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Intoxicated by Jenni Rivera:
The Erotics of Fandom, Sonic Pedagogies of Deviance, and the Politics of Pirujeria

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Yessica Garcia Hernandez

Committee in charge:

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Chair
Professor Jillian Hernandez, Co-Chair
Professor Luis Alvarez
Professor Nancy Guy
Professor Curtis Marez

2019

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University of California San Diego

2019

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VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Intoxicated by Jenni Rivera:
The Erotics of Fandom, Sonic Pedagogies of Deviance, and the Politics of Pirujeria

by

Yessica Garcia Hernandez

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Chair
Professor Jillian Hernandez, Co-Chair

This dissertation uses Jenni Rivera's music, performances, and fandom to examine the Chicana and Mexicana immigrant experience in the 21st century United States and Mexico. A particular focus is placed on how working-class women negotiate class, gender, race, motherhood, sexuality, and body-image through the reception of her music. Chicana singer Jenni Rivera passed away in an airplane crash on December 9th, 2012 and was the first female singer from Southern California to achieve international stardom in the genre of Banda Sinaloense. She sold more than

20 million records worldwide and garnered a working-class girl and women fan base that admired her for being a proud single-mother who took ownership of her sexuality, survived domestic violence, and fought for the rights of immigrants and poor women. Through participant observation, fan interviews, and analysis of music, performance, and fan cultural production, I argue that Rivera and her fans created an intergenerational women-centered space that transmitted *sonic pedagogies of deviance*— lessons that center “erotic sovereignty” and a refusal of heteronormative respectable femininity. Similar to Cathy Cohen’s argument that we should look at marginal figures like punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens – to understand deviance as resistance – *Intoxicated by Jenni* centers three marginal tropes of Rivera’s fandom that destabilize normative categories of womanhood, sexual identity, and body politics – 1) *The Malandrina*, the Chicana party girl who is viewed as promiscuous, hypersexual and deviant for drinking; 2) *The Madre Soltera*, the queer single mother who is constantly viewed as broken, damaged, and shamed for breaking the heteronormative household; and 3) *La Dama Divina*, the fat working-class Latina who is marked as visually disgusting for not having proper “Latina curves.” I show how the radical disruption of respectability that Rivera and her fans engaged in enriches our understandings of moral panics around Chicana/Mexicana sex-positive cultures.

Intoxicated by Jenni contributes to the literature of latina sexualities by introducing new “cultural poetics” of Chicana/Mexicana sexuality that Rivera and her fans co-created. I am intentional about centering the “erotic sovereignty” and “complex personhood” of Latinas because during my six years of ethnographic research, I have found that anti-fans (who tend to be heterosexual Mexican origin men and middle-class Chicanas/Mexicanas) ridicule and post what I call “agitated responses” about Rivera and her fans on social media. Thus, in relation to Rivera’s anti-fandom, *Intoxicated by Jenni* argues that anti-fans’ agitated-responses signify a disassociation

from stigmatized populations: single-mothers, hyper-sexual girls, whores, working-class culture, and fat bodies. The attacks that Jenni fans undergo, are very similar to the media attacks that Jenni Rivera herself experienced. The media often portrayed Jenni Rivera as the *agitator* of erotic immorality who rouse fans to enjoy themselves and embody drunkenness, an activity that many anti-fans disagree with due to their investment in respectability. To this day the attacks towards her fans continue and this dissertation investigates how Riveras' fans become a visible extension of her gender and sexual politics. The pathologization that Jenni fans undergo drives me to approach this dissertation through a desire-based framework (Tuck, 2009) that does not punish women for engaging in fandom but instead captures how they negotiate systems of gender and racial oppression through a lens of love, pleasure, and what Black feminist scholar Audre Lorde calls the “erotics” (1984).

INTRODUCTION

Intoxicated by Jenni

PART ONE // The Entrance

Setting the Stage

It was 8:45 pm on August 10, 2013 and the doors of El Rodeo nightclub in Pico Rivera, California were still closed. People in line looked confused and impatient. Suddenly, one fan started shouting, “Open the door already!” Her loud, deep voice grabbed everyone’s attention and inspired others to also demand entrance. Another fan joined her by shouting, “Jenni! Jenni! Jenni!” “¡Que Viva Jenni!” “¡Jenni Vive!” Their chants were so vivid that for a minute, I forgot Jenni Rivera was dead.

What I describe here is the moment of anticipation with fans who were excited to be part of the “CD and Tequila Release Party” of *La Gran Señora* brand of tequila. Everyone knew *La Gran Señora* referred to Jenni Rivera and, in her absence, it stood for her. This party offered an opportunity to celebrate Jenni Rivera’s legacy by also supporting her brother, Mexican singer Juan Rivera’s CD *Oveja Negra*, or “Black Sheep.” The party took place eight months after Jenni Rivera’s unexpected death in a plane crash on December 9, 2012. Clearly, for these fans, Jenni – as they affectionately referred to her—was still alive. Their piercing cries reminded me of her past concerts, when Jenni’s fans celebrated Latina power by drinking, dancing, and un-dressing for and with her. This time, their cries also had a feeling of sadness. Attending the tequila release party inspired me to ask: how has Jenni intoxicated her fans both before and after her death? What is the cultural meaning of intoxication resulting from metaphorically consuming a woman and literally consuming her tequila for the women attending this memorial celebration? What is the cultural meaning of this socio-emotional state I am calling “intoxicated by Jenni,” which I consider a form of drunken feminist pleasure? Focusing on Jenni fans, this dissertation bridges Latinx popular culture, fan studies, sexualities studies, performance studies, and fat studies to examine how Latina working-class women engage in music fandom to create “spaces of emancipatory politics”

(Johnson, 2013)¹.

Born to immigrant parents Rosa and Pedro Rivera, Jenni was born in Long Beach, California on July 2, 1969. She was a MeXicana² singer, songwriter, actress, television producer, and entrepreneur known internationally for her work in Mexican regional music. Jenni sold over 20 million albums worldwide and was awarded various gold and platinum records. Her songs were about love, breakups, disillusion, body image, divorce, single motherhood, partying, drug dealing, survival, and being a *parrandera, rebelde y atrevida*. According to Ethnic Studies scholar Deborah Vargas, Jenni sang “testimonios of gender nonconformity” (2014, 286). Jenni’s music allowed fans to “transmit undisciplined desires, endorse immigrant civil rights, and protest women’s abuse” (Vargas, 286). Since Jenni’s death, her fans have continued to embrace her through the consumption of her music, tripling her record sales and, more recently, through the consumption of her tequila, reality shows, clothing and shoe lines, makeup. Fans also memorialize Jenni on YouTube and other social media sites.

In this dissertation, I employ an integrative and interdisciplinary framework using Meredith Abarca’s Chicana ethnographic method of *charlas*, or ‘informal conversations,’ and E. Patrick Johnson’s method of critical performance ethnography to understand Jenni Rivera’s fandom, music, performances, the drinking of *La Gran Senora* tequila, and the posthumous tributes to the artist via live music and social media (2006; 2008). I engage in critical performance ethnography by conducting and interpreting *charlas* as co-performances. A co-performance occurs when “both

¹ It is an academic and journalistic convention to refer to subjects by their last name, however, in this dissertation I will refer to Jenni Rivera simply as Jenni in following the fans’ practice.

² In MeXicana encounters, Rosa Linda Fregoso uses the term MeXicana “as an interface between Mexicana and Chicana” for her this term “draws attention to the historical, material, and discursive effects of contact zones and exchanges among various communities on the Mexico-US.” MeXicana references processes of transculturation, hybridity, and cultural exchanges – the social and economic interdependency and power relation structuring the lives of inhabitants on the borderlands” (1998, xiv).

the researcher and the narrators are performing for one another; it also entails ‘paying attention’ in a way that engages the bodily presence of both the researcher and the researched in the moment of the narrative event” (Johnson, 8). I have been a “co-performative witness” of Jenni’s phenomenon for more than 15 years since 6th grade when I first heard her music. Drawing on my own experiences and six years of ethnographic research I have conducted since Jenni’s death, I argue that Jenni *intoxicates* her fans not only through tequila, but also through her resilient *conocimientos*, music, *atrevida* performances, politics of *pirujeria*, and what I call the erotics of fandom. Using Audre Lorde’s definition of erotics to think about Jenni’s fandom allows me to call her fans’ intoxicating pleasures – often taking place while celebrating, partying, singing, undressing, and now mourning – integral components of the working-class wet feminism Jenni and her fans co-created. These erotics of Jenni’s fandom expresses a love and pleasure for oneself not typically sanctioned for Latinas who must negotiate notions of respectability politics and live a double life traversing both the politics of home and nightclub. Therefore, *parrandiando*, ‘partying’ with Jenni was and continues to be a radical act of shamelessly seeking pleasures without being depending on or satisfying men. These moments of posthumous fandom demonstrate that even after Jenni’s death, her fans refuse to give up the power and pleasure she provided for them.

On the morning of December 9, 2012, Univision, the largest Spanish-language television station in the United States, interrupted its regular programming with a terse announcement: “The plane that singer Jenni Rivera boarded after her concert in Monterrey, Mexico is missing.” After hours of searching for the plane, Mexican officials confirmed that Jenni had tragically passed in a

plane explosion following her concert. I still remember the day I heard the announcement of her death as if it were yesterday. I cried for hours while reminiscing about the role her music played in my life and listening to her music on the radio station *La Que Buena* (105.5 FM) in her hometown—and my own—Long Beach, California. Indeed, I trace the roots of my feminist girlhood to my own mother(s), and then to Jenni. As the daughter of immigrant parents and a resident of Long Beach, I strongly identify with many of the lyrics in Jenni’s songs, which have taught me to recognize and refuse oppressive gender relationships in traditional Mexicano machista households.

Jenni was the first woman to raise the popularity of the genres of Mexican regional music, Banda Sinaloense and Corrido, to international fame. According to National Public Radio’s arts correspondent Mandalit del Barco, Jenni “became popular for singing about her own troubles, the domestic violence she suffered as a young woman, her struggles with weight, being a single mother and her three failed marriages” (2012). With her songs constantly topping the Latin *Billboard* charts in the United States, Jenni became the top female regional Mexican music singer by appealing to a predominately female audience. Billboard’s music critic Leila Cobo (2012) reported that Jenni was “a woman of many firsts: the first female banda artist to sell out the Gibson Amphitheater (2006), the first Latin artist to sell out the Nokia Theatre (2009) and the first female regional Mexican artist to headline the Staples Center (2011),” According to fan Vernice Cornejo, Jenni’s cultural importance was due to the pedagogies about survival she transmitted to her fans: “Hispanic women, we go through a lot of physical abuse, mental abuse. And she actually said it herself as she went through it, and she wanted us to see in her that she made it so we could've made it just the way she made it” (2012).

On the Monday after Jenni's death, I went to Plaza Mexico, a predominantly Latino shopping center in Lynwood, to leave a candle for her. I went to Plaza Mexico because I heard from *Despierta America*, a morning news show on Univision, that they would have a tribute for Jenni there; the timing of her unexpected death coincided with the yearly Plaza Mexico celebration for La Virgen de Guadalupe. Together, the twin celebration/memorial became a sign of love for both women. When I arrived, I saw many girls with their mothers wearing Jenni t-shirts and singing her songs together. If a girl did not arrive with a Jenni shirt, she would walk with her mother to the silk-screening shops inside the plaza's swap meet to get a shirt with Jenni's photo and a dedicated message (see fig. 1). After the girls received their wearable mementos, they would walk back to the tribute and participate by screaming "Jenni, Jenni, Jenni" and applauding the women and girls who were performing Jenni's music. The performances took place next to the *kiosko*, outside of the shopping center, adjacent to the candles celebrating La Virgen de Guadalupe and now Jenni.[3] "Que Viva Jenni Rivera," said a nine-old girl at Plaza Mexico after singing Jenni's song "Basta Ya." I was particularly impressed by her because she was so young and yet transmitted the intense *sentimiento* Jenni performed on stage.

The day after the tribute in Lynwood, Univision Noticias uploaded to YouTube a video filmed at Plaza Mexico titled "Jenni Rivera Fans Pay Tribute, 'She's my Idol, She's My Everything.'" The video highlighted two main stories: the story of mother Hilda Medina, her daughter Breanna Gomez, and Breanna's unnamed little daughter; and the story of Elizabeth Mendoza. The video follows Hilda and Breanna as they enter the shopping center to order three personalized Jenni T-shirts. There they meet Elizabeth who tells the camera that Jenni is "her idol, she is her everything!" Elizabeth explains that she identified with Jenni because, like the artist, she also worked at the swap meet with her family. Hilda, Breanna, and Elizabeth's stories reflected

the inter-generational narratives of fandom *as* identification/*testimonio* with Jenni that I had become accustomed to when listening to her music or watching her reality show *I Love Jenni*. The often-inter-generational dynamic of Jenni fandom is evident in Breanna's comment that "my mom was the one who got me into listening to her." Toward the end of the segment, all three of them are captured putting on their Jenni shirts. (see Fig. 1)



Figure 1. Univision video, Mother-Daughter, December 2012.

Univision's fan-based tribute prompted me to ask: How did working-class Latina/Chicana girls make sense of Jenni's music? What role did her music play in their lives? What is the social significance of the intergenerational mother-daughter fan culture that is cultivated through Jenni's following? How do fans remember Jenni and what are the politics of creating an homage to her? What listening practices did Jenni's fans engage in and how did this type of sonic intimacy allow fans to re-create her music with their own stories, rituals, and media? Together, these questions

explore how the intersections of race class, gender, and sexuality shape the ways in which MeXicana fans negotiate music fandom and how their everyday listening practices shape our theories of popular culture, class, and Latina sexuality.

During my visit to Plaza Mexico, I also spoke to vendors who were affected by Jenni's death. From these *charlas*, it was clear that Jenni was loved by many but was also controversial and hated by the more conservative women who blamed Jenni for any "deviant" activity practiced by women in their families. For instance, a *mujer* who worked in a cell phone booth in Plaza Mexico shared with me that her daughter-in-law's travels to Jenni's concerts instigated many fights in her marriage. She also expressed mixed feelings about the drunken sonic identities that songs like "Las Malandrinas," "Parrandera," "Rebelde Y Atrevida," "Mi Vida Loca," and "Chuperamigos" had on girls and young woman.



Figure 2. Myspace wall papers, Malandrinas.

In trying to psychoanalyze her daughter-in-law, she mentioned to me that maybe her daughter-in-law's "rough" upbringing made her a *borracha* "drunk." The conversation shifted so quickly from celebrating Jenni to blaming her and pathologizing her fans that I suddenly felt uncomfortable. The *mujer* could tell that I was passively shook, and asked me, "what do you

think?” I responded with a question, being very careful with my tone as I did not want to appear rude: “¿Usted nunca tomo? ¿No le gustaba salir?” (Did you never drink, or like to go out?). She responded with a smile and said, “of course I did but when I got married, I stopped.” The reason I felt uncomfortable was because I saw myself in her daughter-in-law. People had blamed my “rough years” on my *borracheras*. However, this pseudo-diagnosis of damage felt wrong. The *mujer* then said that regardless of Jenni’s bad influence on her daughter-in-law, she still admired Jenni for making it both financially and artistically as a single mother of five children. She was clear about letting me know that Jenni’s “ghettoness,” sexual innuendos, and loudness did not make her the “perfect” role model, but that Jenni had earned her respect for overcoming hardships and not forgetting about her roots in the “barrio” (hood).

As this project has expanded through the years, I kept coming back to this moment and asking myself whether I would classify this *mujer* as an anti-fan. According to Mark Duffett, anti-fans “are audience members who express a strong disapproval of a particular text” (2013, 290).³ However, where to place this *mujer* in the anti-fan spectrum is complicated because compared to the other anti-fan comments I analyze in this dissertation, she is not an anti-fan, but her response makes evident a *sexual respectable ambivalence* that Jenni’s phenomenon agitated, even among people who listened to her music. Respectable ambivalence was a very common reaction to Jenni’s career when she was alive. Through my research I have found a divide among Mexicans/Chicanx as to how much we should consume, remember, and circulate Jenni. Conversations about defying

³ Jonathan Gray argues that in order to understand anti-fandom, one has to take seriously Gerard Genette’s concept of “paratexts”—the “semi-textual” fragments that surround a text such as the covers, prefaces, reviews, afterwords, and typeface. In Jenni’s case, some of the paratexts anti-fans engage with include entertainment news shows (i.e. *El Gordo y La Flaca*, *Ventaniando*), social media sites (i.e. YouTube, Twitter, Myspace, Facebook, etc), and the posthumous Jenni biopics that have been produced by Spanish-speaking media. In this dissertation, I study several paratext, and anti-fans and use their discursive social media to police several “war of positions” over gender, sexuality, and class.

respectability politics always arise with attacks on her sexuality, fat body, and “ghettoness.” It has become my desire to find out why, how, where, and when these conversations take place and how her intergenerational fans also get interpellated into these debates of im/morality and deviance. I am convinced that placing (anti)fandom in relation to Jenni’s fandom, music, and performances creates a framework to analyze why racialized fandoms like Jenni’s agitate and incite moral panics about representation. Thus, other questions that I explore in this dissertation are: *Why do antifans get agitated that Jenni fans become a visible extension of her gender and sexual politics? How do the class politics of Banda music influence the agitations toward Jenni and her fans? And how do these class associations shape MeXican respectability politics?*

Brief Historical Background Racist Nativism: Ongoing Anti-Immigrant Climate

The Jenni phenomenon has to be situated within an ongoing climate of racist nativism⁴ in the United States. The post 9/11 era of the 2000s witnessed numerous waves of anti-immigrant sentiment that manifested in laws, media propaganda, and the publication of books by racist nativist academics and politicians. A famous quote representative of this time period is found in political scientist Samuel Huntington’s article “The Hispanic Challenge”:

The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves – from Los Angeles to Miami – rejecting the Anglo – Protestant values that built the American Dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril (The Hispanic, 2004)⁵.

⁴ “define racist nativism as the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be. People and Immigrants of Color, and thereby defend the right of whites, or the natives, to dominance.”

⁵ Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order. Touch Stone. 1997.

In Huntington's quote, Mexicans and Latinx communities who refuse to assimilate become scapegoats of a declining American society. According to Huntington, this refusal to assimilate creates a "clash of civilization" (1996). Patrick Buchanan's book *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America* is another example of the racist nativist discourse that surrounded those years.⁶ In this book, Buchanan frames Mexicans as creating a "spirit of separatism," "nationalism," where the use of the Mexican flag is an act of disloyalty to the United States (130). Mexicans, according to Buchanan are, "immigrants of a different kind" because

unlike the immigrants of a century ago, who bade farewell to their native lands forever when they boarded the ships, for Mexicans the mother country is only hours away. Millions have no desire to become Americans or to learn English. Why should they? Mexico is their home. They have come here to work and, rather than assimilate, create Little Mexicos in U.S. cities, as Cuban refugees have created Little Havana in Miami. Only there are ten or twenty times as many people of Mexican descent here as Cubans. With its Spanish language radio and TV programs, newspapers, movies, and magazines, the Mexican diaspora has created a separate culture and is becoming a separate nation within a nation – inside the United States. And that is how Zedillo and Fox see Mexican-Americans – as Mexicans first (136).

As a response to these racist nativist discourses, Mexican immigrants and their children responded with forming numerous music subcultures that showcased their Mexicanidad as an act of pride and rebellion. As George Lipsitz states, Mexican immigrants in the boom of Banda music "flaunt rather than hide their Mexican origins, refusing assimilation rather decisively, even in the face of Proposition 187 and other measures designed to depict immigrants as a menace to California." According to educational scholars these sentiments also reached public K-12 systems. Education studies scholar Lindsay Perez Huber argues that English hegemony is a form of what she calls

⁶ What Jenni's performance at Arizona also show us is that MeXican respectable politics, are entrenched around immigration rhetoric of respectability. By saying "portense bien"

“racist nativist microaggression” a “systemic, everyday forms of racist nativism that are subtle, layered and cumulative verbal or non-verbal assault directed towards people of color” ⁷ (2011, 379). Her concept can be extended to social interactions outside of public schools where Spanish-speaking sounds are constantly profiled. Sound studies scholar Jennifer Stoever-Ackerman argues that anti-immigrant climate of Arizona SB 1070 made the sounds of Spanish (including accents, music, and radio) into forms of illegality. ⁸ She states,

The sounds of Spanish, however, are only the most obvious of a whole host of sonic markers of citizenship. The sounds of music are another. The American listening ear lumps musical genres like mariachi, Tejano, salsa, norteña and reggaetón together—regardless of the diverse national origins of the music or its consumers—and the sounds of instruments like the accordion, timbales, and brass horns become metonyms for the presence of Latino/a “Others.” For many monolingual English-speaking U.S. citizens, the increasing numbers of radio stations that broadcast pan-Latin musical genres—there are over 23 in the state of Arizona—sonically symbolize the perceived invasion and encroachment of the undocumented Latino/a “Others” on (white, English) American territory.

Chicanx Studies scholar Dolores Ines Casillas has documented that during this ongoing climate of racist nativism, the phone lines of Spanish-speaking radio stations “were much busier during the Q&A immigration shows, indicating not only a more attentive listenership but also listeners’ reliance on asking questions from within the safety of their homes” (90).

The social context that predated the 2000/s was not only about racist nativism but also about a particular packaging of classism and sexism, which was widely circulated, and came to be known as the culture of poverty. In the 1960s, Marxist sociologist Oscar Lewis feminized class-stigma and although he still pointed out structural forms of poverty, the “the social and psychological characteristics” that he circulated about poverty were taken up by other scholars, journalist, and

⁷ Lindsay Perez Huber. “Discourses of Racist Nativism in California Microaggressions.” *Educational Studies*. Vol. 47 (4). P 3790-401. July 2011. And “Make America Great again: Donald Trump, Racist Nativism and the Virulent Adherence to White Supremacy Amid U.S. Demographic Change”. 10 *Charleston L. Rev.* 215 (2016)

⁸ Jennifer Stoever- Ackerman, “The Noise of SB 1070: or Do I sound illegal to you? August 19, 2010. *Sounding Out!* <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2010/08/19/the-noise-of-sb-1070/>

politicians to individualize poverty to the scale of the family, and in particular the mother. His analysis influenced the Moynihan report which blamed the Black single mothers for the high rate of poverty among African Americans (Lewis, 1959 and 1961; Moynihan; 1965).⁹ Lewis strongly believed that there were remarkable similarities between all poor people in London, Mexico City, and Black communities in the United States. His numerous books on the culture of poverty in Mexico, and later Puerto Rico, also became applicable to understand Latinx communities in the United States.

I argue that the discursive logic of culture of poverty¹⁰ agitates the type of MeXican respectable ambivalence that I encounter with anti-fans and sometimes even among Jenni and fans themselves. I read the ideological longevity of Lewis' work as a haunting because his work is still believed to be true on both sides of the border; among the middle class and Mexican elite in Mexico and pan-ethnic middle-class groups in the United States, including Anglo Americans. This logic boxes working-class people into numerous forms of epistemic violence that produces class-based policing and respectability among people of the same class. In this project, for instance, the figure of the single-mother conjures up the feminization process that discourses of class-stigma have taken historically. The direct links to motherhood makes the "culture of poverty", a character entrenched in poor women's bodies, existence, sexuality, and morality.

⁹ Oscar Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family*. Vintage Books; New York, 1961. And *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. Basic Books, 1959. Daniel Patrick Moynihan. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. United States Department of Labor, 1965.

¹⁰ Living in crowded quarters; Lack of privacy, gregariousness, high Incident of alcoholism, frequent resort to violence (frequent use of physical violence in the training of children, wife beating), early initiation to sex, free union of consensual marriages, high incidence of the abandonment of Mothers and children, trend toward mother-centered families and much greater knowledge of maternal relatives, strong present time orientation with relatively little ability to defer gratification and plan for the future, a sense of resignification and fatalism based upon the realities of their difficult life situations, a belief in male superiority which reaches its crystallizations in machismo or the cult of masculinity, a corresponding martyr complex among women, a high tolerance for psychological pathology of all sorts.

Lewis stated that some of these traits were also found among the middle-class and upper classes but with different patterns. For instance, he states, “drinking in the middle class is a social amenity whereas in the lower class getting drunk has different and multiple functions – to forget one’s troubles, to prove one’s ability to drink, and to build up sufficient confidence to meet difficult life situations” (xxvii, introduction the children of sanchez). Although he presents himself as having “the most effective tools of the anthropologists,” which are “sympathy and compassion”, his work damaged the perception of poor communities, pathologizing their pleasures and denying their human right to a “complex personhood.”

**“Parrandera, Rebelde Y Atrevida:”
My Working-Class Transnational Malandrina Positionality**

“The reader sees what is intended to be said and also, from tone, from the unconscious emphases and the rest [they] come to know the [woman] saying it”
(Richard Hoggart, 19).

I want to situate myself in this study, because the way I tell this story is influenced by my working-class positionality growing up in Long Beach, the mecca of the paisa Southern California sound, my experience with the anti-immigrant climate of the 2000s, and negotiations of my Latina deviance. These life experiences are the reason why I am interested in music fandom as a scholarly topic and why I decided to focus on how MeXicanas negotiate gender and sexuality. When I was 13, my mother was deported to Mexico because she was undocumented. I still remember this moment like it was yesterday because it left us with many traumatic scars, that cannot be undone. Deportations leave permanent damage. My siblings and I could not understand why our family was not valuable enough to the state that they separated us. My sister and I rebelled against the world, angry that we were forced to grow up very fast. I started working at the age of 13, the

summer after my middle-school graduation, which no one attended because my father was working long hours to provide for both his deported wife in Mexico and their four children in the United States. Because I was a *rebelde* and ditched school all the time, I was sent to Mexico to live with my mother as a form of punishment. Moving to Mexico in 2003 taught me a lot about transnational music cultures and how fandom migrates between the rancho and the barrio. I lived in Mexico for almost two years and then I had to return to the United States, without my mother, because my uncle was not good to me when he was drunk. Again, in these moments, music and fandom saved me. My friends in Mexico taught me to write lyrics in my notebooks. We would write about our favorite songs and share them with each other. Listening to music has always been a social experience for me. Even when I was small, whenever my dad played a Los Bukis song, we knew that was a cue to do our daily chores. While in Mexico, I had to negotiate a lot of gender stereotypes that my classmates had about girls from the United States, that they were “easier” than girls from the rancho. Because I was only fourteen, already had a tongue piercing, and dressed like a *cholita*, most of my male classmates felt that I was promiscuous and available to them. I heard the boys call girls all sorts of names—putas/pirujas—to devalue them. However, because of my experience growing up in the barrio, I knew how to defend myself. These were the moments when channeling Jenni helped me greatly.

I had already encountered Jenni’s music before my mother’s deportation and my move to Mexico. My first memories of encountering Jenni were in 2001 when I was in sixth grade. When I used to visit my friend, Elxbeth, after school, her mother would be in the kitchen making tea and listening and singing with so much *sentimiento* to Jenni’s song “Madre Soltera” (“Single Mother”), which she said meant a lot to her because she was also a single mother. I tried to remember the lyrics of the song to sing along with her. I wanted my voice to be a sonic sign of solidarity, to

express to her that I saw her hard work and that I was thankful she took me on as her “daughter” when my mother was gone. She was there when I lost my virginity and had my first heartbreak. I learned not to be a *pendeja* from her. The moments she spent with me, even if it was to just sing along to “Madre Soltera” and cuss out men, were precious to me. Growing up, the girl rule was that if someone’s heart was broken, we would cheer them up by singing songs about break ups. When we hear these songs on the radio, we would immediately say, “That’s my song! Put it up, put it up.” It was as if the loudness of the music would take away the pain. With Elxbeth’s mother, damn near every song was our song, especially when they were interpreted by Jenni. In a working-class barrio, listening to music is both an intimate and public process. Music heals the heart because we view it as pedagogical—to identify with and learn from. We situated Jenni as the surrogate voice of the community. As Deborah Pancini Hernandez has stated about bachata music, “Romantic music serves as a surrogate voice for people who feel incapable of articulating their emotions and publicly expressing private feelings, and it helps them to negotiate their relationships, whether in the early stages of courtship, in the full news of a mutually satisfying relationship, or in the painful and bitter moments of separation and solitude” (1995, 153). For us, Jenni created numerous sonic identities for us. We felt that she understood us because she had gone through the same rough times as we had.

When I was in Mexico, Jenni was still building a name for herself in the United States. It was not until 2010 that she made it big. When I returned to the United States in 2005, I was committed to carry my Mexicanidad with pride. In high school, I made it clear to everyone I was *paisa* and I listened to La Que Buena and watched Que Buena TV. I went to every Whittier Narrow event possible to celebrate Mexican Independence Day. I even clubbed at Rancho El Farallon, Lidos, El Parral, and El Potrero, popular *paisa* nightclubs in Southern California. My friend Rosa

and I would bump Jenni's album, Parrandera, Rebelde Y Atrevida, at full volume while cruising down the blocks of Long Beach. Rosa's dad had a gray Ford truck with a good sound system in it, so we felt chingonas listening to Jenni. The first song, "Parrandera, Rebelde, y Atrevida," was my anthem because it gave me an identity I could relate to. In those days, I partied hard! I went to many different paisa nightclubs each week. I expressed my Mexicanidad through this music scene.

During my girlhood, Jenni transmitted lessons I needed about sexuality, gender, race, and class. I remember watching her numerous times in El Show de Cristina and Don Francisco and paying close attention to her advice. Because of my experiences consuming her music and *conocimientos*, I am committed to telling this story about Jenni fans through a transnational and intergenerational lens. Listening to Jenni convinced me that we need to challenge discourses stemming from the culture of poverty that renders MeXicana working-class girls and women as the pathological subjects to be blamed for poverty and the instability of the nuclear family. Drawing on conversations in fan chatrooms, *charlas parranderas* with fans at tribute events, oral histories, analysis of music and performances and anti-fan agitated discourses, I examine working-class cultural politics, focusing on intergenerational sex-positive conversations around gender and sexuality. I historicize the contemporary construction of MeXican respectability politics, as discursive moral panics around intoxicated erotics and their deviant self-representation. The agitations intoxicated erotics stimulate create intraracial divisions about Latinas confirming "stereotypes" circulated about them in mainstream media.

As a working-class academic, who *is* the stereotype of a working-class *mujer*, I am invested in creating new paradigms that seriously engage working-class life. Finding language to explain working-class life in a complicated way is a hard task and maybe that is why scholars stick to the critique of representations. The stories I tell here have been filtered through my life experience. I

am honored to explain how Jenni’s music and fandom helped girls and women validate each other when others felt we were surplus. Without a doubt, Jenni’s fandom helps us complicate our ideas about class, gender, sexuality, fatness, and respectability politics.

“Being a Paisa”: Jenni Rivera and MeXicanidad

My generation was taught to be 100 percent Mexican...We had to speak Spanish at home and listen to Spanish music. At the same time, though, we knew the 'American' world. But we weren't Chicanos—that was just a fad. We were Mexican.

— Jenni Rivera

Before Jenni passed away, she was the first woman singer from Southern California to achieve international stardom in the genre of Banda Sinaloense. Scholars who wrote about Jenni when she was alive situated her within the genre of narcocorridos, drug ballads, and the broader corrido music scene in Southern California. Composer and musician Elijah Wald, for instance, situated Jenni within her father’s record company Cintas Acuario, a Long Beach-based record company popular in the Los Angeles area because of its “gansta style” corridos. Wald described the L.A. Corrido scene in the late 90’s and early 2000’s as “a world of young street toughs singing about their drug-dealing, gun-slinging pals...an overlay of gangsta rap” (2001). These corridos and their style are considered to be the Mexican counterpart of the West Coast rappers of the 1990’s (N.W.A., Dr. Dre, and Ice Cube) because the music narrated the realities of working class communities in the *barrios*. For instance, Pedro Rivera (Jenni’s father) composed corridos about the 1992 L.A. Riots, and about a Mexican president accused of laundering drug money. Writing about these types of stories made Cintas Acuario a popular record label. Moreover, compared to other LA-based record companies, the Chicanx singers (Pedro Rivera’s own children) had a

different vision for the corrido “ballad” genre. For instance, in an interview with Elijah Wald, Jenni shared that she didn’t even know about rancheras until she started working with her father:

But we listen to rap and to everything else that the English market is doing, like hip-hop and R&B. And I don’t know, we just have this real big imagination. All of us. We’re all weird and we’re crazy, and we’ve got stuff that other people don’t have. We imagine things, like ‘Oh, what if we would do what they’re doing in English, but we’re doing it in Spanish, our way, and that’s what catches people’s attention (2001).

In Natalia Almada’s documentary *Al Otro Lado*, Jenni shared that she modeled her singing career after legendary singer Chalino Sanchez, and that no women in the early 90s would dare to sing corridos, particularly those about drugs, money and power. Jenni also situated her singing career within a broader subculture in Southern California that Mexican-American youth commonly called “being a paísa.” Ethnomusicologist Sydney Hutchison defines paísa as “literally a person from one’s own country, used to refer to Mexicans, especially those of rural areas” (2007, 214).

For Mexican-American youth, *paísa* became an identity linked to listening to corridos, particularly those by Chalino Sanchez or artists imitating his style: banda and norteño. In his analysis of “La Chakalosa,” a corrido that Jenni composed in 1994 about a woman gangsta and narcotraficante, ethnic studies scholar Curtis Marez argues that Jenni was projecting “a fantasy from below of a dramatic class and gender power reversal that contradicts dominant representations of poor women as passive victims in need of patriarchal protection” (Marez, 24). Jenni’s participation in this subculture was important because she created the Paísa girl’s sonic identity with corridos like “La Malandrina” (1999) in honor and celebration of her fans and their “canija, chakalosa” attitude. This song situates *paísas* as girls who practiced their Mexicanidadⁱ

through corridos, *la tambora*, fashion, vernacular, drinking, and sovereignty in romantic matters.¹¹ Throughout Jenni's career, this party girl archetype was rebranded and renamed by songs like "La Socia," "Las Tequileras," "Parrandera," "Rebelde Y Atrevidas," "Las Chuperamigas," and of course, "La Chakalosa."¹²



Figure 3. Reina de Reinas.

Scholars who wrote about Jenni posthumously were interested in how she attributed her success to "class-based values that prepared her to do battle against the abuses of former husbands

¹¹ Similar to the blues, which Angela Davis discusses, for women who listen to Sovereignty in sexual and romantic relationship is also an important aspect of their life, particularly for immigrant women who leave their home in Mexico, migrate to the United and feel disappointed by the capitalist way of living. These relationships also affected their daughters, so Jenni here is demonstrating power by choosing who she likes.

¹² Other scholars critique Jenni's participation in the genre of narcocorridos. As an example, Hector Amaya uses the lens of *detrterritorialization*, which he defines as "the cultural ruse that underscores the music's lack of responsiveness to social conditions in Mexico and/or the United States and a tactic consumers use to connect to fantasies of power and sufficiency" (226, 2014). Amaya was interested in the branding of authenticity (Mexicanidad) that artists like Jenni Rivera and Gerardo Ortiz create as Mexican American. However, Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta argued that although Jenni did start her career singing narcocorridos, she had stopped any involvement with the genre when she became its top woman artist. This switch is important because although Jenni's identity was marked by the gangster image, she eventually shifted to become the gangster mother and lover

and lovers as well as the values of dominant culture” (Morrissey, 411) ¹³ Morrissey argues that Jenni’s “rebellious narrative approach helped her break ground among women celebrities because she vehemently defended her working class roots, particularly those of poor women, who were victims of struggling male partners” (413). She also contends that Jenni used the narrative of a rebel, working-class, ‘gangsta chick’ – who went from ‘rags to riches’ – to obtain social capital.¹⁴ Similarly, Ethnic Studies scholar Deborah Vargas argues that Jenni’s abilities to hustle or “play” the system gave her the knowledge to work the “normative standards of commercialization and production,” the way working-class communities of color learn to economically survive.¹⁵ In this dissertation, I examine the ways in which Jenni’s intergenerational fans reimagine age, gender, sexuality, motherhood, and class by listening to her music, engaging in fandom, and participating in web communities. I explore the social element of their gatherings, both inside and outside the concert space, and probe how these moments foreground transmissions of Latina deviance, a lifeforce of working-class feminisms.

The Literature of Music Fans

For fans, music has a unique depth and power; it hits them with such force that it becomes an important part of their daily lives.

(Daniel Cavichi, 110)

¹³ Her methodology focuses primarily on Jenni’s autobiography, newspaper articles, and literature review.

¹⁴ She reviews the work of Richard Sennett (1972), Jonathan Cobb (1972), and Pierre Bourdieu (1977)¹⁴ and others to consider how social capital obscures theories of social and economic mobility. She further discusses the work of Dyer (1979) who “discusses several iconic ‘rebel’ actors and actresses” and explains that compared to men, “there are far fewer women among celebrity figures that built their brand on rebellion against social norms” (413). “Sociological theories of mobility and celebrity studies suggest that the use by celebrities of class, gender, and ethnicity statuses as foundational in success narratives is a strategy that requires careful balance. The valorization of a socially marginalized status to criticize a coveted place in the dominant cultural arena can create social capital for celebrities, as the cases of Rivera and other star shows.”

¹⁵ Deborah Vargas. “Un Desmadre Positivo: Notes on How Jenni Rivera played Music,” 295. Also, it is important to note that my dissertation emerges after the Selena phenomenon, where the death of Selena Quintanilla in 1995 caused a similar cultural upheaval. Performance studies scholar, Deborah Paredez argues that the Selena phenomenon marked the 1990s with “conspicuous celebration of Latinas” and the emergence of the Latino consumer market.

Communication scholar Joli Jenson has stated that fandom, as a site of investigation, can tell us about how people make sense of their lives in relation to their *historical, social, and cultural* realities (1992). Lawrence Grossberg states the relationship between fans and cultural texts needs to be understood “in the domain of affect or mood” (1992, 56).¹⁶ Grossberg argues that fans produce a structure of “affective alliances,” which “gives color, tone or texture to our experiences.” (1992, 56) In this sense, affect is not equivalent to desires and emotions but is “the feeling of life,” which is not a subjective experience but a “socially constructed domain of cultural effects” (1992, 56). Both cultural studies scholar Daniel Cavichi and ethnomusicologist Nancy Guy also recognize these “affective sensibilities of fandom” (Grossberg, 1992) and explain the intimate ways fans feel music through analogies of being “touched by the music” and as “experiencing magic.” Drawing on three years of ethnographic research on Bruce Springsteen fans, Cavicchi shows how becoming a fan is similar to a religious conversion. He argues that fandom is a space where fans make sense of their cultural and social lives, shaping their self-awareness and self-continuity. According to Cavichi, Springsteen fans used the affective sensibility of being “touched” by his music to distinguish themselves from regular listeners.

Cavicchi’s contribution to the field of fan studies was his method of capturing “becoming a fan” stories, which helped him to understand fandom as “a way of life.” Cavicchi’s participants compared becoming a fan to having a “conversion” as it demonstrated the “degree of dedication and commitment Springsteen usually inspires” (43). Although this conversion was usually

¹⁶ “Affect is perhaps the most difficult plane of our lives to define, not merely because it is even less necessary tied to meaning than pleasure, but also because it is, in some sense, the most mundane aspect of everyday life. Affect is not the same as either emotions or desires. Affect is closely tied to what we often describe as the feeling of life. You can understand another person’s life: you can share the same meanings and pleasures, but you cannot know how it feels. But feeling, as it functions here, is not a subjective experience. It is a socially constructed domain of cultural effects.”

inspired and influenced by other people, Cavicchi found that Springsteen fans “consider[ed] their relationships with Springsteen to be solitary” (53). In her study of opera singer Beverly Sills, Guy situates the magic of Sills within Jill Dolan’s work on “utopian performatives,” and Victor and Edith Turner’s theorization of *communitas*, stage presence, mesmerism, charisma, energy, light and communication. Dolan’s work is important to Guy’s theorization of magic because “it directs our attention to those instances when magic is at its strongest, when the artist and her or his audience are mutually enveloped in an extraordinary moment” (2015, 128). Dolan uses the term “utopian performative” to think about the possibility of social and political change while Guy thinks about magic as pertaining to personal possibilities, “and caught up in the feeling of interconnectedness, spirits are raised and hopes abound. Such moments inspire the desire for the positive, for the greatness” (129). Guy concludes that the Magic of Sills connecting with her listeners was “her musicianship and her personal need to connect” (2015, 150).

Outside of fan studies, Latinx popular culture scholars have also documented the ways music listeners make sense of being a fan. For instance, studies about the fandom and stardom of other Latina music celebrities show us that fans are intentional about whom they support. Frances Aparicio (1999), Deborah Paredez (2009) and Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez (2005) have documented the centrality of popular music and fandom in the lives of Latinas. In *Selenidad*, Deborah Paredez argues that Selena Quintanilla created a path for Latina women to explore what it means to be Latino in the 1990s, during the height of the Latino boom. Paredez underscores Selena’s body as an important site, as it allowed for wide-ranging Latina identification. Selena’s “dark” and “curvy” body challenged normative ideological images of American superstars. Thus, many Latina girls became Selena’s fans because they identified with her body and felt affirmed by her visibility in the cultural sphere. Grounded in Performance Studies, Paredez also

focuses on collective expressions of grief and how it connected to other, concurrent political and cultural phenomenon like the establishment of the lucrative Latino market, anti-immigrant sentiment and a globalized post-NAFTA moment. Sociologist Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez argues that rock star Gloria Trevi was popular because she “offered a clear social representation of the *mujer atrevida* (the woman who dares to transgress social and moral regulations controlling female heterosexuality)” (2005, 133). Moreover, Frances Aparicio’s work on Salsa music listeners argues salsa is “a distraction, entertainment, escape...[and] a tool of survival” (202) that allows [working class Latina fans] to ‘rewrite patriarchal and misogynist’ ideologies (1998, 188).

Latinx studies scholar Jose Anguiano writes about Latino Morrissey fans and how they make sense of gender.¹⁷ In his article, “No, It’s Not Like Any Other Love: Latino Morrissey Fans, Masculinity, and Class,” he incorporates an intersectional framework to analyze popular culture stars James Dean, Elvis Presley, and Morrissey. He explains that although most of Morrissey’s fans are young Latinos from the suburbs who speak predominantly English, they are often stereotyped by the media to be gangbangers or recent immigrants (94). The fans that Anguiano spoke to referenced how Morrissey became a role model for “new definitions of masculinity.” Like Aparicio, Anguiano incorporates an affective lens to fan studies. Anguiano is also interested in the power negotiations that young Latinos engage with and their relationship to popular culture. Also focusing on Morrissey, Eoin Deveroux and Melissa Hidalgo argue that Morrissey’s music should be considered “border art.” They use Anzaldúa’s theorization of the border to read Morrissey’s fandom “as an example of ‘cultural citizenship’ that is forged through collective and

¹⁷ He also positions himself with what cultural critic Gaspar de Alba calls the “alter-Native grain” which emphasizes how Chicana/Latinx culture is “distinct *yet not subordinate* part of American popular culture”

individual hybridized practices of agency and self-determination in an otherwise hostile social and political border environment” (207).

Although Latinx Fan Studies is still a growing field, the research on fans has largely focused on why fans privately listen to music and how they identify with the artist they admire; little attention is given to fandom as a collective practice, or to the membership of fan clubs. Guy’s recent study on music fandom recognizes the way in which fans not only get to know the artists they admire, they also get to know other fans. Guy acknowledges social media has been a crucial site where fans come to know each other. In fact, for Guy the internet (i.e. YouTube, Facebook, and online blogs) was her site of recruitment. The interactive ways in which Sills fans gather today contributes to understanding fandom as a collective process where the stories of other fans shape the way fans experience fandom. Moreover, ethnomusicologists focusing on the genre of Mexican regional music have illustrated what motivates some listeners of corridos, Banda, and quebradita to consume the music and participate in dancing clubs. Sydney Hutchinson, for instance, documented why Chicano youth in Los Angeles were part of quebradita clubs. One of her research questions was “why Mexican regional music was becoming increasingly important among Mexican Americans, both as a category and in its specific manifestations?” In her study, Hutchinson shows Mexican youth dancing banda, particularly through quebradita, to deal with “cultural difference and culture clash and [as] away to create positive and forward-thinking expressions from border situations” (11). Hutchinson observed youth used music and dancing as a collective practice to respond to the Mexican anti-immigrant sentiment of the time.

PART TWO // Listening to the Details of Fans
Charlas Parranderas, Oral Histories and Digital Ethnographies

To me [Jenni] is everything. As a woman she gave us a lot of values and helped us with a lot of things. Even though she is dead, she will stay alive.

(Jenni Fan)

To find out the significance of fandom, one must ask fans themselves about their activities, not simply look at them from afar and make judgements.

(Cavichi, 9)

During my *charlas* with the women at El Rodeo, I heard repeatedly that the women were there to have fun, and drinking, chanting, and dancing were time-offs from work, sadness, and stress. They understood their engagement with intoxicated erotics as productive, not wasteful. Their activities at the club, as in Jenni concerts, opened spaces for embodied pleasures typically denied them given the arduous and under-compensated labor they perform at home and at work. One of the fans said, “Yo quiero hablar pero no puedo” (I want to talk, but I just cannot). Instantly, the other women and I asked her why. Her sister-in-law, who was sitting next to her said, “ya ba chillar, cuñada? Es chillona, igual que yo.” (Are you going to start crying, sister-in-law? She is a cry baby, like myself.”). She explained,

Today we are celebrating so “no chilles” (don’t cry) “no chilles,” today is a good day. We actually all made it for the first time. She is my sister-in-law, she is my sister and this is the first time we have ever done anything like this together and then to have my best friend with us, nos robamos a la little niece, para descarillarla tambien poquito (all fans laugh). It is a family thing for us so it is great that we are here together.

This was a powerful moment during our *charla* because the woman’s fear about shedding tears explained the importance of coming together as a family of women to *parrandiar* ‘party’ and celebrate an artist that they admired, loved, and identified with. She eventually shared some of her

memories from Jenni's concerts and told me that she has been a Jenni fan since the early 2000s, when Jenni was just starting her singing career.

After my *charlas*, the women recommended I go talk to the women at the next table: "Go talk to them, they are big fans, we just met them outside; they are big Jenni fans. Big time, you have to go talk to them; tell them that we sent you." When I arrived at the next table, the fans were very excited to share their memories of Jenni. This is an example of what I call *charlas parranderas*, a methodology of conversation that happens when fans gather together to celebrate each other through their fandom. I view *charlas paranderas* as an outcome of the erotic of fandom, and as such they depend on what Gill calls a "sensory matrix," which is "dependent on an interconnection among the senses no less vital than the interconnection among the political, sensual and spiritual" (121). *Charlas parranderas* allows me to talk to fans and center their theorizing about popular culture as a starting points of analysis. I also center fan's cultural production as important sites for analysis. I follow Alexandra Vasquez who asks us to "listen to the details" of music cultures. Vasquez states that the masculinist tendencies in the fields of traditional musicology and popular music criticism "authorizes the transformation of obscure musical details into source material that needs little to no analysis" (28).¹⁸ In contrast, Vasquez understands details as

those fugitive and essential living components that contribute, in very specific ways, to an event and its aftermath. Details might be interruptions that catch your ear, musical tics that stubbornly refuse to go away. They are things you might first dismiss as idiosyncrasies. They are specific choices made by musicians and performers and come in an infinite number of forms: saludos, refusals, lyrics, arrangements, sounds, grants, gestures, bends in voice (19)

I apply Vasquez's call of "listening to details" to the details of audience members, fans, and anti-

¹⁸ Vasquez turns to Naomi Schor's work, *Reading in Detail*, to acknowledge the broader history of the detail's trajectory, and how it has made interventions in fields like literature and feminism. Listening to the details of fans "stretch the limes of what is typically enclosed by "music" to include other ephemera whose audibility might at first be difficult to discern"

fans, arguing that these details are also interruptions that in their own ways create fan performances. These details come in multiple forms: chants, removal of clothing, mobile recordings, posters, fliers, fan shirts, and sing alongs, what I term “intoxicating pleasures.”¹⁹ I listen to the details of fans by analyzing their chatrooms, fan clubs, and fans’ memorabilia including jewelry, polaroid photos, bras, thongs, and homemade YouTube videos as valuable artifacts in fan digital collections. I also listened for the phrases fans yelled during Jenni’s performances and read these disruptions as part of, not separate from, Jenni’s presentation and music. Below, I outline how I listened to the details of fans and explain my creative fan methodology.

Charlas Parranderas and Tribute Events: USA and Mexico

Throughout my six years of ethnographic research at tribute events, I have engaged in charlas with at least one hundred fans, some of whom have become my close friends. Meredith Abarca defines “charlas” as a ground up methodology that recognizes the narrators as social and philosophical theorists:

The methodology of charlas, free-flowing conversations, creates a dialogue where unconventional fields of study, of knowledge, come together. As a methodology, it demonstrates how there is not just one history but many stories, how there is not just one intellectual forms of knowledge but many ways of knowing and being intellectual. Charlas are about vertical thinking, not horizontal, meaning the researcher and women in the field are intellectually on the same plane (Abarca, 9).

Being “intellectually on the same plane” is key as it allows me to see Jenni and her fans as “organic intellectuals” of Chicana/Mexicana survivance.²⁰ Under the rules of normativity and respectability,

¹⁹ See intoxication as Feminist Pleasure.

²⁰ In analyzing the autobiography of Afro Latina porn actress, Vanessa Del Rio, Gender and Sexuality studies scholar, Juana Maria Rodriguez applies Gerald Vizenor’s term “survivance” to theorize how Del Rio explains her life as never letting herself “become the victim or feel victimized.” Rodriguez states that the term survivance “provides an apt meditation to help elucidate del Rio’s discomfort with the term victim...Like the indigenous

Jenni and her fans are often misunderstood, judged and decontextualized, so the method of charlas allows for the rewriting, rereading and historicizing the “archives of violence.” Charlas are a crucial method for my work because they deprioritize written texts, which “enact an imperialist practice of power and knowledge.”²¹

Inspired by Abarca’s theorization of charlas, I name this method *Charlas Parranderas* because many of these conversations occur while traveling to and from tribute celebrations, drinking alcohol, singing, dancing, crying, and eating collectively during and after parties. Charlas parranderas activates and stimulates multiple senses in the body, allowing the fans, the “ethnographer,” and the celebrity (or her memory) to get intimate with each other at multiple levels. Charlas, Jenni’s tequila, and karaoke style sing-alongs at tribute events replicate the form of sonic drunkenness fans experienced during her concerts. Charlas parranderas as a method moves toward a multisensorial way of knowing, what anthropologist Sarah Pink has called “sensory ethnography,” an approach to ethnography that is attentive to “perception, place, knowing, memory and imagination” (2009)²².

In my work, the interconnectedness of senses under the state of intoxication is important because it is in this state where many Jenni fans experienced and archived the affects of their fandom. Under a sensory ethnography framework, the researcher disregards concerns for objectivity and also drinks and gets intoxicated. My reciprocal form of engagement at tribute

population of North America and elsewhere, sex workers are most often narratively depicted as the perpetual victim of patriarchal power, damaged beyond repair, even as liberal politics plot their salvation. In contrast, Vizenor’s term *survivance* brings together the resilience of survival as resistance, as it insists on acknowledging presence in the face of societal demands for disappearance” (322).

²¹ Challenging the prioritization of the written text has also been an important conversation in the field of Performance Studies. Diana Taylor for instance has referenced this as the binary between the *archive* and the *repertoire*.

²² Patrick Johnson states, “I did more than attentively listen to their narrative performances – my presence actually validated and affirmed their stories. This was a conversation, not a one-way exchange” (2008, 9)

events has allowed me to foster friendships with fans. Moreover, Jenni's and my own openness to sexuality and sex-related conversations, jokes, puns, and innuendos shaped the type of stories we engaged in during our *charlas parranderas*. Mexican American Studies scholar Rosario Carillo has also found that there is a "rasquache aesthetic constructed and reflected whereby the combination of formal, informal, and raunchy facilitates an engagement with the body in a material way" (2009). For Carillo, "rasquache aesthetics are ideal for analyzing 'inappropriate,' sexually explicit language and embodiments because they are about 'vulgarity' 'tackiness' and being 'lower class'" (Carillo, 2009). Thus, the intoxicating state of *charlas parranderas* prioritizes the body, its desires, metaphors, exhibitionist engagements, "rasquache language and *humor casero mujerista*"²³ (Carillo, 2009). There is a sense of freedom, looseness, love, and erotics—of being shameless—that *charlas parranderas* cultivate. In the moments of *charlas parranderas*, indecency becomes a form of affective nakedness that eradicates the layers and expectations of lady-like behavior. After the moment of bodily liberation, there can be a stage of memory loss, *cruda* (hangover), *verguenza* (shame/shyness), and sometimes regret; yet, this "aftertaste" stage also allows for a moment of solidarity. The soreness from our dehydrated bodies allows for a space of unity. While I use *charlas parranderas* as my own method of engagement with fans, *charlas parranderas* were also the way in which Jenni and her fans communicated with each other in the concert space. Throughout this dissertation, I will make a clear distinction between the two.

Charlas parranderas also happen organically when Jenni imitators are hired by Jenni fans. An example of a Los Angeles-based Jenni imitator is "Gracie as Jenni," who has performed at different house parties for years. My observations of Facebook Live footage of these parties

²³ Translates to Womanist Humor of the Home

suggest that charlas parranderas transfer over to these parties: *drinking, chisme, charlas, dancing, and sing alongs* are the common activities these fans engage in. Thus, my multisensorial eye is attentive to the ways place, space and sound stimulate the conversations that occur. As a film ethnographer, I entered these house parties as the media person²⁴ who video records Gracie-as-Jenni via Facebook/Instagram live shootings. In between these recording sessions, I communicated with some fans about my project, and depending on their interest follow up with them via social media or text/call. Thus, along with nightclub or party fieldwork, the digital space is a crucial site of investigation for this project.

Fan Digital Archives: Chatrooms, Social Media and WayBack Machine

My experience as a hardcore fan of Mexican regional music informed the digital chatrooms that I decided to use as “data.” In high school, I was part of several chatrooms of Mexican regional music, where I met other Mexican Regional music fans: Chalino fans, Jenni fans, Adan Sanchez Fans, Lupillo fans, Valentin Elizalde fans, and Jessie Morales fans. All Southern California paisa music fans. A website that I frequented during my high school days was “Chalino.com” and the Que Buena website. According to its website, “Chalino.com is the site for fans of Mexican Regional music! Discover what fans of nortañas, rancheras, and corridos have to say about their favorite singers and groups. Make new friends with others that share your love of Mexican music.” I used this site to meet new people I could talk to, club with and date. Those paisa chatroom days were fun: I would go to the public library every day after school just to check my messages. We did not have internet at home but I still managed be part of the paisa digital world. The main tabs

²⁴ Because I am a filmmaker, during my Banda Sinaloense ethnographic research in nightclubs I was usually the media person who took video, photos, etc. I always offer this to any artist who I partner with because I know how expensive media advertising can be and they usually can’t afford that. By being the media person for them, I feel that I help them out.

on Chalino.com were: *charla* (chat), *foros* (chatrooms), *saludos* (greetings), and *fiestas* (parties). You had to create an individual profile with your information, a photo, and a description of yourself.



Figure 4. (Top) Que Buena, 105.5 screenshot, 2005. (Middle) Pura Gente Perrona and (Bottom) Los artistas screenshot in Chalino.com, 2001 .



Alias: babygurl

Nombre: ANGIE MORALES

Sexo: Pollita

[manda un mensaje](#)

[manda esta página](#)

Un poco de mi...

Cumpleaños: 20 Agosto 1983
(19 Años)

Soy de: SOUTH CENTRAL L.A BABY
HUH!!!!!!!!!!!!

Estado: California

Mensajes: [269 mensajes en los foros.](#)

Votos: 217

Visitantes: 2,000

[vota por mi](#)

Un poco mas de mi...

OH WHAT IM STILL ALL UP IN THIS MUTHA PHUCKA N WHAT....STRAIGHT REPRESENTIN SOUTH CENTRAL TO THE FULLEST...AND I BE ANGIE AKA MRS. MORALES.....TO ALL THEM HATERS.....PHUCK U N UR B1TCH @\$\$ KREW...CUZ IM STILL ALL IN YO MOUTH....LOL N E WAYS IM OUTZZZZ.....SHOUT OUTS TO ALL THEM HOMIES FROM SUR CENTRAL....AND PAPI JORGE

ps.THIZ IZ MY BABY DADDY JILGUERO ...IF U DONT LIKEIT LICK MY CLIT.AND WHILE UR AT SUCK A T1T.....MY JILGUERO IZ #1 ARriba MY BABE EL JILGUERO N WHAT

Figure 5. Babygurl profile in Chalino.com, 2001.

Several of Jenni fans met through here or used this website to promote Jenni's fan clubs. I met Isabel Hernandez, the president of Tequileras Fan club through Chalino.com. I then Facebooked her, describing my project. I then traveled to her home to conduct an oral history interview with her. Meeting Isabel is an example of how the digital transformed into analog, a process foundational to the formation of their own fan club. I also searched for Jenni fan clubs on chalino.com because I partied with a couple of party crews in Long Beach during the mid-2000s, and I knew that pocket of paisa clubs emerged in Southern California during that time period²⁵. When I found Isabel on chalino.com, the website was still up and running. However, a year later, it was no longer available because the domain name was not renewed. I realized that as a digital

²⁵ Juana Maria Rodriguez has called the internet a "cybernetic rhizome" (2003).

ethnographer, I have no control over how long the content stays on the web. Given the impermanence of the internet, the method of oral history complemented my ethnography of these chatrooms, particularly when it comes to understanding the significance of their fan club sociality. Thus, WayBack Machine, a digital archive of the internet, became an important tool for me to analyze these websites.²⁶

Along with these Online chatrooms, I also searched Myspace, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube to find and interact with fans. I recognize that the spatiality of each website shaped the way fans interact with each other and with me. Cultural anthropologist Michael Wesch²⁷ describes digital ethnography as a method where a researcher engages in participant-observation through digital platforms like YouTube. With this method, a researcher has the opportunity to observe and to participate. For example, Wesch's team participated in the YouTube community via three methods: by uploading their own videos, commenting on other people's videos, and posting questions to other "YouTubers." I have used social media to interact with fans, to comment on YouTube videos and to stay in communication with people I meet in person at tribute sites and Jenni-related events. I have even created videos with fans and uploaded them to my YouTube channel. This approach to the digital has allowed me to take seriously online troll comments, and trace them to other websites, researching and analyzing the migration of both fan and anti-fan responses.

²⁶ Digital Methods. Richard Rogers. The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts. 2013. Chapter The Website as Archive Object.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/asi.23503>

²⁷ Scobie, Willow, "An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube by Michael Wesch" *American Anthropologist*, no. 4: 661-662. (2011)

Fan Oral Histories:

I distinguish between *charlas parranderas* and *oral history* because the latter is a more private process done one-on-one in the participants' homes and has a more "formal" component, vis-à-vis a voice recorder or video camera. I treat the oral history component as the next stage of *charlas parranderas*. Personally, I do not feel comfortable interviewing fans I have not gotten to know for at least 3-6 months. However, regardless of the style of *charlas parranderas* (more group based) or oral history (one-to-one), using the method of critical performance ethnography allows me to interpret both techniques as co-performances. In the practice of both methods, the body is engaged differently. *Charlas parranderas* may agitate the body to a suspension of time, the present moment is lived, enjoyed, and magnified. There is that possibility that the body forgets the past and ignores the future; the present moment is the orgasmic utopia, and time is suspended, enjoyed, and we give "gusto al gusto." In oral histories, the body is forced to remember time and the present is influenced by retelling the past. *Charlas parranderas* can be regretted or forced to be forgotten, because there is that risk someone can shame your imperfect past. In oral histories there is a tendency to represent our best selves, while in *charlas parranderas*, this tendency is forgotten and instead we unmask our alter ego.

PART THREE // Traces of Latina/x Deviance

After my conversation with fans at El Rodeo, I left the table to wander off, drink a tequila shot, and talk to more people. Very soon, the audience, once spatially divided by tables, was united on the dance floor to dance and sing to the music of Voces del Rancho (one of the music groups Jenni grew up with); then Grupo Addicion (the norteño group Jenni practiced with before she left

for Monterrey), then Gustavo Rivera (Jenni's brother), and finally Juan Rivera (her other brother). Only when Juan Rivera came to stage did fans start to cheer, chant, and remove their bras for Jenni.

"I want to hear a loud yell from all the women here!" said a man through the microphone before introducing Chiquis Rivera, Jenni's daughter, as the master of ceremonies. Before Chiquis came to the stage, the family made sure there were several *La Gran Señora* tequila bottles on the table that was on stage. Having Jenni's tequila displayed was important because it represented her legacy and was a way of keeping her alive. After being introduced, Chiquis took the microphone and passionately said,

Hi, first of all I want to thank everyone for being here, supporting my family and overall my mother. I want you to do me a favor, can we send my mom a loud cry to heaven?! [fans start screaming]. I want to thank you so much, I hope you buy my mom's tequila and her book. I want you to learn my mother's story and get drunk with her. With you all, is my Uncle.

Fans [Chanting as Chiquis speaks]: Jenni, Jenni, Jenni, Jenni. Jenni, Jenni!

Through their chanting, Chiquis provides a space for fans to mourn Jenni and keep her alive. The fans did not care if they were too loud and too sexy for Jenni; they felt so comfortable and intoxicated by Jenni's legacy that throughout the night, three fans removed their bras and threw them towards the stage. Juan, Jenni's brother, caught each one, and made these comments (holding up the bra towards the audience): "*Ya empesaron con sus chingaderas*" (Y'all began to fuck around already), whose is this? It matches my outfit huh?" "I don't know whose this is but this lady got some big ass tits!" The intoxicating pleasures of bra-throwing at the tequila release transported me back to that intimate and safe concert space Jenni created for her fans. For example, at Jenni's final concert in Monterrey, Mexico on December 8, 2012, as in many previous concerts, Jenni caught bras thrown to her on stage and spun them around like a striptease to the rhythm of her songs. This moment during the tequila release party confirmed Latina deviance was at the core

of Jenni's phenomenon, so much so that even after her death, her fans continue to get intoxicated by each other's deviant gender and sexualities.

Sonic Pedagogies of Latina Deviance:
Agitating MeXican Respectability

As a music fan scholar, I am attentive to the ways fans engage in listening to music and the significance music has in their fandom. Fans provide us with a new way to understand the sociality of music. They show us their participation is not passive and their fandom is interlinked with *erotic sentimientos*. I employ the concept of *sonic pedagogies of deviance* to think of the ways Jenni's music is accused of passing on aberrant forms of femininity. First, my use of "sonic pedagogies" versus "music pedagogies" comes from my methodology of listening to fans. I use "sonic" because I look for these exchanges in and outside of music. Using sonic pedagogies allows me to account for the affective and corporeal fan-to-fan teachings that are inspired even when the artist is dead. As Lawrence Grossberg explains, fans give "authority to that which he or she invests in, letting the object of such investments speak for and as him or herself" (59). Sonic pedagogies is thus a concept that centers the fans and what John Fiske has called their "textual, enunciative, and semiotic productivity."

I mobilize the term sonic pedagogies to center the productivity of fans, and the teachings they identify from the music, paying close attention to the communal erotic that is fostered through fandom. In doing so, I rely on Deborah Vargas' argument that "Chicano music forms a sonic imaginary— understood as a musically sounded/sonic field where people come to understand, relate, and connect to notions of belonging, history, place, and cultural sensibilities – of Mexican-

descent peoples and the often associated reference to a notion of borderlands” (2014, X).²⁸ I augment Vargas’ formulation with the term “pedagogies” to reflect the ways fans talk about their consumption of music and the teachings that this process represents for them. The pedagogical component of sonic pedagogies has to do with Jenni’s complex personhood and the fan archives that I analyze. When I talk to fans, they usually say, “she went through it” and “she give us confidence.” Most of these comments center what Gloria Anzaldúa calls *conocimientos* -- alternative ways of knowing that integrate reflections with action to create knowledge that challenges the status quo (Anzaldua, 2000). I read Jenni and her *conocimientos* as mediators who were able to translate “gut knowledges” of single motherhood, abuse, self-love/hate, between her fans. In describing *conocimientos*, Anzaldua states:

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 knowledges. These *conocimientos* challenge official and conventional ways of looking at the world, ways set up by those who benefit from such constructions. (2015, 120)

Framing sonic pedagogies with *conocimientos* is particularly important for this dissertation because it acknowledges cultural corporeal knowledges; pedagogies based on working-class cultural knowledges are not recognized because they do not occur in elitist settings, nor are they based on a written tradition. However, as Anzaldua points out and Jenni affectively embodies in her music and performances, working-class pedagogies insist that learning happens anywhere

²⁸ Vargas theorizes imaginaries from Alicia Schmidt Camacho’s theorization of social imaginaries – “cultural forms are not a reflection of the social... but rather the means by which subjects work through their connections to a larger totality and communicate a sense of relatedness to a particular time, place, and condition.”

music is felt, produced and performed, listened and danced to. It also acknowledges that pedagogies inspired in fan-to-fan interactions also cultivate various forms of Latina/x power. Particularly, I explore transgressive pedagogies that are not supposed to subsist because they are considered aberrant.

I am intentional about calling these conocimientos *sonic pedagogies of deviance* because the nonconformity that Jenni inspired was critiqued precisely for its working-class taste. The girls and women in this subculture are constantly critiqued for their Malandrina “gusto” (taste), which is often viewed as “naco,” chunti, and “backwards.” Because of my class positionality, and my commitment to theorizing working class epistemologies, I am attentive to and theorize the vernacular language that was used, and continues to be used, to offend and contain paisas. *Chunti*, which I call chunteria throughout the dissertation, is one of the terms that signify low-class sensibilities that are associated with hypersexuality, ghettoness, and drunkenness.²⁹

My approach to deviance is influenced by Cathy Cohen, who argues that viewing “deviance as resistance” allows scholars to focus on the “transformative potential found in deviant practice” (i.e. intoxication). Cohen suggests that by focusing on deviant practices,

we are witness to the power of those at the bottom, whose everyday life decisions challenge, or at least counter, the basic normative assumptions of a society intent on protecting structural and social inequalities under the guise of some normal and natural order to life. However, not only do these individuals daily act in opposition to dominant norms, but they also contradict members of Black [and Chicanx/Mexicanx/Latinx] communities who are committed to mirroring perceived respectable behaviors and hierarchal structures” (2004, 33).

²⁹ In his seminal book, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Bourdieu gives us an ethnography of middle-class politics. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu states that the ideology of “cultural taste” is linked to upbringing and education. Through numerous examples, Bourdieu shows that “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.” In *Red Necks, Queers, and Country Music*, Nadie Hubbs, uses a Bourdieu to investigate the class politics of country music. Hubbs shows that there is gender deviance and class rebellion happening with Redneck Women.

Accordingly, I argue that through her music and performances, Jenni transmitted *sonic pedagogies of deviance*— lessons centering “erotic sovereignty” that refuses heteronormative respectable femininity. I consider deviance as a *conocimiento* that is used to live nonnormative lives. Pirujeria is a perfect example of Jenni’s pedagogies of deviance that challenges normative ideas of gender, sexuality, class, and body image.

A number of feminist scholars have indicated that many girls and women in Mexicana and Latina countercultures (i.e. La Chonga; Las Pelonas; Las Pachucas; Las Cholas; Las Riot Girls; La Greasers; Las Rockeras) have also been depicted as deviant. In *The Woman in the Zoot Suit*, for instance, Catherine Ramirez shows how “instead of being celebrated as cool or hip, Chicana speakers of pachuco slang have been branded as putas. In addition, they have been dismissed as cantineras (barflies, drunks) and gang members’ girlfriends” (2009, 93). The *putafication* of pachucas happened because they challenged White Americanness, middle-class comportment and normative gender (ibid, 94)ⁱⁱ. Moreover, Ramirez argues that the linguistic varieties of pachucos – caló, pochismos, and nonstandard American English – were upheld as resistance and cultural affirmation for male speakers but were “mocked, punished, or silenced” for female Mexican American speakers (85). For instance, when analyzing the Sleepy Lagoon trial transcripts, Ramirez highlights how pachucas’ “slight accent” was drawn attention to in court and pachucas’ use of “incorrect grammar and allegedly substandard diction...appeared both unladylike and un-American.” Perales also views the use of these words to be unlady-like. The unladylike association with women using the word *verga* is reminiscent of Gloria Anzaldúa’s concept of “linguistic terrorism.” Anzaldúa lists several labels that have been applied to women who talk too loudly or too much: *hociconas* (big mouth), *repelona* (whiner), and *chismosa* (gossip). Rita Urquijo-Ruiz, for instance, defines the term *hocicona* as “a woman who speaks without restraints when

challenging the exploitation of her people. The hociconas often risks censorship and even physical violence when her words are considered offensive or distasteful in nature” (107).

Uquijio-Ruiz also uses her framework of hociconas, or “wild tongues,” to analyze the figure of the pelada/Pachuca/chola in several plays, literature, music, and movies. As she states, “the hociconas defines patriarchal norms of decency, decorum, and language in order to continue to voice her demands.” (2012, 107) In her analysis of several songs about the pachuca she observes how she was presented as “a tough woman who is cold mannered and scantily clad, unlike Mexican women who are not pachucas” (97). Moreover, her style of dress was often described as a whore or *mujer callejera* because she showed a lot of cleavage. Uquijio-Ruiz also notes that drugs and alcohol were present or alluded to when talking about the pachuca. In some of the songs, pachucas under intoxication appeared to be “desperate and useless” without men. The representation of Pachucas is very similar to the Malandrina, a party girl figure in Jenni’s songs. For instance, in the song “Mujeres Apachucadas,” Lalo Guerrero mentions how pachucas also dyed their hair blond, drank, partied, and did not want to have children. Like the ho, the Pachuca represented the “disappearing” Chicana/Mexicana family. Additionally, their refusal to reproduce “emasculates men, who fear that they will be expected to fulfill this biologically impossible task” (Uquijio-Ruiz, 2012). In short, Pachucas, Chongas and Cholas are often viewed as a threat because “these women take control of their bodies, voices, and actions; and although society labels them as loose, street women, or *Mujeres callejeras*, they refuse to allow men to objectify and control them” (2012, 114).

The Erotics of Jenni’s Fandom: Fan Clubs and Digital Affinities

Another important way in which the erotic connection functions is the open and

fearless underlining of my capacity for joy. In the way my body stretches to music and opens into response, hearkening to its deepest rhythms, so every level upon which I sense also opens to the erotically satisfying experience, whether it is dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, examining an idea.

(Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 57)

I attend so closely to reworking the erotic because the book is to a significant extent also an ethnography of a new praxis of eros – of the thought-action possibilities the renewed concepts opens.”

(Lyndon Gill, 2)

Eros reveals realms of experience (like love/pleasure and hatred/pain) that seem disparate but are in fact linked.

Anne Carson

Jenni’s cultural production allowed fans an opportunity to be in touch with their erotics. This cultural production, often inspired by her fans’ way of life, also formed an erotic energy amongst her fans, both inside and outside the concert space. Although Jenni was the source of this erotic reaction, her fans played a crucial role in creating what I am referring to as the erotics of fandom. In “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,” Afro-Caribbean theorist Lorde pushes us to think of the erotic as not only a euphemism for the sexual but also as “our resource of power” that is situated within a “female and spiritual” plane. Although Jenni clearly spoke about the erotic in relation to the sexual, and even the pornographic, she also understood it in relation to the political and spiritual. The erotic is a “depth of feeling” and once you are in touch with it, you are less willing to accept powerlessness. Lorde describes the practice of music listening as an example of being in touch with your erotics. Although she does not mention the practice of fandom to be part of the erotic, she hints at activities fans engage with during their fandom like dancing, examining ideas, writing poems (in our case, fan letters) and building a bookcase (in Jenni’s

fandom, building the fan club outfit). In fact, one core value of fandom is “sharing deeply any pursuit with another person” (Lorde, 56). This social intimacy can be physical, emotional, psychic or intellectual. For me, “sharing deeply any pursuit with another person” is key to describing the core aspects of fandom and its erotic aspects. The study of fandom has taught me that the process of “sharing deeply” with another person requires a sense of community building and affinity for each other. In a capitalist and neoliberal world where we are often valued by our productivity and not our humanness, we are constantly robbed of our erotics. Chicana/Latina engagement with fandom is a way to reclaim intimacies with each other.

I also use Lyndon Gill’s reconceptualization of the erotic as an “organizing hermeneutic, and conceptual backbone” to analyze Jenni’s fandom. Gill proposes that the erotic must be reconceptualized as a “perspectival trinity that hold together the political-sensual-spiritual at their most abstract – in other words, the erotic describes various formal and informal power hierarchies (the political), sexual as well as nonsexual intimacy (the sensual), and sacred metaphysics (the spiritual) simultaneously” (2018, 10). Gill foregrounds three sensory points: sight and visual; sound and vibration; and touch and sensation as “sensoryscapes.” This engagement with affect is also found in Jillian Hernandez and Anya Wallace’s call for girls’ studies scholars to be attentive to the creation of an “erotics of feminist solidarity,” which they define as a “forging of alliance grounded in radical sexual politics and attentiveness to the *affective* and *corporeal* dimensions of conducting feminist work, even when it is not defined as such” (Feminist Wire, 2014 emphasis added). I draw on the erotics of feminist solidarity because it “recognizes the conditions under which women and girls of color craft their identities and sexualities” and because Hernandez’s and Wallace’s description of how music *sustains* girls and *activates* a creative space where they can express themselves reflects for me the affective and corporeal - women and girl centered -

dimension of how Jenni's sonic pedagogies are crafted, sustained, and embodied by mothers, aunts, cousins, and friends.

“Salud Por El Afloje”:
Pirujeria as a Way of Life

Throughout this dissertation, the reader will find that the term puta/piruja appears in each chapter. The heteromasculinist definition of piruja is often used against women to slut shame them for owning their sexuality. According to *Urban Dictionary*, piruja is “A Mexican slang word for whore or prostitute used by many paisas and tijuanners. 1. A female that sells her body in a sexual way for money or anything worth value. 2. A dirty, filthy, *disgusting* woman who has no self-respect.”³⁰ In Jenni's concerts, her fans flipped the definition and ascribed new meanings to what it meant to be a puta/piruja. In concerts and interviews, Jenni also used these words interchangeably. Sometimes she would identify with puta and disassociate from piruja, and vice versa. Regardless of her stance, her fans also cheered her on when she both embraced and denied that pirujeria was happening in her concerts. In fact, Jenni's playful phrase, “nose es pirujeria, no se es pirujeria” became immortalized through a posthumous CD release from her last concert. This phrase motivates me to ask: *What does the performance of pirujeria (and/or its denial by Jenni) do for her fans?* Outside of the concert space fans also mobilized the discourse of “pirujeria” to create memes, re-post videos on Instagram, and comment on their sexual lives. Because the words puta/piruja appear in numerous sites, I use pirujeria as an entry point and low-theory³¹ framework to conceptualize Latina/x deviant sexuality.

³⁰ Paco Rivera. Piruja entry. Urban Dictionary. March 16, 2005.
<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=piruja>

³¹ As Jack Halberstam has stated, “Low theory might constitute the name for a counterhegemonic form of theorizing the theorization of alternatives within an undisciplined zone of knowledge production (2011, 18).”

The literal translation of *pirujeria* is Latina/x w/ho/re politics. In Chicana literature, the trope of the puta has been discussed through an analysis of La Llorona and La Malinche. In Mexican culture, “the Guadalupe- Malinche duality constitutes the two faces of female sexuality...the mother, pure and virgin, and the whore, voluptuous and a traitor” (Amuchastegui, 2001, 76). Sociologists Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez argues that we need to move away from this “problematic and simplistic” good/bad woman framework, which “promotes cultural stereotypes while neglecting the dialectical sophistication of gender [and] it also obscures the possibility of social and political change” (2005, 78). I argue that analyzing the details of *pirujeria* help us complicate slut politics, thus moving away from the virgin/whore dichotomies.

I place the intellectual grounding of *pirujeria* in what sexuality studies scholar Jillian Hernandez calls “raunch aesthetics,” which she defines as “an aesthetic, performative, and vernacular practice, an explicit mode of sexual expression that transgresses norms of privacy and respectability. Raunch aesthetics celebrate the movements, looks, sensations, and affects of women of color bodies. They aim to incite arousal while often simultaneously generating laughter” (2014, 91-94). Hernandez thus reconceptualizes raunch to become a site of possibility, which Ariel Levy discloses in her book *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*. Because of the drunken aesthetics of Jenni’s music, performance, and fandom, *pirujeria* is also in direct conversation with Levy. I integrate Hernandez’s work to redefine raunch from a Women of Color framework using corporeal pleasures as new starting points to theorize Latinx sexualities. Thus, the project of envisioning *pirujeria* as a liberatory sexual praxis is possible because it is grounded in what Kegels for Hegel (also inspired by Jillian Hernandez) has called “The Interdisciplinary School of Raunch”. Although *raunch* is not a term that easily translates to Mexican vernaculars, I find it very productive because Jenni’s bicultural fans in the United States can identify with it, and

the fact that Jenni played with the term *pirujeria* enables me to theorize it as a transnational raunchy praxis.

To understand *pirujeria*, I read the femme body as a site of knowledge production. The flesh is read as an embodied archive of erotixxx creating “subjugated knowledges” about desire, homosocial intimacy, queer love, and corporal pleasures. I read *Pirujeria* as a queer *conocimiento* because at its core, there is failure, a refusal to live under normative standards. But more than a theoretical grounding of queerness, *pirujeria* is also about queer sexualities. Discursively, Jenni’s music and performances were very heteronormative, because she identified as a heterosexual woman. Although she read herself as straight, her fans, both queer and straight, found numerous ways to fall in love with her, and make love to her, and each other. Jenni’s queer fan base was enormous, and although my focus in this dissertation is on Latina deviant sexuality, the male fan club of *Tequileros*, which consisted of half straight and half queer men, raises a conversation about how *pirujeria* is negotiated and co-constructed in relation to queer sexuality. Oftentimes we write about queer and straight sexualities in isolation from each other but Jenni’s fandom forces me to think about them together. As ethnic studies scholar Omar Padilla has shown, the queer affective labor that Jacob Jebale, Jenni’s makeup artist who also died in the plane crash, provided Jenni queered her aesthetically. I contend that similar queer relationships also occurred with fans, particularly with *Tequileras*, *Tequileros*, and J-units, who shared many moments with each other. Thinking about *pirujeria* as queer *conocimiento* also allows me to think about how the homosociality of fandom allows for spaces of bicuriosity and bisexuality – many fluid desires. In the interludes in this dissertations, you will find moments where I gesture at the question; how does *pirujeria* relate to *puteria*, *joteria*, and other queer Latinx politics more broadly? I do not

answer this question completely, but I am aware of the queer aspects of Jenni's fandom and plan to explore them in future research.

Each dissertation chapter negotiates *pirujeria* differently. Chapter 1 examines Jenni's sonic pedagogies of deviance to narrate the ways Jenni's music is accused of teaching girls and women a Latina/x deviance that destroys solidarity among women and is anti-feminist. This chapter analyzes songs like "Las Malandrinas," "Se Las Voy a Dar a Otro," and "La Socia," songs describing the type of Latina deviance Jenni is accused of glorifying. I also focus on "Madre Soltera" because it is another site in which Latina deviance is portrayed. Chapter 3 analyzes *pirujeria* through Jenni's live performances and the fan ritual of *la deschichadera* (bra-removals). I focus on performances in Mexico because Jenni's concerts were raunchier there. This chapter analyzes the deviant gestures of *pirujeria* and how they become sites of desire. Chapter 4 ends with an analysis of the agitations of *pirujeria*. I analyze the reactions of the media and anti-fans to Jenni's concert at La Arena. I also trace an anti-fan list of twenty characteristics of Jenni's fans and think through the ways the *pirujeria* Jenni created was also a threat because it was intertwined in fatness. I argue *pirujeria* creates a moral panic over Jenni fans *aflojandolas*: losing control, displaying sexual agency, and refusing heteronormative respectable femininity. This panic intensified due to the intergenerational "women-centered" dynamic of this fan culture in concerts. The theorization of *pirujeria* is significant because it helps us think about organic sex-positive theories, pushing us beyond the virgin/whore dichotomy, something under-researched in current Chicana studies scholarship. Moreover, the *pirujeria* Jenni and her fans theorized is mostly embedded in fat sexual politics. The anti-fan discourse I analyze in chapter 4 makes this very

apparent. I unpack fat-phobic comment to show that we need an intersectional framework that is both sex-positive and fat-positive too.³²



Figure 6. Piruja meme, from live performance in Culiacan.

Jenni Vive: *An Epilogue* The Erotics of Homage and Remembering

I made an intentional choice to begin and end this introduction with the tequila release party. I wanted the reader to feel what a tribute event felt like and how Jenni fans are intentional in keeping her alive. The phrase *Jenni Vive* (Jenni is Alive) has been used in numerous tribute events that I have attended over the years. Jenni Vive is the phrase the Rivera family uses to talk about Jenni's immortality. Although Jenni is no longer attending these concerts, the erotics of Jenni

³² Because pirujeria deals directly with racialized sexuality, I am in conversation with theories like sexual-aesthetic excess, raunch aesthetics, suciedad, ho theory, and hociconas to theorize the wet vulgarities of Jenni fans.

Vive tribute events is the intimacy of “deeply feeling” her through each other’s memories. These tribute events were crucial in helping me decide how to tell Jenni’s fan-ship story. In many ways, the dissertation became an extension of the tequila release party. In the epilogue, I end the dissertation with the song “Mariposa de Barrio,” and the process of metamorphosis Jenni and her fans co-created with each other. The interludes of the dissertation focus on the erotics of Jenni Vive, and they capture the fieldwork I did both in Southern California and Mexico. These interludes include fieldwork notes from the Grammy Museum, Iturbide, La Arena Monterey, Long Beach Pride, and several imitators of Jenni. These ethnographic flash notes capture Jenni Vive in its erotic forms. As Christopher Small states, “music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do” (1998, 2). The interludes are offered as small vignettes that show us how fans are still musicking³³ for/with Jenni.

The Exit: Intoxicated and Naked

During the tequila release party, I learned that the fans did not need to have Jenni present to be intoxicated by her; they embodied Jenni through their interactions and responses via chants, removal of clothing, drinking, and cheering. The night of the release party, the fans I spoke with took tequila shots in memory of Jenni. The consumption of *La Gran Señora* tequila celebrated Jenni’s memory, a musician who challenged the gender stereotypes and labels given to women who were perceived as deviant. Tequila and Jenni’s legacy have allowed fans to continue drinking her feminist vision of anti-respectability. The Jenni fans I spoke with during the release party did

³³ Small’s definition of musicking, “to music is take apart, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. (1998, 9).

not care about being perceived as loud; they felt intoxicating feminist pleasures from the dissonant Banda sound, removal of their bras, and drinking while saying yes to *#SaludPorElAfloje* “cheers to sexual looseness!” These actions conspicuously reject the social norms dictating that Latina women should center their energies on caring for others (particularly children and romantic partners) while denying their own desires for embodied pleasures and participation in nightlife culture. In so doing, they embrace the working-class Latina sex-positivity Jenni inspired and agitate those who are invested in maintaining the established gender order. Drunkenness, connections with other fans, public displays of the body, and sonic experiences produce an erotics of fandom for these women, whether men and outside community members recognize it as such.

The intro, in part, was published in 2016 for a special issue on Intoxication. Garcia Hernandez, Yessica. I was the sole investigator and author of this paper.

INTERLUDE ONE

La Gran Señora Exhibit

On Mothers' Day, May 12th, 2013 the Grammy museum opened an exhibition called "Jenni Rivera: *La Gran Senora*" (The Great Woman). According to curator Nwaka Onwusa, the first goal of the exhibit was to create awareness of who Jenni Rivera was. The second objective was to create a place where the fans could remember and grieve Jenni, and the third was to continue her legacy (Personal Communication, July 22, 2013). During 2013-14, Jenni's exhibit was the second largest in the museum and Jenni was the first Mexican American woman to ever hold a solo display since the opening of the Grammy museum at L.A. Live in 2008. The artifacts were collected from family members, business managers, dress designers and Jenni's own fan mail. The space dedicated to the exhibition was located on the third floor of the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles, California. The artifacts were organized in three different glass cases. Four hallways accommodated the flow of visitors from different parts of the museum, but the main entrance to the exhibition was located on the right side of the museum. Each glass case represented different stages of Jenni Rivera's life. The first glass case was entitled *La Diva de la Banda* (The Diva of the Band), and was the biggest glass case of the three, focusing on the artistic life of Jenni Rivera, and allowing the visitors to see the life of the artist. The second case was entitled *Mi Vida Loca* (My Crazy Life), and the visitors were invited to see the personal life of Jenni Rivera, her role as grandmother, mother and daughter. Lastly, the third case was called *Simplemente Jenni* (Simply Jenni), where the visitors ended the exhibition with artifacts describing Jenni Rivera's entrepreneurship skills.



Figure 7. La Gran Señora exhibit entrance sign, photo taken by author. 2014.

The exhibit design was very thorough; every artifact had a detailed description of its significance and cultural importance. Despite the different location of the cases, the three cases appeared as one. The pink and purple color schemes created a theme of unity and transformation. Fuchsia is the main color of the walls between the glass display cases, and the pink and purple colors are the background colors behind each glass case. The timelines and posters in the exhibition also have the same purple and pink pattern. According to Nwaka Onwusa, the colors were chosen because she knew Jenni Rivera liked bright colors. Onwusa also chose the purple and pink pattern because she wanted colors displaying a butterfly theme (Personal communication, July 22, 2013). Many times, in her concerts, and songs Jenni Rivera compared her life to that of a butterfly. Jenni used the analogy to the butterfly to describe her metamorphosis. Jenni would say the caterpillar stage represented her struggles, the difficult times in her life. Yet with hope, faith in God, and love from her fans, she transformed to a butterfly, able to fly free. The butterfly analogy even inspired Jenni to create a song titled “Mariposa de Barrio” which has become an anthem for resiliency and the legacy of Jenni’s memory.

The background colors and pattern chosen for the exhibition evoke a feeling of transformation. Likewise, the artifacts chosen by the curator also resemble this theme. For instance, in the case describing Jenni Rivera’s life, the curator selected a dress designed by Adan Terriquez (fig. 4). Known as the butterfly dress, Jenni Rivera wore this dress in her song video “Basta Ya” a song about a young lady who is mistreated by her partner, and toward the end of the music video the protagonist wants to commit suicide. Jenni Rivera stops her. This dress is a meaningful cultural artifact because it reminds the fans of Jenni Rivera’s personal story and the message she would constantly give to her fans, that women are worth a lot and should not tolerate any type of violence.

Because Jenni Rivera's career was based on the reception of her music and the affective aspects of her performances, two videos, located in between the glass cases, were also part of the exhibit. The first video showed Jenni's performances and the second documented the ways people viewed her career, life, and success. As Leonard Marion has argued, the curation of a popular music exhibition cannot be detached from the "sonic and bodily experience of music and the emotional and social ways in which it is experienced." These videos were a crucial part of the exhibit because they bring the sonic and bodily experience of Jenni's music and live performances (Marion 2007:148). As a visitor, one could hear, see, and re-imagine Jenni Rivera performing. In addition to the videos and artifacts, the visitors could also read detailed timelines of Jenni Rivera's life and musical contributions. The timelines were divided into a triptych and located opposite the glass cases. The music genre timelines included a description of Mariachi, Banda, Norteño music.



Figure 8. Inside La Gran Señora Exhibit. Jenni Rivera Timeline (Top L), Videos (Top R), Hallways and People Recording (Bottom L and R). Photos taken by Sandy Judith Garcia. 2014.

During my visits at the Grammy Museum, I noticed fans going directly to Jenni's exhibit. They constantly interacted with each other, and, inspired by the memories Jenni's belongings evoked, they shared stories about Jenni. According to the curator, Jenni's exhibit met the expected

objectives; in fact, it surpassed them, as it also allowed non-Latinx an opportunity to get to know Jenni Rivera (Personal communication, July 22, 2013). I recruited fans for this project while they were observing the glass cases. When I asked a group of five fans from La Puente, California what brought them to the exhibit, one fan by the name of Fanny responded:

Porque venimos a ver lo que tienen de Jenni Rivera y nos gusta mucho. Este, somos fanaticas de ella desde hace mucho tiempo. Nos gusta mucho su musica. Nos gusta porque ella es una mujer muy clara y realmente ella es una mujer maravillosa, fue una mujer maravillosa para nosotros y una inspiracion. Porque es madre y representa muchas cosas que mucha gente de nosotros hemos pasado.

Because we came to see what they have of Jenni Rivera and we like her a lot. We have been fans of her for a very long time. We like her music a lot. We like her because she is a very clear woman and really she is a wonderful woman. She was a wonderful woman for us and an inspiration. Because she is a mother and represents many things that many of us have experienced.

In her response Fanny identifies Jenni's motherhood as an important factor in her fandom. When I asked the fans their favorite songs, they responded with La Gran Señora. I asked Fanny why she liked the song and she responded:

Esa cancion me gusta mucho por la rason de que inspira mucho a las mujeres que an sido enganadas por hombres y este te da muchos, cuando oyes esa cancion te da muchos animos de ser muchas cosas. Y habeses las palabras que ella dice lo quiere decir uno pero no se puede abeses.

The reason I like that song very much is because that song inspires a lot to women who have been cheated on by men and this gives you many, when you hear that song it cheers you up to be many things. And sometimes the words that she says are the thing we want to say but sometimes we cannot.

What stood out to me in Fanny's response is that she saw Jenni's song as a surrogate voice for her own life experiences.



Figure 9. Fans from La Puente, California. From left to right: Priscila, Cynthia, Fanny, Gladys and Lizeth.
Photo taken by Author. 2014.

Another popular song among this group of fans was “No Llega El Olvido,” a song also included in La Gran Señora album. This song detailed the difficulties which come with forgetting someone who has left us, either by heartbreak or death.

A mi me gusta la cancion de no llega el olvido por la rason de que mucha de las veces uno de mujer no sabe espresar el sentimiento cuando pierdes a un amor y con esta cancion mucha de nosotras las mujeres nos identificamos.

I like the song for the reason that a lot of the times we women do not know how to express the feelings we feel when we lose a loved one and with this song many women like us can identify.

To these fans, the lyrics Jenni sang were very important, because they identified with many of her songs. Some Fan Studies scholars have described the artist’s voice as a factor in fans’ selection process to choose a star. However, the fans at the exhibit do not center her singing voice as the primary factor. Instead, they mentioned her resiliency in life, the *sentimiento* in her music and

performances, and the intimate relationship she formed with fans. Of course, voice is an important aspect of her singing and performances, but fans seem to point us to details of her career



Figure 10. *Botas de Avestrus (Ostrish Boots)* and Jenni's Cassette Collection, in Mi Vida Loca glass case. Photo taken by author. 2014.

Cynthia, another fan from La Puente, participated in the production of Las Malandrinas music video.

Cynthia: O si sali en el video de las Malandrinas yo la llege a conocer en un nightclub y ella camino a nuestra mesa y nos pregunto que estabamos haciendo alli ya le dijimos y nos dijo que estaba tratando de recluir a muchachas para salir en su video y ya le mi numero y me llamo y nos envito a salir en su video. Y lo hicimos parte del video fue firmado en una discoteca en lakewood y la ultima parte fue grabada en la casa del hermano de ella.

Si porque esa cancion es hablando mucho de las muchachas que le gusta party like el desmadre todo eso y si pues a mi me gusta el party y todo eso.

fue una experiencia muy bonita nunca nos esperamos que ella hiciera un concierto tan bonito y tambien era muy triste a la ves lloramos porque por primera ves todas fuimos juntas. Y por primera ves podimos verla en persona.

Most of the fans I spoke with at the exhibit shared how they felt about Jenni's death. Some of them remembered exactly what they were doing, and other remember who told them about her death.

Here are some of their responses:

Fan: I remember it was a Sunday morning and my roommate told me, "have you hear that no encuentran el plane de Jenni, anda Perdida."

Fannie: Cuando supimos que ella habia fallecido para nosotros fue un dolor porque la verdad nosotros nunca esperabamos que se fuera muy temprano y muy rapido. Pero a la ves me siento muy contenta porque llege a verla en persona. *Ahora lo unico que nos queda es su recuerdo y la verdad todos los consejos y todo lo que ella paso en verdad.* Las criticas que todo ella paso por eso, la verdad uno no sabe lo que esta pasando, lo que paso ella realmente, yo no soy nadie para criticarla. Yo me voy por lo que fue ella, fue una persona como ella decia *de huevotes*.

Gladys: Mi reaccion mio fue risas, dolor, tristesa, y mucho llorar porque paso por muchas etapas pero me pongo a pensar todo lo que ella sufrio y no podria yo ponerme en sus zapatos de ella y tolerar y seguir adelante como ella lo hizo. Fue una mujer muy admiradora.

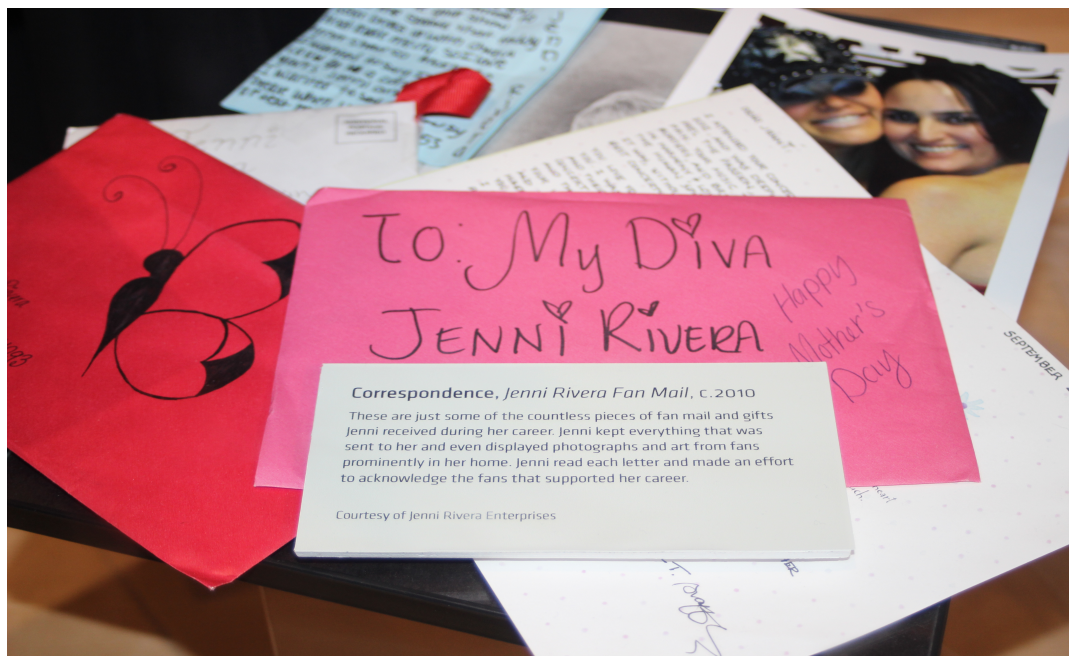


Figure 11. Jenni Rivera fan correspondence. Photo taken by author. 2014.

CHAPTER 1

“NO ES PIRUJERIA, PARA NADA”

Sexual Respectable Ambivalence: Listening to Sonic Pedagogies of Latina Deviance

After a presentation about Jenni’s sexual politics at the University of California, San Diego, an undergraduate student approached me to tell me she knew about Jenni because her mother played her music at home while cleaning, taking showers, and cooking. She confessed to me that listening to Jenni’s music often created disputes between her parents. The student shared that her dad would get agitated about Jenni’s music because he believed they transmitted immoral pedagogies of infidelity and sexual promiscuity. In fact, most of Jenni’s “Male Haters,” a common anti-fan phenomenon, insist Jenni and her music “echa a perder” (destroys) the morality and solidarity between MeXicana women. Jenni and her music instigated fights among couples, and sonic fights about which music could be listened to in the household. Regardless, this student’s mother always found a way to listen to Jenni. As they say, it is easier to “pedir perdon que permiso” (to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission).

This student confessed to me the reason why her dad would get so agitated was because he didn’t think it was appropriate for her to listen to songs like “Querida Socia” (Dear Mistress) because she would also aspire to become a mistress or “La Cuernuda” as Jenni called it.

Quédate con tu traje de novia Yo me quedo con la cama Quédate con tu fiesta de boda Yo con la pasión la llama ¿Como vez si cerramos el trato? Y en la ultima clausula Le aumentamos tantito Nada mas un detalle Tu le lavas la ropa Pero yo se la quito	Stay with your wedding dress I will stay with the bed intimacy Stay with your wedding party I will stay with the passion and flame How do you feel about closing the deal? And in the last clause We increase it a bit Just one more detail You wash his clothes But I take the clothes off
--	--

The logic was if she listened to this song, she would want to be the ho, puta, piruja, la otra – who

undressed her lover and enjoyed sexual intimacy. But the paradox is in the song, *La Socia* is the one who gets the best sex. *If we read this song, without moral expectations, and a compulsory need for monogamy, can socias teach us about sexual agency, desire, and pleasure?*

I left the classroom thinking about what this student had shared with me and reflected on my own engagements with socia politics. I remembered debates about *la socia's* sexual deviance were also found on the internet. In the comments for the music video for *Querida Socia* uploaded by the Jenni Rivera official page to YouTube, there is an archive of agitated discourse by both men and women who believe songs from the point of view of mistresses should not be sung by, listened to and supported by fans. The fans and women who enjoy this song are automatically hailed as the “putas/pirujas” (sluts/whores) and devalued for their sexual assertiveness and their unapologetic sensuality. As a sex-positive single mother, Jenni was fully aware of these virgin/whore dichotomies and she used her music and performances to transgress them. In fact, the labeling of Latina women as sluts and whores extends beyond “La Socia.” They reappear in negotiations of other songs and performances too. So much that Jenni ended her career, theorizing the word *pirujeria* – the condition of being a ho – to celebrate the raunchy slutty moments her fans would enact during her live performances. Sometimes this celebration came in the form of a disavowal, but Jenni’s playful disidentification reinforced her own investment in *pirujeria*, as a sex-positive Latina filosofia celebrating deviance as resistance and sexual liberation.

An example of the recognition of *pirujeria* by disavowal happened during Jenni’s last concert at La Arena de Monterrey, in Mexico on December 8, 2012. While Jenni was concluding “Chuperamigos,” a song using sexual explicitness to launch critiques about “proper” and “respectable” femininity while heartbroken and intoxicated, she caught a bra thrown to her on

stage. The bra was thrown to Jenni after she yelled, “boracha y encuerada, que bonita vida me cai, y arriva las viejas borrachas!” (intoxicated and naked, what a beautiful life, cheers to my drunken ladies). It is after this call for nudity when Jenni caught the red bra, and the first thing she does is search for the size tag to find out its size. As she was holding the size tag, with an exaggerated, tongue-in-cheek manner Jenni stated “ya empesaron a deschicharse eh, yo les dije que se deschicharan?” (y’all started to undo your bra’s already? Did I tell you to remove your bras?). The fans responded with a loud yell, and Jenni continued by saying, “Luego a mi es la que la queman en los medios” (I am the one who will be roasted by the media by this) and asks her fans if they are hot, “tienen calor?” In this exchange, Jenni used sarcastic language to interact with fans; she drew upon coded language aiming to temper the *atrevida* actions of her fans in order to deflect the gender policing and the media bashing she had regularly been subject to. Two years earlier, during Jenni’s first concert at La Arena, the media and the *Vigilancia de Monterrey* attacked Jenni for instigating *la deschichadera* and accused her of immoral activity. Despite her previous encounter with *la Deschichadera* at La Arena, Jenni’s recognition of *la Deschichadera* demonstrated she was enjoying, sanctioning, and encouraging her fans’ public undressing.

As she looks at the size of the bra again Jenni tells her fans: “esta que le aprietaba el brasiel, por eso se lo quito, no es pirujeria, no es pirujeria, para nada, es tamaño 40C, quivo” (this person whose bra fit her tight, it is not sluttiness, not sluttiness, at all, is size 40 C), to clarify that the act of bra removal was not an expression of *pirujeria* “sluttiness”, but to suggest instead these women take their bras off because of how hot it is and the tightness and discomfort of bras. The playful disavowal of *pirujeria* was Jenni’s way to negotiate what L.H Stallings calls “sexual pacifism,” a logic centering the liberation of Black women through discourses of reproduction, because it is valued by the state. In the process, sexual pacifism creates an asexual and desexualizing culture

where motherhood and womanhood cannot be in tuned again (2015, 61)³⁴. L.H Stallings uses the term sexual pacificism to refer to the way Black women negotiate notions of respectability at the expense of asexuality. I find Stallings’s term very productive in the case of understanding Latina/x sexual deviance, because Jenni and her fans constantly had to negotiate and defend their investment in sex-positive politics. After investigating whose red bra was offered to her, Jenni spun it around like a striptease to the rhythm of the song and her impromptu commentary communicated to her fans *la deschichadera* was a fan detail of *pirujeria* and a sex-positive sensorium, which she often had to disavow because of the consequences that came with unapologetically admitting to it. Regardless of the disavowal, her concerts were erotic spaces where fans, woman, mothers, and girls, could safely embrace the “*pirujas*” in them. Fans turned the social order around and did not care if they embodied the disreputable femininity of *pirujeria*³⁵.



Figure 12. *La Deschichadera* at La Arena Mty, December 8, 2012, courtesy of JR YouTube Chanel.

³⁴ Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures. University of Illinois Press. 2015.

³⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin. *Rabelais and His World*. Indiana U Press. Bloomington. 1984.

I start this chapter with references of *pirujeria* vis-à-vis listening to “La Socia,” fans engagement with *la deschichadera*, the song “Chuperamigos”, because these erotixxx sites provide us with different examples of Latina sexual deviance. These different sites show us Latina women find creative ways to challenge sexual pacifism and create alternative sexual cultures through what Stallings calls “mama’s porn...not literally the pornography of our mothers but ... a maternal profane imaginary and lineage, that informs cultural object of propaganda in Black women’s sexual rebellion” (2015, 60). The bra for instance, is a literal refusal of the reductive use of breasts merely for reproduction. “La Socia” also challenges structures of reproduction by enjoying sex for the act of pleasure. These are the traces of *pirujeria*, and its deviance in reclaiming the figure of the slut/whore as a site that teaches us how to decolonize sexuality through engagements of rebellion. Listening to these sexual politics inspires me to ask: *how does listening to Jenni’s music lead to these orgiastic moments of pirujeria in the concert space?* It appears listening to Jenni’s music becomes a foreplay to *pirujeria*. I argue that for her fans to feel the “wild safety” which led them to expose their bodies in public, Jenni had to first create a *paisa* form of *atrevidaness* (*risqué*) which encouraged girls and women to embrace their bodies, pleasures, sensualities, and desires.³⁶ By returning to the beginning of Jenni’s career, I pay attention to how her music provided ways to refuse the domestic space, challenge masculine notions of infidelity, and created sensualities embraced through their night outings at clubs. The radical aspect of *pirujeria* was that they not exclude girls nor mothers from its pleasures. For Jenni and her fans, the rebellion of gender and sexual norms was always an intergenerational conversation.

The way fans speak about Jenni’s music allows me to argue that *pirujeria* was built a song at a time and was possible because her music transmitted *sonic pedagogies of deviance*— lessons

³⁶ For more on Wild Safety see pages 75-76 in *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Futures* by L.H. Stallings.

that center “erotic sovereignty” and a refusal of heteronormative respectable femininity. Similar to Cathy Cohen’s focus on marginal figures like punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens – to understand deviance as resistance – fans have identified several marginal tropes in Jenni’s music which destabilize normative categories of womanhood, sexual identity, and body politics for fat working-class MeXicana women and girls. These include – 1) *La Socia*, the working-class Latina who threatens the nuclear family with her dangerous sensualities; 3) *La Que Las Va Dar (She who will give them away)*, the married or coupled woman who is tired of being cheated on and decides to cheat too; and 2) *The Malandrina*, the Chicana party girl viewed as promiscuous, hypersexual and deviant for drinking. I show how these fans debate with each other about monogamy, marriage and infidelity, and challenge the sexual pacifists’ ideologies formed against *socia* politics. Inspired by fans who identify with being *socias* (mistresses), I join L.H Stallings in thinking about how nonmonogamy can “destroy Western humanist concepts of love” (2015, 122).

The power of these pedagogies of deviance is that fans understand “sexuality as a site of memory, as opposed to [just] discourse” (Stallings, 156); where women’s desires are felt in various ecstatic ways. The memories of being a freaky fan are not just left in the walls of nightclubs, bedrooms, and computer screens, instead these memories retain the corporeal past, relishes the fleshy present, and fantasizes about the raunchy future. All of these pedagogies are formed through the touch of music in the ears of fans. Stalling contends that

Imagination as bound to memory holds information vital to the shifting research and study of sex work and sexual cultures. Having already asserted the importance of seeing sexuality as an object of imagination, I subsequently propose that imagination as bound up with memory further advances sexuality beyond objective knowledge as power. The nonreproductive uses of sexuality, sexual expression, that would be seen as immoral or hypersexual are instances of sexuality trying to get back to where it was – a space where human coupling is not at the center of sex and intimacy (151).

In a project of music fandom, seeing sexuality as an object of imagination allows us to understand music “as an orgy of senses” which enters fans’ bodies to liberate their spirit, soul, and flesh. This process of music listening is felt both inside and outside of language.³⁷ Fred Moten and Stefano Harney theorize a feeling of music through their theorization of “hapticality,” which they describe as “the capacity to feel through others, for others to feel through you, for you to feel them feeling you” (98). Moten and Harney arrive at this definition by centering the work of several musicians like Black Shadow and David Rudder. In theorizing hapticality, Moten and Harney’s practice their own erotics of fandom and think of the sonic pedagogies these artists provide for them. I follow them by thinking of how fans feel Jenni’s music, and how through these different sites of memory, these Latinas create new possibilities for Latina sexuality where “human coupling is not [always] at the center of sex and intimacy” (151).

It is for these reasons, Stallings application of neutral sexuality seduces me, because it thinks of sexuality as a site of memory where art becomes sex and sex becomes art. This model allows us to understand fans as “things that feel” when they listen to their favorite artists. As Stalling states when referring to a character in a play who is a seamstress, sometimes there may not be words to describe the affective connection your labor creates through clothing, but the “imagination’s approach [to] fabric, style and senses proves that making someone feel is an art whose form does not necessarily rely on using words” (156). In this project, I find this model of thinking of sexuality through memory, touch, and feeling very productive for a project about music fandom, because in my case studies, I analyze an artist who created music for fans through her labor. Many times the way fans make sense of the music does not rely on using words. Most

³⁷ “Nottage emphasis on the blues genre’s sonic aesthetic rather than lyrical content confirms that what is beautiful, proper, or civilized is conveyed outside of language.” (157).

importantly, this model allows me to think of the reception of Jenni's music as a process of "promoting neutral sexuality." Stalling describes neutral sexuality by giving an example of the relationship the seamstress had with one of her clients.

Though Esther never offers physical sexual services like Mayme, the lingerie and lingerie fitting provides neutral sexuality that has emancipated Mrs. Van Buren and herself from what Perniola sees as a vitalist premise of sex, or orgasmomania, "an instrumental conception of sexual excitement that naturally considers it directed toward the attainment of an orgasm." Esther makes Mrs. Van Buren a thing that feels during the fitting...As a result of the time that they have spent together as customer and worker, Mrs. Van Buren attempts to kiss Esther and explain it as a gesture of friendship...Esther's performance, her art as sex, was a form of shared ecstasy aesthetically created: even if the feeling it invoked in Mrs. Van Buren were not intimacy, they were feeling elicited by an ecstatic experience between Esther, the sewing machine, and the bedroom. Nottage, unlike Perniola, refuses to rank neutral sexuality over profitable sexuality where orgasm seems to matter most. She recognizes the use value of both. (160)

In this scenario both women create sexual possibilities for each other through ecstatic experiences. In other words, both women are intoxicated by each other's touch, care, and art form. There are no physical sexual exchanges, but their shared company produce orgasmic affects. This is the case for Jenni and her fans, particularly when it comes to the practice of listening to her music. In the act of listening to Jenni's music, there is no physical sexual exchange between Jenni and her fans, but in "seeing sexuality as an object of imagination" the act of listening foreplays many orgasmic encounters. In the same way, listening to the details of fans aroused my own sacred senses. Thus, I read the act of listening to Jenni's music as a process of caressing a neutral sexuality. Moreover, viewing sexuality as a site of memory is particularly important because Jenni has departed us. Stallings engages in the practice of thinking of her ancestors and the way they, too, insist on a decolonial sexual praxis affecting the living and afterliving. With this in mind, I hope Jenni, wherever she is, partying, is able to continue la pirujeria.

In the first section of this chapter, I locate the *piruja* in literature and focus on what has been said about their sexual deviancy. I follow this conversation by situating the *piruja* in the politics of Banda music. I demonstrate gender and sexual politics for women and girls in Banda nightclub spaces are embedded in the heteromasculinist vernaculars people use to describe the participants in this nightlife: *paisas* and *chunties*. For instance, the *Urban Dictionary* definition for both words describe the femme participants in this subculture as *pirujas*, sluts. I use *Urban Dictionary* because it provides the popular usages of those words. To triangulate the *Urban Dictionary* entries, I incorporate interviews with fans describing their own negotiations with the gender and sexual politics embedded in the Banda scene. Their interviews help us understand the gender politics Jenni was responding to when she sang and the radical ways that her fans also challenged those gender expectations. I follow this section with a fan chatroom conversation attacking Jenni for her song “La Socia.” This section gives us an insight into the way anti-fans accused Jenni of transmitting sonic pedagogies of deviance. The chatroom conversation on *chalino.com* also reference songs like “Las Malandrinas,” “Madre Soltera,” and “Se Las Voy A Dar A Otro,” which are all songs refusing domestic life. The gender and sexual politics in these songs help us see how Jenni and her fans collectively resignified *pirujeria*, an often-stigmatized sexuality, to a celebrated praxis of sexuality allowing them to prioritize their own erotixxxs and pleasures.

Locating La Piruja in Literature: Slut Politics

In a study of the significance and health of sexuality among Mexican migrants, Sandra, a migrant from Michoacán, used the word *piruja* when the conversation of using a condom came up with her monogamous partner. Sandra said, “No soy Piruja para que uses condones conmigo; los condones úsalos con las pirujas con las que te metes.” (Aqui y En El Otro Lado, 43). The

researchers found condoms connoted a lack of trust among partners. In Sandra's case she felt her partner did not trust her. Based on her response, a *piruja* is someone who sleeps around freely and has condoms at her disposal. Sandra's *disassociation* from a *piruja* gives her a form of respectability, because unlike the *piruja*, it is implied that she only sleeps with one person. In tracing the meaning of the term *piruja*, I found Mexican linguist Luis Fernando Lara associated the term *puta*/*piruja* to pachuco culture. Lara explains that around 75-69% percent of the pachuco vernacular derives from popular Mexican Spanish. In this list of terms, we find the words *paisa* "paisano" and *piruja* for "puta." In this list, he does not define the term, but he associates it as a substitute for the term *puta*. However, other scholars trace the word *piruja* to "calo Gitano" in Germania. Lesly Ivett Garcia Jimenez explains,

Otro vocablo similar está registrado por el CO, "pira" como 'piruja' del latín *pirula*, la cual, por cierto, sólo tiene el significado de "prostituta" en México puesto que así lo registra el DRAE en una de sus acepciones, en El Salvador como 'mujer que no cumple con sus deberes' y finalmente como 'mujer joven, libre y desenvuelta'. "Piruja" posiblemente tenga relación con el término "TALONERA" de germanía que era la prostituta que andaba por las calles aludiendo al talón por una metonimia con "andar".

Through my exploration of this term in the literature, I found that the term *piruja* has a strong stigmatization (Gomez-San Luis and Almanza Avedaño 2013) and in popular culture the term *puta*, like *slut*, or *putear*, like *sluttiness*, is more popular as a reclaimed word.

Afro-Latina porn actress Vanessa Del Rio explains how the word "slut" often receives a bad reputation from society, but she likes "the word slut" because it allows women to "embrace their sexuality and refuse to be sexually controlled." (28). In her interview, she goes on to talk about other words also meaning sexual looseness, like "whore, slut [and] prostitute" she states that she has been "all these." Her *testimonio* guides me to think about the ways that these words stand

to mean different deviant categories in different moments.³⁸ Del Rio is critical about this distinction and raises important questions for scholars interested in the trope of the Latina slut. She asks,

Who are you drawing the line for? And Why? Do you actually believe it's not acceptable [to be a whore] or are you just saying that because that's what you think people want to hear you say? Are you trying to justify it to yourself? Or to society? For picking up a man in a bar and going home and fucking him for free – honey, you want to call me a slut for that? Then fine, call me a slut. And what happens if you're with an ogre, and you get excited? But he's also about to pay you \$500? You're there in this room with him...and all of a sudden your pussy gets wet! What do you call yourself then? If you want to call me a whore, then I'm a whore, OK? (37).

As Del Rio states, the difference between these words is the exchange of money for sex. With the words *puta*, *piruja*, and prostitute, there are similar politics to the definitions of these words but also their usage. Throughout Jenni's music and performances, she has played with the tropes of the *puta*, *piruja*, and more broadly *la atrevida*: the woman who is willing to pleasure herself.

On July, 10, 2011 *Jose Luis Sin Censura* televised "Jenni Rivera En Exclusiva." In this interview, Jenni spoke both about her life as a singer and her life as *una mujer*. She often referred to herself as an "imperfect woman," who made so many mistakes, but who learned from them. She described her stage personality, *La Diva de La Banda*, as a "picara, jugetona," someone who enjoyed making her audience laugh. As a *mujer*, y "las experiencias en el amor" (her love life experiences) she was known to be horrible at that task. In the interview, Jose Luis sin Censura asks

³⁸ The woman interviewing Del Rio asks her to think about which of these tropes is better and she responds, "I don't even know if I can distinguish" however she shares the phrase that she heard Ginger Lyn say on TV, "always a slut, and never a whore." This phrase by Lynn, alike Jenni's interview, implies that there are differences between these tropes and that some words have a stronger connotation over others.

Jenni about her love life. He tells her people have pinpointed every person she has been with and it appears “love” is not her biggest strength. Jenni responds,

no es que no me a ido tan bien, lo que pasa es que, eh seleccionado mal, pero el amor alli esta, aiy muchos buenos hombres, y me encantan los hombres, que Buenos estan... y la verdad, aparte ahorita tengo un pege perro, tengo un pege

It is not that love is not my biggest strength, what has happened is that I do not know how to select them, the love is there, there are many good men, and I love men, they are so good looking, the truth is that right now, I have good “pege”, I have a lot of “pege”

Jenni starts laughing and continues by saying,

“la neta la verda es que esta canion la competencia, hay muchas viejas pirujitas, y uno tiene que complacer al hombre, oh no?” (the truth is that the competition is tough, there are a lot of pirujas out there and we have to know how to please.

Jose Luis responds to her by saying, “dicen que la mujer en la cama tienen que comportarse de una manera especial para tenerlo alli” Jenni, in turn, responds, “uno sinceramente, yo digo, uno tiene que ser *en la calle una dama, y una puta en la cama.*” The audience starts clapping and Jose Luis responds “mira pusistes a todos felizes” (look you have made everyone happy). In this interview, Jenni refers to both the words *piruja* and *puta*, and she places them as opposites to each other, or at least she uses the term “puta,” as the identity that one should adopt and *Piruja* becomes the person that comes to steal your partner if you do not act like a *puta*. The way Jenni played with these two tropes of the *puta* and *piruja* can be traced to the gender and sexual politics of women in banda music. In the next section, I go *Urban Dictionary* to analyze how *piruja* is used to describe women in the Banda scene. By understanding the gender and sexual politics of Banda, we can see how *pirujeria* is also imbricated in working-class deviant politics.

Chunti Music: Class, Gender, and Sexual Politics in Banda Music

Locating Jenni's sonic pedagogies of deviance requires me to situate her within the gendered, classed, and sexual politics in Banda culture and narrate how Jenni, as la Diva de la Banda, constantly disrupted gender and sexual norms both onstage and offstage. During my interviews with fans, they mentioned how they negotiated class-based associations for listening to Banda music. There are two words popularly used to describe the audience of Banda: *paisa* and *chunties*. "Paisa" is often used as a self-reclaimed word claimed by listeners proud of Mexicanidad, while "chunti" has a derogatory feel to it because it is often used to disassociate from Banda culture. When I asked Sofia, a Jenni fan from South Central and member of Las Tequileras fan club, about her experience as a first-generation Chicana-Californiana, she responded:

It was a little different from the rest of other girls or other kids for that matter. I clearly remember how when I was about 10 years old, we had the Walkman. We had the Walkman where we put the cassette and stuff and they had a little radio. Everybody listened to Power 106 everybody listened to hip hop and rap. Not to say anything bad because I liked it too, but I liked Banda Arcangel R15, and I liked Banda Machos. I liked Los Temerarios. I liked something else and when I would tell friends or people in class that you know. it was a big. When I was growing up there was La Quebradita back in the 90s and it was like laughed at, "Ewww you like that [music] you're Chunti". You know we would get all of that you know. Or at least I would because I wasn't very into Power 106, I remember that. That was everybody's station Power 106. That wasn't my station. I liked to listen to La X back in the day. You know La X, 'cause that was the one that had la quebraditas and I always felt that I was a little different from the rest of my peers who liked other stuff you know. I liked something different you know because that's how I was raised and that's how I grew up. I remember being six years old and knowing all the songs to Juan Gabriel you know because that's what I listen to and that's what I liked.

In our conversation, Sofia uses the word *chunti* to describe what other students called her because of her taste in music. *Chunti* was not a word she personally identified with; other people who were not participants of this subculture used it to describe her. In a follow-up question about what *Chunti* meant, she responded:

I think Chunti was a very offensive word to somebody who just recently came from another country and was not assimilated to the kid American style. Because you are just a recently arrived immigrant. You weren't dressing like us because back in the days our pants needed to sag to the point where they needed to be kind of rubbed off because they were rubbing the floor. And if your pants were a little bit above that. Oh my gosh you're Chunti. You have high water pants. Oh my God, look at her chunti shirt. Back then it was Chunti to be, 'eww you're Mexican'. It was an offensive word.

In this explanation, Sofia shows a perfect example of how the term chunti was used by people who did not participate in the Banda music subculture. Chunti became the word used to critique Mexicans who refused to culturally assimilate to white American culture. Even though Sofia was born and raised in South Central, as a first-generation Chicana-Californiana, her preference for Mexican music marked her as chunti.

According to *Urban Dictionary*, a *chunti* is someone who exhibits fashion, music, vernacular, and other customs resembling those from Mexico. The fashion classifying an individual as chunti consists of cowboy hats and boots (made of leather or alligator), tight jeans, and big belt buckles. The music associated with chuntiness is banda sinaloense, corridos, and rancheras. The themes of the songs often include “drunkenness”, “drinking to get rid of sadness,” “masculinity,” “la migra” and songs about Mexico as homeland. In an example used to explain how chunti is used as an adjective, the user writes,

Someone who does not dress *chunti* is still considered *chunti* if:

1. They bump “banda” in their car with their windows rolled down
2. They go to chunti clubs (i.e. Potreritos, La Mirage, and El Club, The Premier)
3. They speak (beaner) slang

The hashtags associated with this entry are #paisa #tacky #chunty #ghetto #chunti. The three categories in this example transport us to southern California where these nightclubs are located. The geographical specificity of these clubs tells us that the barrio in Southern California is an

important site of chunteria. This spatial specificity of *chunteria* reminds me of Tomas Ybarra-Frausto's description of the barrio as a place that shapes and articulates the "the community's sense of itself, the aesthetic display projecting a sort of visual biculturalism." Ybarra-Frausto defines rasquachismo as Chicana sensibility of *attitude* or *taste* that does not care about *el que diran*. One aspect of rasquachismo is that it "makes-do" – as an "underdog perspective - a view from los de abajo" – rasquachismo is "an attitude rooted in resourcefulness and adaptability yet mindful of stance and style". Here, however, with chunteria, along with visual biculturalism, we also have sonic biculturalism, where music, the sonicscapes of the nightclub life, and everyday vernacular are the characteristics that associate with this low-class sensibility (1989). Pierre Bourdieu also acknowledges the class associations music signifies. He states, "nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than taste in music" (18). Ybarra-Frausto also states an important aspect of rasquachismo is its "Mexican vernacular traditions," particularly from those involved in bicultural lived experiences; thus, in this context, "piruja" and "pirujeria" (Jenni's fans re-envisioning) are also vernaculars used to describe paiza girls who express their sexuality unapologetically. In relation to the visual aspects of rasquachismo, Ybarra-Frausto acknowledges:

Those newly anointed into the emerging Chicano middle-class are the first to deny connection with anything remotely rasquache. Hints of such association too readily evoke the rough and tumble, slapdash vitality of barrio lifestyles recently left behind in the quest for social mobility (5).

I read this observation by Ybarra-Frausto as a distinction in the way Bourdieu describes them in *Distinctions*. These intraracial class politics are the dynamics that interest me here and, in this

chapter, I center the sexualized politics associated with women participating in this “chunti” music scene.³⁹

The term that Sofia used to identify herself was “paisa,” a popular term used to describe people who listen to “corridos.” The urban dictionary definition of this term describes a paisa as:

A Mexican living in the United States that wears cowboy hats, belts and Boots made of Ostrich skin. Also, Rayon shirts, unbuttoned at the top so that the chest (usually hairy) can be exposed to show off a cheap gold chain adorned with a symbol of the Virgin de Guadalupe. This person will speak very little English; preferring to speak in Spanish and use the phrase, *mamasita* or *mija* when trying to attract the attention of a *piruja* or hoodrat⁴⁰

In the discursive definition of paisa, women and girls are perceived as *pirujas*, and the sexist modes in which Latinas are policed in this music culture and others, and creates an opportunity for Jenni and her fans to redefine the definition of *piruja*, into what she described as *pirujeria*.

Gustavo Arellano uses the term “chunti” and “chuntaro” to describe the listeners of Mexican music (2007, 125). A white person asks him whether other Mexicans in Mexico or children of Mexican in the United States resent their parents for the music they listen to. The question is asked because she resents country music and shares she cannot stand when her family plays it. In this example, the working-class association with country music is paralleled with Mexican music. At the end of her question, the white woman continues to ask, “Are there Mexicans

³⁹ In academic discourse, *rasquachismo* is celebrated as a working-class aesthetic that one uses to survive and, in this process, we have grouped different subcultures and their working-class politics into one *rasquache* form. Ybarra-Frausto identified different forms of *rasquachismo*. For instance, towards the end of his essay he includes a list which ranks *rasquachismo* in three categories: a random list, as *medio* (low) *rasquache*, and *muy* (high) *rasquache*. This list raises the question of what are the class politics when something is beyond *muy rasquache*? Does it still get labeled *rasquache* or it is identified as something else? If it is *muy-muy rasquache* would some working-class folks like middle class deny their connection to it? I argue that *Chunteria* is an example of a sensibility that is considered *muy-muy-muy rasquache* and is viewed as a taste that even other working-class Chicanx folks or middle-class Mexicanx do not want to be associated it with.

⁴⁰ Paco Rivera. Paisa entry. Urban Dictionary. March 16, 2005.
<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Paisa>

who think the music similarly reflects stereotypes of being rural, poor, and less educated?”

Arellano responds:

The only Mexicans who hate Mexican music are *pochos* ashamed by Mexican music’s peasant roots. Like country music, Mexican regional is the true music of a silent majority, because it reflects their day-to-day lives – violence, heartache, and poverty. The identification with this *chuntaro* music is so pervasive that the children of these immigrants – kids with no real ties to Mexico – end up becoming major Mexican recording stars in their own right (2007, 125).

The example he gives is the Rivera family. Arellano talks about the patriarch, Don Pedro Rivera, who became famous after the king of corridos, Chalino Sanchez, died and later recorded his own song to popularize Mexican music among his own generation. Arellano clarified “the most important figure in Mexican popular music might well be Lupillo’s sister, Jenni Rivera, whose songs of empowered femininity coupled with a great voice makes her a Madonna for the *chuntaro* set” (2007, 125). Arellano does not define what *chuntaro* means, but uses the words “chuntaro set” to refer to Jenni’s listeners, her fans, and women audiences of Mexican regional music more broadly. The loaded significance of words like “paisa,” “chunti” and “piruja” explains why there is a respectable ambivalence behind Jenni’s own performance of *pirujeria*, and why her fans are so crucial in helping her build this radical form of sex-positive fandom. This respectable ambivalence is complicated and in the next section, I show several conversations that took place in Chalino.com. I decided to focus on these exchanges because they demonstrate how Jenni fans make sense of these debates signaling a formation of *pirujeria*.

Sexual Respectable Ambivalence: The Chalino.com Debate

In 2001, Jenni Rivera was the only woman with a foro (forum) on Chalino.com. During this year, Jenni released the albums “Dejate Amar” and “Se Las Voy A Dar A Otro.” This year was crucial for Jenni because by this point her hit, “Las Malandrinas,” had made her popular

among many girls and women in Southern California. But this popularity came with a lot of critique, from both women and men because of the songs “Querida Socia” and “Se Las Voy a Dar a Otro”. In various Chalino.com threads, women and men disagreed on whether Jenni should be singing songs that “glorified” being “la otra” (the mistress).⁴¹

On April 9, 2002, a femme identified chatter posted a thread titled, “La Fat Chacalosa.” In this post, “4126” expresses how much she hates Jenni because of her self-centered personality and her arrogant money-hungry attitude. She also goes on to say

Gorda, no wonder te dejo tu ex-marido porque no te aguanto en la cama... Verdad Querida Socia debes de cuidar a tu nuevo maridito porque te lo vajo real quick. See Ya Waaaannaa be negra w/your braids.

Fatty, no wonder your ex-husband left you, he could not handle your weight anymore in bed, right Querida Socia, you should take care of your new husband because I can steal him real quick and you want to be Black with your braids.

Two users respond to the thread telling 4126 her post was “cold” and that “talking about her weight is a low blow.” The next day Jenni responded to the post to defend herself. Jenni stated, “mija, obviously you are talking out your butt because everything you say is wrong.” In this *contestacion* (response), Jenni made sure to clarify several things: First, her husband did not leave her and if she knew the horrible story behind the separation, she would not be talking. But regardless if Jenni wanted him back, he would be back without a doubt. Second, in reference to the comment about Jenni wanting to be Black, Jenni admitted that she is right, but she clarified she does not want to be Black but she loves Black style. The comment about the “trecitas” had to do with Jenni’s cornrows and her decision to use them in CD and DVD covers. As I will analyze more in Chapter

⁴¹ The premise behind these messages was that music had a pedagogical component, and if the listener is not smart enough to make “good choices” they would be seduced by the deviance in the music. These paisa fans were engaging in debates that academics were having about music, listening, and their reception. In the late 90s and early 2000s, scholars like Angela Davis, Josh Kun, Curtis Marez, and Frances Aparicio were challenging debates about “easy listening” they argued along with Simon Frith.

2, Jenni's assimilation into American culture took place through Black popular culture. Third, in response to the comment about her ex-husband not being able to handle her weight in bed, Jenni clarified she is "very good in bed" and her sexual skills and weight were not the issue. In fact, she is so good in bed that she should have been a *prosti* (sex worker) instead because she would have made "bank" with her skills, as every man that she has been with always wanted to come back. Finally, she also clarified that she would never think she is better than anyone because she had more money. She knows at it felt like to not have a car, pay rent with welfare, buy food with food stamps, and she acknowledged that any day God can decide to take everything away from her.

Although Jenni defends herself with rawness and honesty, she was scolded by other users for responding to 4126, because some of them believed she should not be fighting with fans or haters. One user called her unprofessional for sharing too much information about her sexual life. This male-identified user was upset that Jenni had referenced that she had been with more than one man. This interaction about Jenni's sexual history refers to the politics of *pirujeria*. However, Jenni immediately responds to him, stating:

You are saying that as a professional woman I should not say that I have been with this or that but that is not being professional, that is being a hypocrite. I am a human being who speaks her truth. I have the same experiences of any other women. What do you want me to say? That at my age, I have only been with one man? Yeah right, the truth is that there are few women, particularly single, who can say that have only been with one man. I have had passionate experiences like any other woman. Like any other woman, I love that. I am not proud of being with more men but that is my life. I choose it this way. Anyway, that has nothing to do with professionalism. The world want real artists with feelings, emotions. Beyond an artist, I am a woman with character.

Even in Jenni's response, we can hear how she shamed herself when she acknowledged having numerous sexual partners is not something of which she was proud. Yet immediately, she said she decided to live that life. In this quick reclaiming, Jenni flipped the negative association with the

term *piruja* and instead proudly admitted, that like other women, she loves sex. In this moment, we see Jenni engage in a form of respectable ambivalence, Jenni's loyal fan, LaFemmeLatina, encouraged Jenni's response and told her, "you go girl, give them a piece of your mind. Who is this person that come into this foro to talk sh** about you. When I read it some days ago, I did not respond because I thought that this person was better off being ignored. But I am glad that you were able to come in and defend yourself."

In addition to the slut shaming, this conversation turned to a debate as to whether the music "rubbed off on the listeners" and whose responsibility it was to raise children and provide them with "positive" (respectable) pedagogies. A user wrote,

"True, it is ultimately a parent's responsibility to raise their kids, but when an artist's prides herself or himself in helping out the community, how much are they really helping by glorifying substance abuse, and infidelity? Aren't there other issues that could be addressed, like having goals in life, believing in yourself and following your dreams, instead of a bottle?"

Artists have the right to express themselves in whatever manner they wish. They can sing about whatever topics they want and make as much money as their pockets can hold, and spend it on everything that comes to mind. The problem arises when artists claim to care about the well-being of their fans and community. They show they care by promoting drug use, alcoholism and marital instability leading to family breakups. That's one hell of a way to say I care about your future."

A Jenni fan joined in and defended Jenni and herself by describing herself as "a mature Jenny fan, who realize that songs are just that, songs" but then expresses other girls cannot do that, and they take songs literally, stating,

no one is going to come here and tell me that doesn't happen, because I've seen it. Why is everyone bragging about being a Malandrina and Chacalosa and Socias etc? Is that something good? Example.....La Socia is just a song, right I agree, and it talks about something that is out there. I'm not blaming Jenny for all the infidelity that's going on, but I do blame her for glorifying it. What's so great about being "la otra"? What pride do you take in being "la otra"? Okay most of you will say, that it proves we women can do it to, if guys are dogs, then we can be just as bad as they are (I've heard that before). Okay true, but who are you really hurting in that

position. The guy??? yeah right, he has his wife and his bit*ch and to top it off their fighting for him, what more does he want? So don't you see that the only harm you are doing is to another women? Not the man. The man could care less. By bragging about how you too can drink as much as a man and be with one person and the next just like a man, I really don't understand or see the positive message there. Jenny doesn't encourage you to drink, or to do drugs, and might not even tell you to go take someone's husband away, but she does glorify it.

And to the person who said that it is a parent's job to raise their kid and not Jenny's. Very true could not agree with you more, but just like you also said that these kids who do follow what they hear in a song, lack love, you are maybe right. That's why I feel, that if Jenny loves her fans so much and watches out for them, she should also understand that point, that there are many girls who lack parents guidance and look up to her and what she says, so maybe start giving more positive messages instead of the negative ones. Not that it's her job nor obligation to do it, but I'm sure if she really cared, she'll do it because of that, because she really cares.

In this quotation, the user is first acknowledging “immature” Jenni fans do not know how to distinguish between reality and fantasy and thus they consume and “brag” about songs like “Las Malandrinas,” “Chacalosa,” and “La Socia” (Mistress). The premise in this message is that if Jenni sings about “positive messages” in her songs she can reform her listeners to “dominant society’s norms of manners and morals” (187, Higginbotham). She suggests immature Jenni fans “lack” family guidance and are vulnerable to being seduced by deviance. She uses “La Socia” in particular to demonstrate the deviance Jenni is singing about is anti-feminist because it places women against each other. Of course, Jenni responded and clarified that she never meant to “glorify socias.” She explained her job as a performer is to interpret songs. In times when working-class Latina women are perceived as surplus, when a “culture of poverty” discourse prevails among racist nativist structures in the United States and middle-class Mexicans, some Latina women in the United States claim sexual respectability to claim self-respect, dignity, and “sanitized citizenship.” Because of the heteromasculinist ideologies of women as *pirujas*, some women used respectability as “a weapon against such assumptions;” (192) However this weapon, instead of critiquing misogynist structures of slut-shaming, blames women, for rupturing relationships.

Jenni fans were aware that by claiming an affinity towards Jenni, they were situating themselves within *atrevida* politics. My concept of sonic pedagogies of deviance stem from these debates, particularly because sexual pedagogies are devalued. To fully understand the respectability politics referenced on the thread on Chalino.com, in the next sections, I analyze the songs “Se Las Voy A Dar A Otro,” “Las Malandrinas,” and “Madre Soltera” because they were mentioned in the conversations as songs either sending positive messages or deviant ones. I incorporate some of her fans’ interpretations of these songs to demonstrate the transmission of sonic pedagogies of deviance through Jenni’s music. Thus, I agree with Cohen that if we want to queer a field, we have to do it by “the centering of those most marginal” and our analysis cannot be “with an eye toward pathologizing or even justifying their behavior, but instead with an eye toward recognizing and understanding the possible subversive potential, we can reorient our respective field to focus on the potential liberatory aspects of deviance.” (2004, 38)

Dangerous Sensualities: Las Socias (Por Gusto o Engaño)

As the chalino.com thread noted, “La Socia” is the sonic identity which created the most tensions with fans, non-fans, and anti-fans, because she is the epitome of *pirujaness*. La Socia is accused as the mistress, who has plans of breaking “love” and the future of a nuclear family. In fact, in comments about this song, this sonic identity receives many agitated responses and there is always a debate between what is morally correct. The “socia” (mistress) anthems emerged in her album *Dejate Amar* in 2001. This was Jenni’s first album that included a written dedication to her fans, family, and production team.



Figure 13. Screenshot from La Socia music video, courtesy of JR YouTube Chanel.

In *Querida Socia*, Jenni tells a story about infidelity. The song begins with a phone call from a recently engaged women to her soon-to-be husband’s mistress. The sounds of a phone ringing are included in the intro to which Jenni picks up and says, “hello.” With a sassy tone, the women tells Jenni:

Wife to be: “oyes solo te hablo para decirte que mi amor ya pidio mi mano...” (I am calling to let you know that my love has proposed to me)

Jenni responds by telling her: “quien dice que no seguire siendo la otra... alfin que eso no se gasta. (who told you that his proposal will prevent me from being your associate, at the end, intimacy lives long)

The exchange between the engaged girlfriend and la socia is staged with much tension, but the song’s point of the view is given to the mistress, a voice that often is marginalized within an infidelity feud. Although *la socia* is a sonic identity often receiving many forms of agitated discourse, the lyrics themselves, the music video accompanying it, and the fans who like this song, challenge us to think about anti-respectability politics and women’s tensions with each other. In a similar vein to “Las Malandrinas” music video, “La Socia” also depicts conflicts women face with each other. These moments of ideological conflict are important sites to analyze

Latinx/Chicanx respectability, because often in these situations, morality is used to validate one woman's way of life versus the other. The guilt of immoralities and by extension gender and sexual deviance are fabricated by several ideological state apparatuses like the church, the state (vis a vis public programs), and even public schools.

La Socia is a song not only sung by Jenni. Duranguense artist Diana Reyes also recorded the song in Mexico. Jenni was advised by Pepe Garza to record the song in the United States, as it became a big hit in Mexico. The popularity of the song raises many questions about *socia* politics and its pedagogies. In cases of adultery, the Catholic Church automatically shames the mistress and she is the one who is condemned as the sinner and perverse sexual being who is trying to separate a monogamous partnership. What is powerful about this song is that it is sung from La Socia's perspective. Some of the fans I have spoken to have been *socias* for brief parts of their lives—some longer than others. When this topic arises, we tell each other we have no blame in the situation because the socia is not the one committed to the other relationship. Those who are committed to the relationship are the ones who have the responsibility to be open about their desires and sexual pursuits with their partners. In La Socia, the two women speaking to each other represents the way heterosexual men are often removed from the shame of infidelity. Years later, Jenni and Diana revisit the trope of La Socia by singing their duet, *Ajustando Cuentas*, where both women decide not to fight each other and leave the guy to save their friendship.

Socia politics are messy. Jenni always had to defend her morality when it came to “La Socia.” In another chalino.com conversation titled “Socia o Esposa”, a chatter asked Jenni if she prefers to be the wife or the mistress, and what would she teach her own daughter to be. Jenni responded, “aiy que preguntita” and assured the user she will always be the wife and never the socia. She shared she had to be the socia because her husband was cheating on her, but not because

she wanted to be a socia. In response to the comment about her daughter, she assured the user that she will always teach her daughters to be wives. At first glance, Jenni's disassociation from the song appears to partly embrace respectability politics. But when one considers her life carefully – apart from her singing career – we see evidence status as a her single mother, after a second divorce, set pressures to educate her children in accordance with gender expectations, because if anything went “wrong” with them she would be blamed for it. However, in Jenni's music, women were not victims. As Angela Davis states, describing the ideologies of the blues, “even in their most despairing moods, the female characters memorialized in women's blues songs do not fit the mold of the typical victim of abuse. The independent women of blues lore do not think twice about wielding weapons against men who they feel have mistreated them.” (1998, 34)

“Ella Nos Esta Abriendo Los Ojos:” Refusing the Domestic Space

Jenni's music bore witness to the contradictory demand of Chicana and Mexicana women. Like Black American women and the blues, Chicanas and Mexicanas “faced ideological expectations of domesticity and subordination emanating from dominant culture,” (Davis, 22). A typical example is Jenni's song, “Mi Vida Loca” which opens with an introduction which sounds like a programming announcement.

Hoy en el Show de Carolina. jovenes, mujeres, Señoras que no se resignan a ser lo que ellas llaman MBs – Mujeres Basicas. El tema de hoy mujeres que viven la Vida loca.

Today at the Carolina Show. Young people, women, ladies who do not resign themselves to being what they call BWs –Basic Women. The theme of today women who live a crazy live.

She addresses this message to girls, women, and elders and informs them the topic of today's show is women who refuse to be *mujeres basicas*, (basic women who are only restricted to the domestic

space) and instead decide to live a *vida loca*, or crazy life. Because of unfair gender expectations, Jenni knew both adults and teenagers would identify with the song. After this intro, the purpose of the song is to describe what this crazy life entails. However, the song's narration tells us the "loca" aspect of this life is measured by someone else's standards of normativity. With the way Jenni performs this song, she is practically asking us to reflect on why girls and women's lives are labeled deviant for centering their own gustos (tastes).

Que vivo una vida loca soy hembra muy diferente que vivo mi vida recia quien sabe que hay en mi mente que ya esta bien del desorden que eh vivido desde siempre. Porque tanto les molesta? que me quiera divertir que goze de todo a todo mis verdades no fingir quiero contar mis parrandas antes que vaya a morir. Que de parranda en parranda verguenza tengo muy poca que a lo grande me divierto corro de una fiesta a otra y sepan que es muy <i>mi gusto</i> el vivir mi vida loca. <i>Y es muy mi gusto</i> ajaaa... arriva culiacan sinaloa señores.	I live a crazy life I am a very different female That I live a thug life who knows what is on my mind that is already good of the disorder I have always lived. Why does it bother them so much? That I want to have fun that I enjoy everything Not to pretend my truths I want to share my party days before I die If from party to party I have very little shame I have fun in a big way I run from one party to another This is my taste to live my crazy life. And this is my taste ajaaa My people, cheers to Culiacan Sinaloa
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In the second half of the song, Jenni sings about how she refuses to be anybody's *gata*, or house cat, and chooses to live a crazy life. She is proud of being rebellious since an early age and is unapologetic about not knowing how to make homemade tortillas. According to Jennifer⁴², a fan I met at El Rodeo de Pico Rivera, through this song Jenni motivates women who are going through a restrictive situation at home to have more courage to stand up for their own pleasure and

⁴² Pseudonym

not let society and cultural norms tie them down to become a “basic woman.” Jennifer told me she identified with Jenni Rivera’s song “Mi Vida Loca” because her father was overprotective and never allowed her to go out. She explained;

Yo vengo de una familia con un papa muy machista. Entonces esa cancion me gusta ponerla porque enseña su alegria. Dice palabras muy Fuertes. Por ejemplo cuando dice que de ningun perro soy la gata. Pero es la verdad. Yo lo e visto en mi vida. Los hombres esperar que alli estemos a su antojo. Esa cancion le da fuerza a las mujeres para no ser esa mujer.

I come from a family with a very macho father. I like putting that song because it demonstrates her joy. It also says very strong words. For instance, when it says, “I am no one’s cat.” But it is the truth. I have seen it in my life. Men think we are going to be there whenever they want. That song gives women the courage to not be that woman.

Through “Mi Vida Loca,” Jennifer feels encouragement to stand-up for herself in her household and challenge the rules her father and other men have for her. Jennifer explained how Jenni’s music inspired her to privilege her own pleasure and not be passive with men. I read her response as a transmitted sonic pedagogy of deviance, because Jennifer places her lived reality in relation to the song and learns to challenge normative ideas of gender. This nonnormative way of life Jennifer learns through “Mi Vida Loca” is often associated with deviance. Chicana/Mexicana girls and women often struggle with the gendered biases of nightlife. Jenni’s acknowledgement of this unfair treatment of gender helped women challenge their realities at home.

In *La Fat Chacalosa* thread I analyzed in the previous section, one of Jenni fans, who defended Jenni against the haters, shared she could not understand why people did not like Jenni, if, thanks to her, women were finally opening their eyes against misogynist violence. This theme, “ella nos esta abriendo los ojos,” also came up with several fans. In my interview with Maria⁴³, a

⁴³ I interviewed Maria while her daughter was in soccer practice. At first, she did not think that our conversation would last a long time. However, by the time her daughter was done, we were just getting into her “juicy” memories. She asked me if I wanted to go the track practice with them so we could continue our *charla* there. I said, “yes let’s go”. I

fan who grew up in South Central, for instance, it came up when she was talking about the responses her mother and husband had to her listening to Jenni's music. They both agreed that Jenni's songs changed her. Maria describes her life as "casi no vivi" because she got pregnant at 14, while planning her quinceañera, and after having her first baby, she moved with her boyfriend to Hawthorne. During her teenage years growing up in South Central, Maria remembers listening to NWA, Tupac, and other English-speaking artists. Banda music was not a genre she listened to often until she met Graciela Beltran, the first woman Banda artist she encountered. However, when the corrido "Las Malandrinas" was released, she immediately was drawn to Jenni's music.

While Maria talks about how her mother and husband think Jenni's music "le abre los ojos," she references the song, "Mi Vida Loca." She explained:

Es que antes yo pienso que, maybe when I got pregnant, I had my kids so young. First, I would think, whatever my mom says, whatever my mom says. Me quede con eso. Y despues, whatever my husband says. Y luego salio Jenni and I said, nevermind not you, y tu tampoco. So, I was like nope and nope. So yeah como que me rebelaba poquito mas. like wait, no. que querian algo no lo voy hacer hasta que yo quiera hacerlo you know. Como decia Jenni, "Yo no soy gata" en la cancion de Mi Vida Loca" See they are gonna wait hasta que yo tenga ganas de pararme. Yeah, ves por una parte si cambie. Tambien mi husband me dijo una ves, "ya no eres la misma." Pues no, todos cambian. I mean I was 14, I was 16, no quedrias que yo para toda la vida voy a estar, "oh my god" tu no eres el mismo. Antes no hacia lo que haces ahora. Oh no le gustaba lo que le gusta ahora y yo no digo nada.

I think that it is because I got pregnant so young. I had my kids so young. First, I would prioritize whatever my mom says. I stayed with that and then, whatever my husband says and then Jenni. After her, I said, never mind not you, and neither you. So, I was like nope and nope. So yeah, I rebelled a bit more. Like wait [I reflected and said] I will not do it until I want to do it you know. As Jenni said, in her song Mi Vida Loca, "I'm not your housecat." They are going to have to wait until I want to serve them. Yeah, you see on the one hand I did change. But who is the same. We all change. I mean I was 14. I was 16 when I had my kids. You would not want

followed her to the track field and on my drive there I was reflecting on a comment that she said to her daughter, "yes mami, I shared things that you don't even know yet." Maria believed that Jenni was signing to her generation and although she was already a young mother when the song released, she identified with being a Malandrina. Maria described how she recorded Jenni's songs on her voicemail message, an activity that her mother hated because Jenni's voice stood in her Maria's voice. She also hated it because she felt that the song was recorded in dedication to her.

me to be the same for life. My husband is not the same either. He does not like the same things from before.

Instead Jenni sings about how her *parrandas* are important to her and how she wants to talk about them before she dies. She also asks us to reflect on why society gets agitated when women want to have fun. *Why are parrandas such a danger for women?* In a powerful way, Jenni states living between different parrandas is her gusto, and if she is fine with this decision, it should not be anybody else's concern. In her description of la parranda, the night life is lived spatiotemporally: in these moments shame disappears, life is lived fast, movement is fluid, and corporeal pleasures are prioritized. With the phrase "porque tanto les molesta que me quiera divertir," Jenni asks us to reflect on policing the nightlife of femmes. The way parrandas are described in this song, as a way of life, is a perfect example of how chuntiness is associated with a lifestyle deemed deviant; and can ruin the purity of "femininity." Jenni invites her fans to see the radical futurity of these parrandas. The reappearance of nightclub life throughout several of these sonic identities raises the question of the role of dance in Jenni's fandom. Celeste Fraser Delgado and Jose Esteban Muñoz state "Dance sets politics in motion, bringing people together in rhythmic affinity where identification takes the form of histories written on the body through gesture" (1997, 9).

Mi Vida Loca is particularly important for Jenni, because as a single mother of 4 children, she was constantly judged for going out with her friends. Jenni had her first daughter when she was fifteen years old, and she acknowledges she did not have an opportunity to enjoy her life. By her late 20s, Jenni already had her five children, and craved opportunities to go out to distract herself from the day-to-day life of single motherhood. The fact that Jenni had her first daughter at 15 is another factor in forming an intergenerational fanbase, particularly because mothers would identify with her motherhood while younger audiences related to her because of her youthfulness.

Malandrina – Paisa Girl - Sensuality: Enjoying Nightlife Pleasures

“Party aesthetics reminds us to pay attention not only to the marked performances by those on “stage” but also to the unmarked performances by those not onstage.”

(L.H. Stallings, 200)

By the time Jenni decided to try out her singing career, there were other women artists singing in the genre of Mexican regional music. Maria, for instance, listened to Graciela Beltran before Jenni, and Sofia remembers artists like Ana Barbara. However, what made Jenni unique among fans in southern California was that she embraced her Chicananess and sensuality unapologetically. Sofia describes Jenni’s contribution as being more “dareful” and “breaking from the typical mold” of the “good girl.” In “La Chakalosa” and “Las Malandrinas” Jenni’s underground hits, her erotics are found in the sensuality she embodies in her songs. The figure of La Chakalosa, for instance, despite duties in the drug trade, is in tuned with her erotic desires when she decides to be “coqueta” (coquettish) in her nightlife engagements at El Farallon, El Parral and El Rodeo. Jenni’s commitment to distinguishing between her erotic sensuality and sexuality speaks backs to the way cis-heterosexual men often do not separate the two. Men in Mexican regional music usually sexualize women, and their sensuality is interchanged with and for sexual purposes only. Here Jenni, uses her sensuality to take control and rename her own erotics for her own satisfaction.

Alicia Arrizon distinguishes between sensuality and sexuality, stating, “while sexuality is characterized by sex, sexual activity and sexual orientation, to be sensual is to be aware of and to explore feelings and sensations of beauty, luxury, joy, and pleasure” (193). Arrizon, uses Lourdes Portillos’s documentary, *A conversation with Academics about Selena* (1999), to show the common conflation between both terms. In this film, Portillo interviews Sandra Cisneors, Cherrie

Moraga, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano to talk about Selena's impact on Latina girls. Cisneros contests Selena's impact in the lives of these girls and questions her positive influence since she did not attend college and dropped out of high school. Moraga disagrees and states, "Selena gave these girls a way to have Chicana sexuality" and Yarbro-Bejarano added her "racialized sexuality" contributed to her success. Arrizon identifies that Latina sensuality is never discussed in the film, and argues,

The young women in the film, performing and imitating Selena through their clothes, singing, and dancing do not necessarily embody a 'Chicana sexuality' as per Moraga; they may just be expressing their adoration for Selena and their enjoyment of her songs, dance movements, and fashion – the Chicana sensuality. Thus, an alternative reading of these youngsters in the film is that they are performing their feelings through mimetic representation of Selena and her sensual legacy (194).

Another example she gives to contextualize sensuality is La Lupe: "sensuality as an 'affect' of Latina/o performing bodies...including feelings, emotions, actions and thoughts" (195). As her career progressed, Jenni did sing about sexual encounters, but in these two songs, she became popular because girls and women were able to identify with her Chicana identity and be inspired by her sensuality.

Jenni also used local nightlife geographic references important to Chicana girls in Los Angeles in the 1990s. In these two corridos, the *bailes*, nightclub life, are important spaces where *paisa* girls who identified as *malandrinas*, *tequileras*, and *socias* engaged in the agency of their own erotixxs. In both Lupillo and Jenni's version of the corrido "La Chacalosa," the nightclub space is critical to their subcultural identity. In fact, the corrido identifies women who have their own table with drink service at nightclubs. For some, this section of the song might not stand out to them, but throughout my ethnographic work with Banda Sinaloenses in Los Angeles area, I have

analyzed the gendered spatial politics of nightclubs. Many women took pride in not needing men to secure a table with bottle service at the nightclub.

The significance of *bailes* is also explained by corrido scholar, Martha Chew, who states dance is an important part of norteno music as they function as “powerful sites of solidarity” where “specific learned rules” of gender roles are adapted, challenged, and transgressed. Chew described how families have used legends to try to control the sexuality of young girls in *bailes*. The most common folk tale tells of a woman who went to a dance without permission from her parents and ended up dancing with the devil disguised as a handsome man. Chew recognizes, although many of her participants did not believe in this story anymore, they tell us about how parents used fear to scare girls and women not to rebel against normative ideas of womanhood. This background allows us to understand why the baile or the nightclub space is an important theme among Jenni’s early music. Chew also describes how the baile space created an erotic environment, stating:

Dance, like sexual intercourse, generates a sense of pleasure and relief. In both activities there is courtship, foreplay, arousal, the evocation of erotic images and sentiments, excitement, release, climax and exhaustion, and there are multiple references to domains of power. Dances for courtship are an outlet for displaying sexual attractiveness and an arena for announcing sexual availability and arranging liaisons. The spaces where dances occur are very much regulated by the roles of community assigns to each sex.⁴⁴

When describing the song “Las Malandrinas”, Maria described Jenni’s music as “una forma de rebelida. Como Rebelde, like dam, lo que no habia antes. Esa Mujer Fuerte. Rebelde. Like a gangster. Era como Tupac y ellos pero en español.” La Malandrina was different to La Chacalosa, in the sense that she was not the daughter of a narco, she was just a femme fan of corrido culture, who liked to party, drink, and enjoy the nightlife with good corridos. Expanding

⁴⁴ Chew describes dances as places where couples have an opportunity to “escape.” “Under those circumstances dances are one of the few opportunities young couples have to see each other and talk to each other in physical proximity.” (137)

the identity of La Malandrina, fan of this subculture made this song speak to more girls and women in the genre. As with La Chacalosa, La Malandrina is also a sonic identity that emerged from a masculine vernacular. For instance, the title of Jenni’s song “Las Malandrinas” is the feminine version of Los Malandrines, a sonic identity in corridos describing someone who is active in the drug trade by selling marijuana or cocaine. The term Malandrino stems from the colloquial term “Malandro”⁴⁵ which has a pejorative connotation across Mexico and Latin America. In their album *El Clavo en Los Huevos*, Los Razos had already sung a song titled “Las Malandrinas.” In this corrido by Los Razos, Las Malandrinas are described as beautiful woman who distribute drugs.

En los salones de baile Siempre andan bien elegantes De botas, cinta, y tejana Finas joyas y diamantes Pantalones apretados Y una escuadra por delante	In the nightclub halls They are always elegant With boots, belts, and cowboy hats With Fine jewelry and diamonds Fitted pants And a whole squad in front of them
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Los Razos also described Malandrinas in relation to their sensualities, but it was not the same for men to sing about women than for women to sing about themselves. Representation was critical to women fans of this genre of Mexican regional music. In her memories of Jenni’s early career, Sofia stated:

The way Jenni approached her crowds. The way she approached the girls, the females, her style. It just attracted me. I identified immediately. I am like, “Oh my God. Oh my God. You know. She’s like wearing stuff that I like.” Like las gorras de avestruz (the ostrich hats), it was a style that I had back when I was 17. Of course, she was an upcoming artist. Of course, she had the bling and stuff you know. But that’s how it all started that I remember because I would go see Lupillo and *alli estaba* (there she was) Jenni. But then Jenni caught my eye.

⁴⁵ “Malandragem” is also a Portuguese term that refers to a “lifestyle of idleness, fast living and petty crime” and this term is usually celebrated in samba lyrics.

In this quotation, Sofia is describing how Jenni's style attracted her. She confesses at first, she attended the performances for Lupillo, not Jenni. But the more she saw Jenni on stage, the more she felt attracted by her sensual aesthetic.

"Las Malandrinas" was also important because it referenced class tensions between Chicanas. In the beginning of the music video, Jenni acknowledges malandrina subculture is often associated with lower-class culture, or as it is often referred to by participants who disassociate from it – "chunti." "Las Malandrinas" gave language to the sonics of class stigmatization, which girls and women knew existed when people referred to them as "chunties". Deborah Vargas argues the corrido "Las Malandrinas"⁴⁶ exemplifies *suciedad*⁴⁷ through *sucio time*. Vargas defines Lo sucio as "the sensory registers of genderqueer sexualities that come to be defined as *sucia* subjectivities, including the ways the smells of cheap cologne marks the arrival of queer femininity, or fried food registers racialized class status" (717).

⁴⁷ Centering queer genders and sexualities, the analytic of lo sucio operates in relation to three racialized discourses of difference; 1) "lewd, obscene offensive hypersexual undisciplined bodies" 2) "darkened suspect citizens perpetually untrustworthy, impure and nonloyal to the state." 3) "diseased 'culture of poverty' subjects overdetermined to fail to arrive to normative womanhood and manhood" (716). Suciedad is parallel with Roderick Ferguson and Kara Keeling "surplus populations" and the senses are an important component of lo sucio as an analytic, "lo sucio operates through the racialized references of the smells of otherness in residential spatialities like "el barrio" or "the ghetto."



Figure 14. Screenshot from Las Malandrinas music video, courtesy of JR YouTube Chanel.

For Vargas, Las Malandrinas is a *sucia* subjectivity because they “are the waste of neoliberal time.” Vargas draws from several key scenes in “Las Malandrinas” music video to show how “*Suciedad* operates through waste as time or the time devoted to nonessential acts that fail to fulfill capital reproduction.” Vargas continues to say that “lo sucio as waste is understood here as a dimension of time excreted from *bodies laboring in pointless doings*.” For Vargas, “*Sucia* bodies, such as *las malandrinas*, are unprofitable bodies” (721). Although the lens of *suciedad* offers an interesting entry point to the class politics of La Malandrina, I deploy *chunteria* because my narrators used this vernacular term. Using the language used among the subculture is critical to my bottom-up approach to theory formation about class struggles.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Malandrinas/nes became a sonic identity because it was a term that reappeared in the genre repeatedly by different artists. For instance, Cintas Acuario, also created a multiple-volume series titled *Puros Corridos Malandrines*. Like *Pa La Plebada de La Plebada*, the music cover of *Puros Corridos Malandrines* also centered men and described women as background. For instance, in the cover of volume 1, *No Apto Pa' Tecatos Ni Madrinas*, there are two pelones cheering while two couples stand in the background dancing. The centering of the two men cheering with their drinks tells us that their desires and wishes are the important ones. All the music included in his cassette is also by men. It is

La Malandrina and La Chakalosas are the “Chicana Californiana” versions to Jose Limon’s question “Where are they, the women, in this male-dominated, too close approximation of the world of Gregorio Cortez?” (140). In *Dancing with the Devil*, Limon describes South Texas during the 70s and 80s, when Mexican women were not even allowed near the bar. However, Jenni’s image of La Malandrina, the paisa girl, relies heavily on the theme of *intoxication*, a theme which, in this dissertation, will expand to multiple forms beyond drinking. However, alcohol and drinking are well-known themes within the genres of Mariachi, Banda, and Norteño. As Helena Simonnett has pointed out, in the time of Mexican the revolution, Mariachi musicians were ‘not highly regarded’ because they were “entertainment of the poor and of drunken men.” (137) Alcohol gave this genre a stigmatized image, one which as Simonnett points out continues to haunt the musicians, and in my case the fans, who are very proud of their leisure activities. It is not surprising that antifans, as I will explore in the following chapters, would mention drinking in their description of Jenni’s fans. What anti-fan comments hint at is the gendered aspect of drinking and the sexist belief that in order to drink women have to exchange their sexuality for a bucket of beer. Even if true, there seems to be an agitation about the gender carnivalesque Jenni’s fans provide.

“I’m going to give my ass to somebody else:” Singing about Cheating

Jenni also sang about women who had the courage to divorce or separate from their partners. In “se las voy a dar a otro,” Jenni sings about a protagonist who is being psychologically

no surprise then that a corrido like La Malandrina, which was composed by a woman for other women would make a local hit in the subculture. Situating La Malandrina in the broader paisa subculture allows us to see that the irony of sucio time is that Jenni’s fan activities did fulfill capital reproduction, especially if we consider Bourdieu’s theory of social capital, and the underground economy of the workers in this music scene (the guy selling the music, musicians, waiters, DJ, etc.). Jenni always gave thanks to her fan base for economically sustaining her family. In fact, fans themselves have told me that that they will continue to attend the tribute events to financially support Jenni’s children.

manipulated by her partner⁴⁹. The woman protagonist is cheated on, humiliated, and constantly neglected, which makes her believe she has no worth and she is to blame for not being good enough to be loved. The feminist narrative arc in the song ends with the protagonist finally realizing she does not deserve to be treated this way, and that she can find someone else. The chorus of the song tells her husband she will give her affection to someone else who deserves it. The chorus, which repeats the title, “se las voy a dar a otro” is used as a sexual innuendo in the lyrics of song. We do not know if she is referring to her body parts or only affection. Through live performances, she made this play with language even more noticeable. She also encouraged fans to not give their bodies away for free. This song became popular in her live performances, and in chapter 3, I discuss how this song transformed through the years and share some of the intoxicating pleasures fans engaged in when Jenni performed this song live.

Se las voy a dar a otro, porque tu no las mereces, las tuviste tanto tiempo y no las aprovechaste, te pasaste en tus pendientes. Se las voy a dar otro, que las quiera de a de veras, mis caricias valen mucho y si tu no las quisiste, no me falta quien las quiera.	I will give them to someone else Because you do not deserve them You had them so much time And you did not take advantage of them You spent your time ignoring me I will them to someone else That will want them for real My affection is worth a lot And if you did not want them Other people will
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In the music video, the husband fat-shames his wife and tells her that she needs to stop eating. The disgust in which he expresses this makes Jenni believe her fatness is the reason why he does not like her anymore. The husband takes advantage of her low self-esteem, which is caused by his own comments towards her. Because the husband fat-shames Jenni, the gym is an important

⁴⁹ “Se las voy a dar a otro” became her first international success and the album where this song appeared was nominated for her first Latin Grammy.

space in the music video. The husband is embarrassed to take his wife to the gym and goes on his own because he meets with his mistresses there. When Jenni decides to leave him, she joins the gym too and loses weight, which makes her feel more confident. But in the process, she realizes that her weight was never a problem, because other men flirted with her along the journey. These flirtatious interactions make her feel secure about her own sex appeal and she then decides to go on a date with two men. In the video, we see her transform from being “fodonga” to “una mujer areglada.” This song came up in my interview with Sofia. She mentioned this song when I asked her thoughts on the impact Jenni had on Latina sexuality. Sofia responded:

I think it started to become a little OK to talk about cheating on a husband. I think it started to become OK to break from that mold. The stereotypical idea that the women is the one who is loyal, the women is the one who suffers, the women is the home. The typical stereotypes that women have. There is a song *que se llama*, “Se Las Voy a Dar a Otro.” She’s talking about *las caricias* (caresses) right, but when you are listening to it, like “se las voy a dar a otro” (she is going to give them to someone else) *que se las va dar*? *Le vas a dar el tracero* (what is she going to give them, her ass). What song says that she will give her ass to someone else? Never! At least not in my time. Like *que sea haci* de blunt. Like you know, he is not listening to me, you’re not paying attention to me. You’re clearly cheating on me. I’m going to give my ass to somebody else. She didn’t say it course in the song but its like whoa. Not that I am a supporter of cheating. Not that I am a supporter of being promiscuous but I am a supporter of: “hey dude, I’m not gonna sit here and be nice and take all this shit from you while I have a friend next door who’s willing to like, you know give it a pop. Like it made it ok to defend, to stand up for ourselves.

Maybe a lot of people don’t see it this way. I’ll tell you right now my husband, he’s not a liker. He’s not fond of Jenni.

He was like, “no, vieja loca, borracha!” He is always like, “She started becoming famous because she started singing to fat girls.”

He believes, hands down believes, that because she started singing to fat girls, because she was fat, that’s why she became famous because all of her fans were fat.

And I’m like, I was her fan too”

He is like, “exactly, I love you but you’re part of her fans.”

That's his belief. He didn't enjoy, he didn't like when she would sit on the guys lap. 'nah, porque that is out of your typical woman image.

And I've come across a lot of men who is like, "vieja borracha" "vieja loca." They would call her gorda. There is a lot of these men haters. Why? Because she was break out that mold, where it was the nice girl.

In this response, Sofia uses "se la voy a dar a otro" as an example of how Jenni challenged normative ideas of betrayal. At first it appears as if Sofia does not support the deviant pedagogies of the song when she states, "Im not a supporter of cheating. Not that I am not a supporter of being promiscuous" but later, she explains she does not support the emotional abuse of women and if men are engaging in this behavior, why would it be wrong for her to engage in it, too. Women's realization that cheating has nothing to do with their value can be a radical awakening. Particularly within heteropatriarchal structures and ideologies which train women to satisfy men's desires. A study about sexual talk for Latinas found Latinas often must negotiate ideas of "staying a señorita" which consists of not having premarital sex, to increase their gender and sexual value (Faulker, 2002). They state, "waiting to have intercourse until marriage constituted a strategy to keep a man from cheating and "straying." (Faulker, 315)⁵⁰ Ideas of maintaining your virginity to avoid cheating is a false promise, because if men want to cheat, they will do it anyway. I read "se las voy a dar a otro" as a sonic pedagogy of Latina deviance, because in her quote Sofia is interpreting it as an "advice song," a characteristic Angela Davis also observed within blues music. Davis states advice songs "cautions women who might similarly be deceived by the romantic expectations associated with the bourgeois, patriarchal institutions of marriage" (17) and instead "exudes a self-confident sense of female independence and unabashed embrace of sexual pleasure" (ibid).

⁵⁰ Reconciling Messages: The Process of Sexual Talk for Latinas. Sandra L Faulker and Phyllis Kernoff Mansfield. Qualitative Health Research, Vol. 12 No. 3, March 2002, 310-328.

In her book, *Unbreakable: My Story, My Way*, Jenni talks about why it was so difficult to leave her first marriage. She discusses the expectation she felt from her parents to stay in her marriage. When she got pregnant at the age of 15, she did not want to leave with Trino, but her parents told her she needed to marry him. Years later, when her parents found out about the domestic violence, they regretted forcing her to leave with him and told her she could always come back home. By this point, Jenni felt she had to prove to herself she was able to survive the horrors of her first marriage. Jenni also felt shame that if she did not stick it out with her husband, she would have failed for not being able to be like her mother. She felt social pressure to stay in a relationship, particularly because she was part of the first generation of women in her family who left their partners.

Conclusion // Crafting Pirujeria a Song at a Time

For most fans, Jenni's music conjures lessons of gender and sexual nonconformity. With her music, Jenni gave her fans new vocabularies for articulating Mexicana cultural symbols. For instance, we could read *La Socia* as an example of *La Malinche* trope in Chicana feminism. For Jenni and her fans, *La Madre Soltera* represented a veneration for all the hard work single mothers do, but within societal norms, if *La Madre Soltera* decides to engage in any form of pleasures, she is quickly read as *La Llorona* (the Weeping Woman), for leaving her children. Since the beginning of her career, none of Jenni's tropes fit within the *Virgen* narrative, because Jenni always portrayed women as rebels and agitators. The richness of her narratives of womanhood provided a new, complex politics of Latina deviance in which they are constantly encouraged to overcome "tradition of silence." In "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" Gloria Anzaldua states that women are often robbed of their *femme* being "by the masculine plural. Language is a male discourse." Jenni

Rivera's music disrupted the male discourse and created a language for paisa girls to enjoy Banda culture and "talk back" to regulatory gender roles. In relation to pirujeria, I argue every popular song in her early career was building towards pirujeria as a liberatory sexual politics, but not without contradictions. Pirujeria in the context of Deschichadera came later in Jenni's career, but here we see how to get to the body politics of pirujeria, she had to start by critiquing domesticity, cheating, *socias*, and a celebration of single motherhood. After her fans applied these sonic pedagogies to their lives, their erotics of fandom allowed them to collectively queer Jenni and reimagine pirujeria as a politics of women-centered pleasures.

Jenni's music suggests emergent pirujeria insurgency, in that her songs have a pedagogical component teaching women to embrace Latina deviance as a form of resistance. Even when Jenni does not identify with the *socia*, *por gusto*, she interprets it so her femme fans can discuss the contradictions that arise. In the following fan message for instance, we see self-identified *socias* had the opportunity to discuss this topic and reflect on their own romantic entanglements with their lovers: "Being La Socia, There are times you don't know you are la Socia but by the time you find out you realize you are already in love so at the end you don't care as long as you get a small role in his life." Another fan said, "in my opinion, I defend both sides y todo tiene que ver el pinche Viejo por andar de caliente!!! Mendigo Cabeza de serdo." The lyrics of this song touched women's lives in ways which cannot be ignored. While we find contradictory comments, it certainly illuminates an experience common among women. Naming issues affecting Latina women was a central function of Jenni's music. Her songs centered the social, emotional, spiritual, and sensual desires of MeXicanas. Jenni's songs preserved and transformed what women of color have called *theorizing from the flesh*. The way Jenni and her fans responded to *socia* politics addressed cheating in a collective context. The debates about Socia politics is a place for further research,

particularly because it provides rich conversations about the ways these words become used among women.

Interlude Two // Visiting La Arena In Monterrey

In December of 2016, four years after Jenni's death, I traveled to Monterrey, Mexico to attend a Jenni fan gathering at La Arena, the venue where Jenni had her last concert. I found out about the J-Unit gathering through Burronio's Facebook, a fan from Ciudad Juarez. Burronio is a very popular J-unit fan in Mexico because he has traveled several to southern California for Jenni tributes and is close to the Rivera family. I saw him at Potreritos earlier that year and he was wearing his personalized shirt that said "Cartel de Jenni, J-unit Ciudad Juarez." I was too shy to talk to him at El Potrero night club, but I am a true believer of timing and I truly believe I was supposed to meet him at La Arena, Monterrey in December, along with other Mexican J-Units. The flyer did not state an exact location to meet, but I trusted someone would guide me there. It was my first time at La Arena. I had seen many videos of La Arena because Jenni's last concert was there, but also because *Jenni Vive* 2013 took place there.



Figure 15. Fan made flyer, circulated on social media, courtesy of Burronio, 2016.

Because La Arena is a such a large venue, there are several parking lots, so my Uber driver dropped me off in the first parking lot that he saw. When I arrived, I asked the security guards if they could direct me to the tribute. The security guard told me immediately that the event had been canceled. I was very confused because Burronio and other fans had just checked in on Facebook and said they were on their way. I decided to show the guy helping me the flier and he said they didn't book La Arena, so the event is not taking place inside here. I walked away hoping he just did not know what he was talking about. I checked Facebook again, and someone said they were in the parking lot around the corner. I walked there hoping to see people. When I got to the parking lot, I saw a mother with her daughter walking towards me. Because she was wearing a red shirt and had balloons in their hands, and I was wearing a Jenni Rivera t-shirt we locked eyes and ask each other if we were here for the event She said yes and I felt a sense of relief. We introduced ourselves. Minutes later, other fans started showing up. A group arrived in a truck and had a speaker, so we could sing some of Jenni's songs. Two of the women were even dressed like Jenni. After they set up, Burronio arrived with more J-Units.

When Burronio arrived, he started asking everyone where we were from. That day I was the only one from the US, most of them lived in Mexico and were from Monterrey or Ciudad Juarez (where Burronio is from). I overheard him say that they expected more fans. I told him that I was very confused about logistics because there was a toy drive also taking place in Iturbide, but that was several hours away from La Arena. He then explained to me that both events were supposed to take place together, but there was a misunderstanding with logistics. He later said, "pero los que tenemos que estar, aquí estamos" and I agreed. A local television station went to the event to interview us. I was interviewed because I was from Long Beach. They asked me why I would travel so far. I told the reporter I wanted to see where Jenni performed her last concert. After

the interviews, the Jenni imitators bumped some of Jenni's music and we all started singing.



Figure 16. Fans at La Arena, courtesy of Myrthala, 2016.

One of the fans told me that she attended Jenni's last concert and that the *sentimiento* Jenni performed with that night was unique. She suggested it was as if Jenni knew it would be her last concert. Throughout the evening several fans shared more memories and when the time came, they released their balloons to the sky. Releasing balloons every 9th of the month was a ritual some J-Units practiced to remember Jenni. Seeing the balloon fly was symbolic of their relationship with Jenni.

After the gathering at La Arena, Burronio, Myrthala and Marcela had dinner plans. In my desire to get to know them more and not be alone in Monterrey late at night, I asked them if I could join and right away, they said "yes!" We went to a bomb ass taqueria in Monterrey, and I ordered a large number of tacos because they were so good. Everyone said that I had a very healthy

appetite. Burronio's mother accompanied him to the event at La Arena. They both flew from Ciudad Juarez. It was the first time Burronio's mom attended any of the tributes.

While we were at dinner, they started talking about Jenni Vive 2013. This tribute was very memorable to them because many of them had met for the first time. Burronio and Marcela were one of the few J-Units selected to sit on the VIP area. Jenni Vive 2013 allowed many J-Units to bond closely with each other, because most of them stayed in the same hotels or traveled together from different parts of Mexico and the United States. Burronio has stated numerous times if Jenni had not died, these J-Units probably would have never met each in person. After Jenni's death, J-Unit fan clubs in Mexico became very visible to the Rivera family, as they were very active in inviting fans to come for the tributes. Most of the fans who attended Jenni Vive 2013 have been committed to attending all of the Jenni Vive events.



Figure 17. Fans at Jenni Vive 2013, La Arena Mty, Courtesy of Burronio.

Another conversation that night was how to distinguish between “newer” Jenni fans to

those who had been with her since the beginning. This conversation was interesting because it also came up when I interviewed Isabel, a tequilera who has been a fan since 1999/2000s. According to them, they were able to tell because of their J-Unit number. The higher the number, the newer their fandom was. Because of the constant cultural production behind Jenni's life, newer generations of fans emerge. For instance, some of the girls that I interviewed after Jenni's death said that they became Jenni's fans because of the reality show, "I Love Jenni". Every popular medium by which she gets remembered creates a new generation of fans. A recent example of this is the release of *Mariposa de Barrio* in Mexico. *Mariposa de Barrio* was the "official" biopic of Jenni. Telemundo worked closely with the Rivera family to create the narrative. However, prior to *Mariposa de Barrio*, two other biopics had already been released by different television stations. *Mariposa de Barrio* obtained a lot of hype because the Rivera family was closely involved with the production process. As with the reality show and the other biopics, these series released in the United States first and later in Mexico. On the Spring of 2018, *Mariposa de Barrio* was released on Netflix in Mexico, so a lot of newer audiences in Mexico began watching. Memes of spectatorship and fandom circulated on Facebook. I met a fan from Tijuana during the opening of the Jenni Rivera Boutique in San Ysidro became a fan of Jenni because of the series. Her mother even told me that years ago her daughter would have never liked the music genre because she was "fresa" but because she liked Jenni's story, she began to listen to her music.

Due to some fan-related confusion, Burronio and his mom needed a place to stay, so I invited them to stay with me at the Hostel. We slept in the same room for a couple of days. We even explored the city together. They did not want me to be alone and during those days, so we got to know each other more closely. After establishing a friendship with Buronio, I realized that all the flyers he circulated were created by him because he has a graphic design background. He

also designed the t-shirt for the events. Numerous times, I witnessed the labor that went into creating those flyers and t-shirts. He was very proud when the Rivera family validated his labor.

The next day we met again for a carne asada at Myrthala's house. Although we had just met, it felt as though we had known each other for years. When we spent time together, all of our conversations were mostly about Jenni and her music. Jenni's songs also helped us talk about our lives, because they triggered memories from when the song helped us get through difficult times in life. Before Burronio left for Ciudad Juarez, he made sure I was all set up to go to Iturbide, to visit the site where Jenni's plane crashed.

CHAPTER 2

“She was Us and We Were Her:” Forming Intimate Fan-ships in Fan Clubs

¿Que las Malandrinas se Convirtieron Tequileras?

What is it about Fan Clubs that attracts people to join them?

On January 5 of 2015, after almost eight years of not logging into Chalino.com, I searched for what remained about Jenni in this online chatroom archive. I found a decade-old post by Isabel, the president of Las Tequileras fan club. Isabel's name on this site was *Tequileral01* and her chatroom photo was with Jenni. Isabel used Chalino.com as one of her recruitment sites for Las Tequileras, a fan club that she started in 2003. Las Tequileras fan club started with 17 girls/women in Southern California and eventually spread to other states like Illinois, Texas, Georgia, Kansas and even Mexico. Isabel met Jenni for the first time at a night club in 1999. She was 16 years old, and remembers purchasing a polaroid photo with her. In this photo, Jenni wrote the word “cuñada” (sister in-law). During my *charla* (interview) with Isabel, her mother described her daughter's fandom as being “en el argüende” which translates to being part of loud and noisy gossiping. The way in which Isabel's mom describes her fandom centers flashiness and loudness as main components of the fan activities she and the other Tequileras engaged in. In fact, a staple of the sonic identity of Las Malandrinas is that they “hacen mucho ruido” (make a lot of noise). Isabel shared that after the first time she saw Jenni she fell in love with her because, as a young girl, the refusal of domestic space that Jenni sang about resonated so much with them. As a sixteen-year-old, Isabel negotiated firsthand the gender and sexual politics that Jenni Rivera's music expressed. In a music genre dominated by men, it was powerful to see a woman with so much confidence and “ovaries” perform on stage. The first time Isabel met Jenni was in the nightclub in the late 90s,

when Jenni was heavily influenced by the Chalinillo aesthetic and the atrevida themes that I describe in Chapter 1. When Isabel met Jenni there were already other fan clubs in existence like Las Malandrinas. In fact, during our interview, Isabel mentioned Sonia, also known as La Malandrina de Avenal, who was first a Malandrina before she joined Las Tequileras.

Isabel's signature on Chalino.com was interesting to me as it read, "To all the haters keep on hating because we love it!!!! ate... Reyna de Reynas y Malandrinas se volvieron Tequileras...." Isabel's reference to haters in her signature did not surprise me because I was reminded that at the beginning of Jenni's career, she experienced a lot of critiques from media, anti-fans, and nonfans, particularly because she was the embodiment of most of the sonic identities she created. With this background from Jenni's early career, I read between the lines, and speculated that Tequileras had stories to tell about dealing with Jenni's haters and that was why Isabel had to have a signature that addressed them. I was also familiar with the phrase que las "Malandrinas se volvieron Tequileras" because I had heard Jenni say it in her album *Homenaje a las Grandes* (2003) and in one of my favorite live concerts, *Jenni Rivera En Vivo Desde Hollywood*, which took place at the Kodak theater in Hollywood in 2006. The concert was a sold-out show and several of her fan clubs showed up that night, including Las Malandrinas de Avenal and Las Tequileras and Tequileros.

During the 2000s, fans of Mexican regional music organized clubs that allowed them to party and have fun. These parties became the paisa version of other Chicanx/Latinx youth subcultures that were taking place in Southern California. In recent years, there has been a resurgent of archiving projects documenting youth stories from the 1990s. Guadalupe Rosales, for instance, has two Instagram archive projects "Map Points" and "Veteranas Y Rucas" that are

documenting the Rave scene in Los Angeles⁵¹, and Historian Jorge Leal has a project titled “rockarchivola” that documents the Rock en Español scene in Los Angeles⁵². Fan clubs for musical artists took on a different role than the party crews. Fan clubs for artists were also interested in making sure that their artists reached stardom in their careers. Fan clubs like Las Tequileras facilitated meetings around the artists’ concerts, and organized ways the artists could get more fans. For rising women artists like Jenni, fan clubs also served as rasquache marketing teams helping her with sales and promotion. Jenni, was very appreciative of the work her fan clubs did for her and during the middle of her Kodak concert Jenni said,

Quiero darle las gracias a los clubs de fans que estan conmigo en esta noche. Empesaron con las Malandrinas, Se Convirtieron en Socias, Ya eran Chakalosas y Ahora son Tequileras las canijas. Proximamente Seran Parranderas, Rebeldes y Atrevidas. Los clubs de Fans son los que siempre, siempre me han defendido cuando sucede una cosa o sucede otra. Que dicen esto de mi, que dicen lo otro. Que ya critican aca, que ya critican aya. Y como yo soy muy dejada (making a face) ellas me tienen que defender⁵³.

I want to thank the fan clubs that are with me tonight. They started with being Malandrinas, they became Socias, they were already Chakalosas and now they are Tequileras, the shameless girls. Soon they will be Partygirls, Rebels, and Risqué. Fans clubs are those who always, always defend me when something happens or when they say this about me or that. When they criticize here, and criticize there. And since I am very docile person (making a face) they have to defend me.

As usual, Jenni thanked the audience for attending her show, but that night she particularly thanked the fan clubs for their attendance and told them that it was the fan clubs that always defended her

⁵¹ Raquel Gutiérrez. Veteranas and Rucas: Documenting 1990s Chicano Youth Culture. February 5, 2016. ArtBound KCET. <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/photos-of-east-la-in-the-1990s> and Carolina A. Miranda. Guadalupe Rosale used Instagram to create an archive of Chicano Youth of the ‘90s – now it’s an art installation. October 19, 2018. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-guadalupe-rosales-veteranas-rucas-vpam-20181019-story.html>

⁵² Marcos Hassan. This Instagram is An Archive of Rock en Español’s Golden Years in Los Angeles. Remezcla. May 9, 2018. <https://remezcla.com/features/music/rock-archivo-la-instagram/>

⁵³ Jenni Rivera “En Vivo Desde Monterrey,” YouTube Video, 50:44, July 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGcOOJTGaY4>

in tough situations. Jenni's comment, "Y Ahora son Tequileras las canijas" referenced the active involvement of Tequileras/os in Jenni's early career. Placing this comment along side Isabel's post made me realize that fan clubs were an important site to investigate and that "defending Jenni" was a form of affective fan labor that was a crucial component of the erotics of Jenni's fandom.

Since encountering Isabel's online post, I have rewatched the Kodak concert and can recognize references to Las Tequileras all throughout her concert. Jenni's erotic play in the concert itself also raised questions about how fan clubs responded to Jenni's atrevidaness and how the politics of pirujeria developed among themselves. In other words, how did fans continue to co-create these sex-positive environments with each other, both inside and outside the concert space? For instance, during the beginning of Jenni's concert at the Kodak, she started with a playful intro:

Don't you wish your girlfriend was hot like me? Don't you? Salud! ¿O quieren que sea niña buena? I don't think so! Porque yo soy Parrandera, Rebelde, Y Atrevida! Para todas mis Parraderas, Para todas las Rebeldes!

Don't you wish your girlfriend was hot like me? Don't you? Salud! Or do you want me to be a good girl? Because I am a party girl, rebel, and risqué. For all my party girls! To all my rebel girls!

Jenni's incorporation of the chorus from the song "Don't Cha" by the Pussycat Dolls featuring Busta Rhymes gives reference to the "girlfriend" (good) and "socio" (bad) binary women continue to be boxed into. In a coquettish way, Jenni asks her fans if they want her to be a good girl. The fans respond no, and she says, "I don't think so because I am a party girl, rebellious, and *atrevida*". The year prior to the Kodak concert, Jenni had released her album *Parrandera, Rebelde Y Atrevida*, so this intro was her transition to the new song "Parrandera, Rebelde Y Atrevida" she was promoting. As Jenni sang this party anthem, she identified several Tequileras in the audience, because as she concluded the song, she gave them a shout out, "Tequileras in the house!" The fans in attendance started yelling and we could feel the intimacy Jenni provided to them.

These three sites: Chalino.com, The Kodak concert where Tequileras were constantly acknowledged, and Jenni's album *Homenaje a las Grande* where the song "La Tequilera" was released inspired the following questions:

- *What cultural work did Jenni Rivera fan clubs have?*
- *What did it mean for fans to be part of Jenni Rivera fan club?*
- *How do fans experience Jenni differently vis-à-vis individually as opposed to being part of a club?*

Through a genealogy of Tequilera fan club, in this chapter, I move to close readings of Jenni's performances and the way fans organized themselves to see Jenni. I argue that the erotic poetics Jenni created in her music also transferred to the concert space which impacted the intimate lives of her fans, and this process of erotic transferences allowed fans to co-create sex-positive antirespectable environment with each other. Specifically, by analyzing fan interactions on fan forums, I argue fan forums were a crucial space for continuing to co-create sex-positive (anti)respectable environments with each other. I read the fan forum through a lens of erotic poetics, because alike Jenni's music and performances, I acknowledge the cultural production of fans as important sites where we can make sense of Latinx erotixxx. In the cyberpractice of Tequiler@s de la Semana for instance, Tequileras asked each other questions about sex, desire, and other erotics that they enjoyed. These interactions show us that fan forums are discursive online spaces, going beyond Jenni to explore each other's erotic subjecthood in the zone of what L.H. Stallings calls "girlfriend subjectivity" (75). My argument is based on the digital intimate affinity Jenni and Tequiler@s co-created with each other, which formed more than a fan and artist relationship; it surpassed these boundaries into areas of long-lasting friendships, what Sofia has called "fan-ships." Tequiler@s formed a template of fandom for Jenni she later expanded with other groups as she became a transnational star and other digital technologies developed.

The question of how to tell the Tequileras and Tequileros' story was difficult, mostly because I wanted to use a writing style that could convey my messy method/ology that started with my virtual voyeurism and later became analog charlas. As Juana Maria Rodriguez states,

Digital discourses, those virtual exchanges we glimpse on the Net, are textual performance: fleeting, transient, ephemeral, already past. Like the text of a play, they leave a trace to which meaning can be assigned itself, its reception, and its emotive power. To write about these online performances already alters their significance; a shift in temporal and spatial context produces a shift in meaning (2003, 118).

Thus, inspired by Rodriguez's performative writing of cyberspace, I end the chapter with digital fieldnotes from Las Tequileras archive. I incorporate these fieldnotes from the digital fan forum because they demonstrate the erotic affinity that they had for each other. I treat each virtual exchange between Tequileros as a social act transmitting personal and collective intimacy with each other.

I start this chapter with Univision Foros, a Latinx chatroom where all the original members of las Tequileras met in the early 2000s. After this section, I analyze Jenni's song "La Tequileras" and the album *Homenaje a Las Grandes* where this song was released, because this music track impacted the identity of the fan club. I argue that the intimacy between Tequileras and Jenni also had to do with Jenni's own uses of her erotic fandom. The fact that Jenni was creating homages to the singers who she also admired, like the Pussycat Dolls, made her connect with Las Tequileras' love for her. After this section, I tell the story of Las Tequileras through vignettes from a fan tour in the summer of 2003. Next, I show how the fan-ship Tequileras created with Jenni and each other had to do with their transnational affective ties. I end with digital fieldnotes of the fan website and forum that Cecilia, the second president of Las Tequileras created. In this section, I cover topics like motherhood and digital fandom.

Digital Fieldnotes // Roll Call // Presente

In the fan section of Las Tequileras and Tequileros fan forum, Tequileras and Tequileros practiced the ritual of roll call to check attendance. Whoever arrived at the forum first had to start the new thread. Roll call allowed tequiler@s to assess who was in cyberspace. Typically, those who were active responded with the word, “presente” translatable to “I am here.” Along with presente, some fans also incorporated an update on their day, birthdays that they were celebrating, or their enthusiasm for the sports teams they were cheering for. Emoji were also popular accompaniments to their “presente” response. As with language, emoji can also have double entendres. On one occasion, a Tequilera responded to a roll call by inserting an emoji with a thermostat and the words “I’m hereee.” One tequilera responded by asking whether she was sick and another tequilera playfully took this opportunity to throw in a sexual innuendo. She wanted clarification on what the emoji with the thermostat represented, she asked, “are you sick or ‘caliente’ which one of the two?” Another fan followed along with the joke and sent her a photo that according to her would heal her, regardless if it was from sickness or calentura (horniness). By the time I had found this message, a decade later, I could not see the photo, but I speculate it was a sexy one. At least, I hope it was. Not all roll-call exchanges ended like this one, but I mention this one because it highlights the mundane ways sexual references are used and most importantly it highlights the intimate relationship Tequileras felt with each other. Their jokes and albures (puns) were aspects of the erotic affinity that they had spent years creating with each other.

The thermostat exchange happened within a week of the creation of this new forum

in 2007. In fact, on January 29, a tequilera wrote a post to talk about how good it felt to have a new forum. This Tequilera described the forum as being back at home. After a happy face emoji she said, “(I know it’s not the same site) but feels like home lol.... Didn’t u guys missed it?” Several Tequileras responded and all agreed that it did feel like home. In that moment I realized that the earliest post on that site were from 2007, and las Tequilera had just migrated to that new digital space. If the fan club had started in 2003, and the chalino.com post I found was from the early 2000s, what other digital spaces were these Tequileras referring to? What about this forum felt like home? The words of a tequilera, “I’m glad that there is a place to talk and get to know other Jenni fans” made me realize that home were the actual fans, but that the digital space felt like home because it was the tool that allowed them to maintain a closer relationship with each other. The home aspect referred to the autonomy they had to manage the place they had to talk with each other. But how did Tequileras and Tequileros arrive at that moment in their fan club? (Digital Fieldnotes)

Tequiler@s in the Digital Space: Chuntivision, Chisme, and Chatrooms

During our *charla*, I showed Isabel my research folder that included the pages I had printed out from Chalino.com. I showed her my research folder after she had mentioned that she had not logged on to these cyberspaces in almost 12 years. The moment when I found Isabel’s Tequilera post on Chalino.com was perfect, because months later, when I tried to log on again, the website had been taken down. I showed Isabel my research folder because methodologically it was important for me to be transparent with her, and to explain to her that some of my research questions were inspired by the digital archive I found. The research folder helped us with our conversations. I referenced it when we spoke about photos. For instance, when Isabel showed me

her first Polaroid photo with Jenni, I told her that I recognized the photo because it was her user photo in chalino.com. When I showed her the folder, Isabel asked me if I also had seen the “Foros de Univision.” I told her that the foros had been shut down by the time I found her. Isabel states,

Comensamos en Univision. Porque habia como foros. So comensamos en Univision donde era Regional Mexicano. So alli empesamos a conocernos. De alli sale de que mi artista favorito es Jenni Rivera. Y de alli nos empesamos como hacer amigas y todo. Sale Sofia muchas de ellas salen de el foro de Univision.

We started in Univision forums. Univision had Mexican regional music chatrooms and we started to get to know each other there. From there we all realize that our favorite artists was Jenni Rivera. And from there we became friends and everything. I met Sofia and many other Jenni fans from Univision chatrooms.

Most of Las Tequileras were teenagers when they encountered Jenni. Because of their age they had to be creative about how they engaged in their fan activities. The age of most Tequileras made the internet an important component of their story. However, during their time – social media networks like Facebook, Myspace, and YouTube, did not exist yet. Thus, Los Foros de Univision became an important space for them to have conversations with each other. *Los Foros de Univision* were chatrooms sponsored by television network Univision Communications, which is the largest Spanish-language content in the US. The foros were created for telenovelas, musical genres, and specific artists. The music entertainment-related chatrooms were divided among different musical genres. Isabel remembers logging in through the category of Mexican regional music. The difference between Chalino.com and Univision Foros was that the wider network at Univision was interconnected to television-related content, and due to this, users also navigated the website for news, weather, and other informational content for Spanish-speaking community. In a newspaper article published by *El Pais* in 2005, they describe Los Foros de Univision as a space of interactivity. There were around 800 different chatroom communities and three million registered

users. In September of 2005, the chatrooms attracted 75 million visits and 32 million messages among users. According to Liliana Sanchez, the director of Univision.com content, “people not only came to discuss a specific topic, but they came to enjoy some with other people that had the same interest.” Sanchez also states that the difference between a chatroom and blog was that in the foros, no one had ownership over the space, so everyone had fair chances to participate.

All the participants of the foros had access to the same features, they each could initiate a new discussion, new topic, and participate at any time of the day. Lotty Vargas, the person in charge of the Foros de Univision stated that their philosophy was to “escuchar al usuario” (listen to the user) and she stated that 95% of the chatrooms were solicited by users themselves, who were mostly Latinx young adults from the United States. The foros were an excellent business model for Univision, as the chatrooms became a place where people connected with each other and created numerous affective bonds to the digital space. According to Liliana Sanchez and Lotty Vargas, being part of the Foros of Univision was a passionate relationship as some people were able to love, hate, obsess, find friends, enemies, and lovers.⁵⁴ When the foros were shut down in 2015, users created a change.org petition.⁵⁵ Rumors circulated that the chatrooms were closed because Donald Trump wanted to sue Univision⁵⁶, while others believed that the chatrooms were shut down because they were no longer being used since people had migrated to other social media sites like Facebook.

According to the Pew Research Center on Internet & Technology, in 2001 61% of Hispanics entered the web daily, a 20% increase from March 2000. Around 78% of Hispanic

⁵⁴ Francis Pisani. Los Foros de Univision.com, un espacio de interactividad. El Pais. November 17, 2005. https://elpais.com/diario/2005/11/17/ciberpais/1132195883_850215.html

⁵⁵ Barbara Idk. Reabrir Foros de Univision. <https://www.change.org/p/univision-communications-reabrir-foros-de-univision>

⁵⁶ Nefertiti. Porque crees que cerraron los Foros de Univision. Hello Foros. September 2015. <https://www.helloforos.com/t/por-que-creen-que-cerraron-los-foros-de-univision/9978>

internet users were under the age of 30. In their study, they compared the differences between how online Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites browse the web. They found that compared to whites and blacks, younger Hispanics entered the web for entertainment purposes. The report states,

Hispanics with Internet access are more likely than online whites to have browsed the Web for fun, listened to music online, downloaded music, played online games, looked for information about books and movies, and sampled audio and video clips. These differences are likely associated with the relatively high number of young adults in the Internet population rather than with cultural differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites.”⁵⁷

Despite this study by the Pew Research Center, the 2000s also witnessed a debate about the “digital divide.”⁵⁸ A report titled *Latinos and Information Technology: The Promise and Challenge* prepared by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute was critical of the type of access Latinos had to IT. In their numerous categories of access – physical access, cultural access, commercial access, and physical access at school – they found that the Latinx community largely lacked access in these settings. For instance, in the 2000s, home access was lower for Latinos. They found that there was a significant connection between home access and income. They also found that school access lacked at a higher rate for schools with high percentage of minority students. Language was another factor contributing to access; the institute recognized most of the internet websites were in English, and for first generation immigrants, “lack of Spanish language web sites can be a determining factor in Latino use of the Internet.” Access to Spanish language websites was particularly important because “community relevance and cultural content are important predictors of Internet use by Latinos.” These findings explain the tremendous popularity that Spanish-

⁵⁷ Lee Rainie and Tom Spooner. Hispanic and the Internet. Pew Research Center. July 25, 2001. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2001/07/25/hispanics-and-the-internet/>

⁵⁸ The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute. *Latinos and Information Technology: The Promise and the Challenge*. IBM Hispanic Digital Divide Task Force. February 2002. <https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/trpi/archives/LatinosandIT.pdf>

speaking chatrooms like Chalino.com and the foros de Univision had among fans of Mexican regional music.

Although there are no statistics on the economic class of users, class dynamics about taste and culture impacts content and the interactions of the chatrooms. When I interviewed other Tequiler@s, they referred to Univision as “Chuntivision.” The reference to *chunti* tell us that this digital space had low-class associations to it and part of it was due to the hyper-national performance of Mexicanidad. Tequiler@s used the word Chunti to embrace a word often used to mock listeners of paisa music. The way in which the *Urban Dictionary* entry uses sonic references to describe chunti lets us know that the ghettoness associated with this working-class sensibility is described in terms of vernacular language and loud music with “annoying tones.”⁵⁹ The sounds of Mexicanidad are presented as a sonic deviance and these class associations explain why Tequileras had difficulties requesting a chatroom for Jenni. According to Isabel, obtaining the chatroom was difficult because Jenni was not recognized as a celebrity by Univision. Only mainstream celebrities had dedicated chatrooms and Jenni was not considered famous in the early 2000s. Nevertheless, the fans kept sending Univision emails and they were finally able to have their own Jenni space. In addition, Univision chatrooms were managed in Miami, Florida, where Jenni was not known during the early 2000s. Jenni fans were competing with what Maria Elena Cepeda calls the Latin music boom.⁶⁰ Over the years, Mexican regional music has often been viewed as culturally inferior to other genres like salsa, bachata, and reggaetón. On Chalino.com, all the artist on the website were from Southern California, so fans did not have a problem creating a forum for Jenni. The

⁵⁹ Definition from urban dictionary –“consists of many slang words (informal). Popular music styles are “banda”, “rancheras”, and “corridos”; all exhibit loud trumpets, accordions, and men/women with sharp annoying tones as if they were plugging up their noses with themes surrounding “drunkenness”, “drinking to get rid of sadness”, “masculinity”, “la migra” (immigration), and songs about their beloved land Mexico. <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=chunti>

⁶⁰ Musical ImagiNation: U.S. – Colombian Identity and the Latin Music Boom. New York U Press, 2010.

intra-politics around Jenni in Chalino.com were complex. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, not every user liked her, many critiqued her for transmitting sonic pedagogies of deviance, but nevertheless she was present in the male-dominated lineup.

It was through the “foros” that Isabel met Rosie Rivera, Jenni’s sister. In the foros, Isabel self-identified as a fan of Lupillo and Jenni, so if other fans also liked these artists, they would most likely reach out to her, as fans like bonding over their common interests. Isabel said that Rosie reached out to her because she also liked Lupillo and Jenni and this common interest is what started a friendship between them via the chatroom and emails. Isabel said Rosie had said her name was “Rosa”, but she never introduced herself as the sister of Lupillo and Jenni. Isabel never thought it could be her. As their friendship grew, Isabel shared Rosie invited her to see Gustavo Rivera, another member of the Rivera Dynasty. Due to a family party, Isabel’s mother did not give her permission to go so Isabel emailed Rosie to tell her. Isabel said,

Rosie was also in the Univision Forum. To become my fan she tells me that she is a Lupillo fan. Because I was a Lupillo and Jenni fan, at first, I wanted to make a Lupillo fan club, but it never happened. People did not follow me but Rosie told me, “I can see that you like Lupillo a lot too” so she lies to me about not being his sister and tells me that she is just his fan. She tells me that she would like to meet me and that she was going to invite me when they went out. We would send emails to each other. She told me that her name was Rosa.

And one time she told me, Gustavo is performing at Mexico de Noche, a nightclub in Anaheim. You like him? I told her that I liked the whole Rivera dynasty. I have CDs of all of them. She asks me if I want to go and tells me that she will attend with a friend and her boyfriend. I get a little scared about the situation. What if it's a lie?

I already had said yes, so I had to go. But that day there was a family gathering at my house and my mother did not let me go. I sent her an email and I told her the situation with my family and that they did not let me go. Rosie says to me, “not to worry about it that there will be a next time”. She felt that I was being sincere and tells, “I have something to say to you. I do not want to continue lying because I see that you are sincere with me. And you're being honest.” I thought to myself, omg she is going to tell me that she is a man and not who she says she is. She decides to tell me that this whole time she is lying to me and her real name is Rosi Rivera, the sister of Jenni and Lupillo. That day when I was reading the email, I told myself,

wow, she is lying to me. How could she be Jenni's sister. I could not believe it. You're kidding me. She tells me, I am not lying, she is actually performing at a Jaripeo by the 91 freeway. She will be there, do you want to go? We can meet there so you can see I am not lying to you. She asked me are you going that day, and I said "oh yes, I'm going to go with my friend." Lets see each other by the door, I tell her. We asked around if someone could take us to the event because I did not drive during that time.

Yessica: How old were you?

Fabby: I was 16 going towards 17 and I still did not drive. So we begged my friend's brother to take us to that *jaripeo* (rodeo). He told us that if he was going to take us, we were going to pay for it because he did not like Jenni Rivera since she talked bad about men. But he took us and I met Rosie there. It was the first time I met her. I could not believe it, the sister of Jenni and Lupillo was looking for me.

Y: What was the explanation that she gave you for why she lied:

F: Rosie felt that because she was Jenni's sister, fans would just become her friend because of that. And the friendship was just that. She saw that I did not care that she was just a fanatic, I treated her with respect because we were fans of the same artists. I offered her my friendship not because she was their sister but because she identified as a fan. We continued being friends. I went to her house all the time. She invited me to a party at her house, they were celebrating Jenni's birthday. The party was at Lupillo's house. At this party, Rosie saw that I did not approach her siblings for photos. It was like normal now, I acted normal because we were friends, I was not only fan anymore. Then she kept inviting me and afterwards I celebrated my birthday at the house too.

After Isabel found out Rosie was Jenni's sister, she continued the friendship because it did not change her feelings towards her, but what did change was the way she expressed her fandom towards Lupe and Jenni. In order to prove to Rosie that she was not her friend because of her siblings, Isabel felt that she had to stop engaging in "fan activities" like taking photos when they were around. When Isabel attended Rosie's family parties she could not ask to take photos with Lupe or Jenni. After their friendship developed for about four years Isabel told Rosie that she wanted to create a Jenni related fan club. Rosie told Isabel that several fan clubs already existed, by this time in the early 2000s: Las Malandrinas; Las Chakalosas, and Las Socias had already

developed, but Isabel wanted to establish a different one. This fan club was the opportunity for Isabel to engage in fan-like activities and be part of a bigger collective of fans. In other words, through the fan club, Isabel would bring the digital community she had recruited online to an analog collective format. In the next section I introduce the Tequilera sonic identity and give some background on the song and the paratextuality it brought to Jenni and her fans.

Introducing La Tequilera/os Sonic Identity

Yessica: And how did you decide in Las Tequileras?

Isabel: Because of the CD, it was during the time the CD came out. After listening to the songs, I said, I do not want it to be the same names or follow the name of another song that had already come out. Other fans were going to say that we copied them. I told Rosie, I want to name our club "Las Tequileras" and she said yes. But at first we were only Las Tequileras, and then they calling it Jenni's Tequileras. I was ok with that but no we were just Las Tequileras.

Yessica: What was the difference for you?

Isabel: Because to me, I named us Las Tequileras. Later when Cecilia took over as a president everyone started calling it Jenni's Tequileras. To recognize that it was related to Jenni. But inside I was like we are Las Tequileras, that was then name I gave it.

This is how Isabel describes coming up with the name "Las Tequileras", a song that appeared in *Homenaje A Las Grandes*, an album released in 2003, the year the Tequileras were also created. *Homenaje a las Grandes* was a rendition to the femme singers that opened the doors for Jenni like: ranchera singer Lucha Villa, rock singers Gloria Trevi and Diana Ross. In an interview with La Prensa San Diego in 2003, Jenni shared her admiration for these artists and its the influence behind the album. Jenni acknowledges herself as a fan of each of the women. She acknowledges the mix of music genres— among them, ranchera, rock, R&B and soul — and identifies herself as a fan of diverse styles.

Es una especie de lista no escrita que sólo llevo grabada en mi memoria. Ahí está mi admiración por el estilo inconfundible de Lucha Villa y Rocío Dúrcal, por la dimensión enorme de Lola Beltrán, por la energía de Mercedes Castro, la fuerza expresiva de Guadalupe D'Alessio, la personalidad de Diana Ross y el talento controversial de Gloria Trevi que, al margen de sus problemas personales, nadie puede discutir. Cada una de ellas, en diferentes categorías, me aportaron algo valioso... Todos los temas los grabé porque son mis favoritos y debido a eso abarco diferentes géneros y épocas. Esta es la música que escuché desde pequeña... Empecé haciendo cosas diferentes. Grabé corridos para llamar la atención en un momento en que no había mujeres cantando corridos. Demostré que podía hacerlo. Luego hice de todo: boleros, baladas, canciones en inglés. Como me gusta toda la música, puedo interpretar cualquier cosa.⁶¹

It is a kind of unwritten list that I have only recorded in my memory. There is my admiration for the unmistakable style of Lucha Villa and Rocío Dúrcal, for the enormous dimension of Lola Beltrán, for the energy of Mercedes Castro, the expressive strength of Guadalupe D'Alessio, the personality of Diana Ross and the controversial talent of Gloria Trevi that, apart from her personal problems, no one can argue her talent. Each of them, in different categories, gave me something valuable ... I recorded all the songs because they are my favorite songs and because of that I cover different genres and times. This is the music I've heard since I was little ... I started doing different things. I recorded corridos to get attention at a time when there were no women singing corridos. I showed that I could do it. Then I did everything: boleros, ballads, songs in English. Since I like all music, I can interpret anything.

In this interview Jenni situates herself as a fan of the music of these women. Jenni encountered the music of some of these artists through her own mother. Thus, with this album Jenni becomes the bridge between older and contemporary Mexican music. This album helped her focus mainly on women's issues and remind us of the sonic pedagogies she listened through her own's mother's playlist. In this interview with La Prensa de San Diego, Jenni also explains why she included a song in English. She described this song as a form of respect for her English-speaking fan base. She states,

⁶¹ Pablo De Sainz. Jenni Rivera rinde homenaje a las mujeres que cantan. La Prensa de San Diego. May, 9, 2003. <http://www.laprensa-sandiego.org/archieve/may09-03/jenni.htm>

Así como respeto a mi público Mexicano, también tengo que respetar a mi público que como yo nació y fue criado en este país, que también escucha música en inglés y que se merece un pequeño detalle de mi parte.

The same way I respect my Mexican public, I also have to respect my audience that like me was born and raised in this country, that also listens to English music and deserves a small detail from me.

This album allowed people who were fans of these other artists first to also like Jenni and the genre of Banda Sinaloense and Norteño. With this album, Jenni created what I will call *fan paratextuality*, a method of fan transference, that uses homage, impersonation, and cover sampling, to appeal to fans from other artists, and even music genre.⁶² Paratextuality is a term used in transmedia scholarship to think about how the textuality across different media platforms creates a larger text. Jenni's impersonators have used fan paratextuality and some of them even have their own individual fan clubs⁶³. In this album, each song can be read as its own textuality, associated with an artist who has their own narrative and fan base, from which Jenni used to create her own larger narrative. According to her manager Pete Salgado, *Homenaje a Las Grandes*, was an album that did not highlight Jenni's originality and who she was as a performer⁶⁴. In fact, covers are often viewed negatively in the music industry and are frequently associated with women artists because many times women are not viewed as creators. Even though this album only had covers, I argue that this album helped Jenni obtain a larger fan base, and that her sex-positive atrevidaness, aesthetic, and Banda sound is what helped her fans use "La Tequilera" as a sonic identity unique to Jenni, despite the numerous covers that existed about it.

⁶² Raul Rodriguez-Ferrandiz. Paratextual Activity: Updating the Genettian Approach within the transmedia turn. *Communication & Society*. Vol 30(1) 2017

⁶³ An example of this is Gracie as Jenni, an impersonator that I write about in an interlude. She has her own fan club and fans of Jenni are part of it.

⁶⁴ Pete Salgado and Gabriel Vasquez. *Su Nombre era Dolores: La Jenn Que Yo Conoci*. Harper Collins Español. 2017.

The song “La Tequilera” is about a protagonist who cures her soul with tequila because she has recently experienced a cruel, heartbreaking breakup. The protagonist describes the act of being “tequilicious,” as a form of spiritual ecstasy and therapy, which allows her to forget her breakup. Marie Sarita Gaytan argues that the song *La Tequilera* departed from “traditional feminine expectations.” Gaytan states, “At a time when it was largely taboo for women to consume alcohol (especially liquor like tequila) or publicly express their desires to drink or get drunk, the song challenges a number of societal conventions” (2014, 85)⁶⁵. Lucha Reyes⁶⁶ was the first to record *La Tequilera*, making it popular in the 1940s⁶⁷. Scholars Marie Sarita Gaytan and Sergio de la Morra have recognized that Lucha Reyes’ career is often overlooked and excluded from Mexico’s popular imaginary of ranchera music. They argue “Reyes was marginalized because she visually and vocally violated the gender norms of the period, queered the ranchera genre, and challenged the heteronormative contours of Mexicanidad (Mexicanness)” The life of Lucha Reyes is a perfect example of fan paratextuality, particularly when we are thinking about a queer fan base and fluid sexuality. According to Agustin Gurza,

Reyes demolished social mores by flaunting female independence. She allegedly engaged in bisexual relationships and commandeered the once exclusively male privilege of drinking in public, mixing tequila and passion as part of her act. In legend, she became identified with the star-crossed, broken-hearted, hard-drinking heroine of one of her last hit songs, ‘La Tequilera.’⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Gaytan reads tequila as a technology of gender that “serves as a site where local levels of resistance and self-representation unsettle traditional expectations” (86) Gaytan states, “tequila likewise functioned as an ambiguous space where women could assert a range of emotions and destabilize the gendered dimensions of consumption. Tequila, in spite of its close alignments with masculine *Mexicanidad*, should not be dismissed as a one-dimensional trope that maintains social categories or enforces conservative political culture.” Gaytan “the reference to baptism, a Catholic ritual and the first of the holy sacraments, alludes to the lifelong expectations of the church, especially with regard to women’s comportment.”

⁶⁶ For more information on Lucha Reyes read: “Cucurrucucu palomas: the estilo bravío of Lucha Reyes and the creation of feminist consciousness via the canción ranchera” by Antonio Garcia-Orozco, who writes with more detail about Reyes bisexuality.

⁶⁷ In the album Jenni credits Beatriz Adriana for the song *La Tequilera* because she also interprets the songs. The citation to Beatriz Adriana is a generational reference to the artists that Jenni’s family listened to.

⁶⁸ Agustin Gurza. *Lucha Reyes Biography*. La Coleccion Strachwitz Frontera de Grabaciones Mexicanas y Mexico-Americanas. <http://frontera.library.ucla.edu/es/artists/lucha-reyes> and *La Tequilera* by Lucha Reyes. <http://frontera.library.ucla.edu/recordings/la-tequilera-29>

I agree with Gaytan and de la Mora that the transgressive aspect of “La Tequilera” is found in the public act of drinking. They state, “By Claiming to drink too much tequila, Reyes violates gender-appropriate and middle-class vernacular that spoke to the experiences of poor or working-class women who were often assumed to lack cultural refinement” (2017, 211). In claiming the sonic identity of “La Tequilera,” Jenni’s fans refused respectability and challenged the agitations they received from these self-made life choices. For instance, a fan on one of the chatrooms stated,

“Like Jenni said, I will be a Tequilera until I die. Because not only men can be Tequileros, we can also be, and who ever does not like it, I really don’t care. All the ladies who are Tequileras send your messages my way, and Viva Jenni! and Las Tequileras.”

Although Lucha Reyes was the artist who made this song popular, Jenni’s fans reused the song and its sonic identity to refer to their erotic digital fandom and sex-positive affirmation. Jenni’s reinterpretation of the song is also an important site for analysis. As Gaytan and de la Mora observe, the ending of La Tequilera is open to numerous interpretations. When describing the closing lines Gaytan states, “On the one hand, they could signify demise or the realization of self-destruction. On the other, they might signal a moment of self-reflection that nods to a future where change is possible” (86). The change Gaytan refers to is confidence to move on from the toxic relationship. The small ways Jenni changes the song creates a different meaning. In her version of the song, Jenni reinterpreted the song to situate herself in a space of *pirujeria*, sexual wetness and agency. Her ending states, “pero no, se las di a todos eh...?” (But I did not give it up to everyone). In fact, in live performances of this song, Jenni spoke about how tequila made women more sexually loose. In one of her live concerts while singing this line, Jenni stopped the song to state,

Pues es que ya saben lo que pasa con el tequila no? las mujeres tomamos tequila y las aflojamos. No crean que a mi no me sucede, me pasa igual que a todas usted. Salud, por el afloje.

Well, you know what happens when you drink tequila? We women drink tequila and loosen it. Believe me it happens to me too, just like all of you. Cheers, for the sexual loosening.

Jenni's interpretation of the song responds to "community gossip" about drunk sex and clarifies to the public she only had sex with those she desired. Jenni's interpretation of the song claims agency and rejects slut-shaming discourse. In Jenni's case La Tequilera's sonic identity had an additional sex-positive layer, one that also followed the fans and the type of social affinities that they experienced with each other. This reinterpretation of the song "La Tequilera" with the sound of Banda, particularly the tuba, tambora, and tarolas, also add a sonic drunkenness, dissonance, and an out-of tune feeling to the song. In the words of Deborah Vargas, this out-of-tuneness of music "commands our attention to music as power as well as to the power of music with regards to Chicana gender and sexuality" (*Dissonant Divas*, xiv). Here, Jenni's performance with the Banda sound points us to her gender disruption of this masculinist music genre and to a working-class transnational sound of Chicana gender and sexuality.

A los Hermanos Rivera Les gusta mucho el Tequila Porque su mama les daba bien llenitas las mamilas A que mi ama Ay, yo ya major boy Pues ya que ago aqui Dizque por la por la borachera Dicen todos Que casi todo *Ah, pero no se las di a todos, eh Lo perdi	The Rivera Brothers Like a lot of Tequila Because their mother would fill up their baby bottles Oh my Mother Oh, I better go What am I doing here They say because I was so drunk Everyone is saying That I almost * Ah, but I did not sleep with everyone Lost everything
---	--

The “Tequilera” version Jenni sang also mentions the Rivera dynasty. As we saw in Chapter 1, this was a common practice for Jenni, as it situated her in a broader genealogy. Towards the end of the song, Jenni replaces the stanza about a lover with one that talks about how the Rivera family love tequila because her mother feed it to them through a bottle. In the following section, I describe the day Las Tequileras became an official club and elaborate on what it meant to be part of Las Tequileras. I also introduce other Las Tequileras and do a fan tour of couple of concerts Las Tequileras attended in 2003. In describing some of concerts Las Tequileras attended, I demonstrate what it meant for Las Tequileras to experience Jenni in a collective manner, and explain how part of the erotic aspects of fan clubs was that they provided fan affective labor for Jenni.

Scenes of Deep Fan Joy // Fan-Ships as Erotic Affinities

In the summer of 2003, Las Tequileras attended a couple of Jenni concerts with each other. According to Isabel, this process involved several steps: first, weeks in advance the Tequileras created Jenni inspired fashion including club t-shirts, airbrushed hats, and fan banners. Tequilera fashion was a way to stand out at concerts and to make the fans more visible to her. The second step included organizing a pick-up schedule Isabel followed to make sure that they arrived on time to the concerts. Isabel shared with me that at the beginning she was the only Tequilera with a car so she would pick up the other Tequileras from Long Beach and other areas in Los Angeles county. A Tequilera who helped Isabel with the club was Cecilia, who took over as the President after Isabel had her first baby. The summer of 2003 was an important year for Las Tequileras and Jenni, because they became official in front of more than 1000 people and Jenni showed their love to them by taking photos with them and chatting with them as if they were more than fans. What had started in a chatroom turned into many long-lasting relationships. In my interview with Sofia, one

of the “OG Tequileras,” who met Isabel and Cecilia on Univision.com, she described her Tequilera experience as a “fan-ship.” Sofia stated:

I want to say that I had the fortune to be there since she started. And when you're not a big celebrity you're able to be right in front of your fans. It's a more intimate Fan-ship. Fan-Ship is not a word but it's a more intimate relationship with your fans because you don't have a lot of them and it's a few of them. So, you get to be closer to them. You get to almost even know them because they're the same crowd that's following you around. So, because I had the fortune of meeting Jenni when she barely started. I want to say that it was a very intimate and I was lucky enough to become part of that crowd who became her intimate fans for years to come. After her stardom just skyrocketed. You know. I wouldn't be able to say, "oh she was like that all the time because I know other people other fans might have a different take on it." They might be like, "well yo la veia de lejos. I never had opportunity but the type of fan that I was I was fortunate enough to see her since the beginning. And that's why I could say it was a it was a more intimate fan-relationship.

Intimacy was a crucial fan affect between Las Tequileras and Jenni. Fan studies scholars have used the word *fanship* to describe “identification with one’s fan interest” (Chadborn, Edwards, Reysen, 2017).⁶⁹ In this context, Sofia combines three words – fan, friendship, and relationship – to describe more than identification with Jenni. She used “fan-ship” to describe the erotic affinities that Jenni formed with the Tequileras. I want to return to Lorde’s *Uses of the Erotic*, which theorizes the political aspects of centering affective exchanges. According to Lorde, the erotic is “the power which comes from sharing deeply any pursuit with another person” (56). This collective sense of sharing joy could be “physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual” and forms “a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them and lessens the threat of their difference” (ibid).

The best way to demonstrate how fan-ships as erotic affinities feel is to take a fan club tour. Through a description of six trips taking place the summer of 2003, I show how attending Jenni’s

⁶⁹ Daniel Chadron, Patrick Edwards, and Stephen Reysen. “Displaying Fan Identity to Make Friends.” *Intensities: The Journal of Cult Media*. Issue 9, May 2017.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stephen_Reysen/publication/316856709_Displaying_fan_identity_to_make_friends/links/59145fa14585152e199dc6d2/Displaying-fan-identity-to-make-friends.pdf

concerts as a club practice was a deep pursuit of sharing joy in a communal manner. I argue fandom is a site where the power of the erotics is embraced, celebrated, and transmitted, both inside and outside the concert space. My goal by focusing on these six trips is to describe how the fandom the Tequileras created around Jenni centered an erotic lifeforce that eventually surpassed her.

*Trip One:
Warehouse Shoe Sale: Moving from Digital to Analog⁷⁰*



Figure 18. Jenni and Tequileras at Warehouse shoe sale, 2003.

⁷⁰ Ruth Nicole Brown. Blair Ebony Smith. Jessica L. Robinson. Porsche R. Garner. “Doing Digitally Wrongly.” *American Quarterly*. Volume 70, Number 3, September 2018. Pp. 395-416.

On June 28, 2003 Las Tequileras, four women who met on the Univision.com chatroom, met at the Warehouse Shoe Sale in Santa Ana to support Jenni. Sofia shared that Jenni had to do these events because she was not famous yet, so she accepted any opportunity she had to promote herself. By this point, Isabel, Cecilia, and Sofia had already established a relationship with Jenni. Most of them had seen her perform since 1999 and acknowledged they had come across her because of her brother Lupillo. Sofia shared:

The way Jenni approached her crowds. The way she approached to the girls, the females, her style. It just attracted me. I identified immediately. I am like, "Oh my God. Oh my God. You know she's like wearing stuff that I like." Like las gorras de avestrus (ostrich boots), it was a style that I had back when I was 17. Of course, she was an upcoming artist. Of course, she had the bling bling and the stuff you know. But that's how it all started that I remember because I was following or going to Lupillo's gigs y alli estaba Jenni. But then Jenni caught my eye.

As Sofia shared during the beginning stages of Jenni's career, her brother was the one who received attention. He was the superstar that was famous and being played on the radio. By creating a fan club, the Tequileras were committed to promoting Jenni to other girls and women. One important aspect of this affinity for Jenni was supporting her at events like the warehouse shoe sale. This warehouse shoe event was one week before her first concert at the Ford Theater. One of the roles that Las Tequileras took on prior to the concert night was helping Jenni and her sister Rosie with ticket sales. According to Isabel many of the fan club members helped Jenni personally deliver the concert tickets to people's houses:

Nosotros anduvimos vendiendo los boletos con Jenni. As de cuenta que Rosie y Ella (Gladis) ella era la mejor amiga de Rosie, y nosostras heramos las que vendiamos los boletos y los llevamos a las casas con tal de que los boletos se vendieran. Porque no era como que tenia promociones.

We went selling the tickets with Jenni. Gladis, Rosie's best friend and us were the ones who sold the tickets. We personally delivered the tickets as long as the tickets were sold. Because it was not like Jenni had a promotion team.

During these years, Jenni did not have promotional networks, so her fans and family members served as such. De Kosnik argues “fan activity, instead of being dismissed as insignificant and a waste of time at best and pathological at worst, should be valued as a new form of publicity and advertising, authored by volunteers, that corporations badly need in an era of market fragmentation. In other words, fan production is a category of work” (189). Las Tequileras are a great example of how crucial fan clubs are for women performers in the genre of Banda and corridos. These women became affective laborers for each other, and the intimate relationship they established went beyond the music, it was about the intergenerational sociality they could create with each other. This Tequileras fan club used their time to recruit more Jenni fans to attend Jenni’s concerts and help her.

Trip Two:

El Bautizo: Jenni’s First Concert, Affective Fan Labor, and Sexy Sensuality

I was determined to make that concert a success for many reasons, the main one being it was the first event I ever coordinated without Juan. I had to prove that I could do it on my own.

Jenni, in *Unbreakable*, 120

Esta es la primera que nos tomamos en grupo y fue la vez de su primer concierto. Para ese concierto que ella tubo en el Ford, que fue el primer concierto O es esta, esa es nuestra primer foto. que nos tomamos y esa fue antes del concierto.

This is the first [photo] that we took as a Group and it was the time of her first concert. She had that concert at the Ford, which was her first one. We helped Jenni sell concert tickets.

Isabel, first president of Tequileras

On July 6, 2003, at the Ford amphitheater in Los Angeles, Jenni thanked everyone for helping her make her first concert possible. Compared to the theaters, stadiums, palenques, and

arenas that Jenni would later perform in, the Ford amphitheater only fit 1,200 people. However, this concert was a big deal for Jenni because she was transitioning from performing in nightclubs where she shared the stage with other, mostly male, artists, to a stage she had all to herself, which allowed her several costume changes. In her touching acknowledgement to the audience, Jenni stated that the “cariño” her public gave her was incomparable to any other form of cariño her family, partner, or children could ever give her. Here Jenni is describing the intimate relationship with her fans through an affective connection. “Cariño” translatable to “I have affection for you.” The term reflects the fondness Jenni felt from her fans.

The concert at the Ford became only one of many performances Las Tequileras attended. Las Tequileras took their first fan club photo at this concert. According to Isabel, Las Tequileras wanted Jenni to officially “baptize” them at the concert, in other words, they wanted to be publicly recognized. Isabel stated,

Yo le pedi ayuda a Rosie, le digo, crees que pueda hacer que Jenni nos bautise ese día. Como que diga que es oficial ya el club. Y me dijo, ok yo le voy a comentar. Y si ya de allí, para todo eran sus Tequileras. En sus conciertos, y todo.

I asked Rosie for help, I told her, do you think I can make Jenni baptize us that day. like making our club official? She told me that she would ask her. After that, Tequiler@s became her everything. In her concerts, everywhere.

The same way the Tequilera protagonist in the song is baptized with Tequila, Isabel wanted Jenni to baptize them in one of her concerts. As Gaytan underscored in her analysis of “La Tequilera,” “the reference to baptism, a Catholic ritual and the first of the holy sacraments, alludes to the lifelong expectations of the church, especially with regard to women’s comportment” (86). If we play with Isabel’s usage of the word baptize, Jenni stands in as the tequila in this very sacred ritual, which symbolizes an intoxicated erotic that created a lifelong network, which, unlike the Catholic church, constantly disciplined women’s comportment.

Trip Three

La Dehydration: Traveling Long Distances to See Jenni

The same month as Jenni's first concert at the Ford, Las Tequileras went to a concert to *Los Terrenos de La Feria* en Tulare. According to Isabel, driving to Tulare was the furthest they had gone. The concert was free to the public and was sponsored by La Maquina Musical who was celebrating their fifth anniversary. The lineup for that concert included people like; El Original de la Sierra, Valentin Elizalde, Ricardo Cerda El Gavilan, Awkid, and El Halcon de La Sierra, among others. Las Tequileras arrived early, around 10 am, before the doors opened to get front space. Like most free radio events, there was no seats in front of the stage, so the public who wanted to be near the stage had to stand for the entire concert. Las Tequileras waited 12 hours to see Jenni, who was the last performer of that night. According to Isabel, most of las Tequileras did not move from their location because they didn't want to lose their spots. Being that close to Jenni allowed them to communicate with her with their banners, cheers, and gestures. The security guard, who became very familiar with Las Tequileras, constantly asked them if they were not going to go to the restroom. Isabel said that in order to avoid trips to the restroom she stopped drinking water. She was willing to experience dehydration to see Jenni.

Como 12 horas porque ella salio acantar como a las 8 fue la ultima, ella cerro el evento. So desde las 10 que llegamos alli hasta que se termino como a las 11 estuvimos alli paradas. Sin movernos y nos decian un security, no van a ir al bano? no porque no estamos tomando agua. Si no tomamos agua no ocupamos ir al bano. Y como ella que se movio nos turnabamos si alguien queria ir al bano o tomar agua. Yo deveras no me movi. Era una muchacha y yo. Le decian quieres ir al bano, no pues no estoy tomando nada. Y alli nos estuvimos todo el tiempo.

We were there like 12 hours because she sung last. She closed the event. We were there since 10 am and we left until it finished around 11 am. We were standing the whole time. Without moving. The security guard would tell us, are you not even going to the restroom? And they would respond, well we are not drinking water so we don't have to go to the restroom. If we don't drink water then we don't need to go to the restroom. And if someone did have to go the restroom because they just could hold it anymore than we would rotate. I didn't move though. Only another

girls and me stayed all 12 hours. We stood there the entire time.

This story is very powerful. The fact that Isabel didn't even drink water so she did not have to move and potentially miss Jenni's performance shows the dedication, admiration, and fandom she had for Jenni. Isabel mentioned that Yerika, one of the Tequileras almost fainted because they were not drinking water or eating food. The Tequileras who did want to go to the restroom rotated with each other so they would not lose their spots. The dehydration Las Tequileras consciously tolerated brings me back to the socio-emotional state that I am calling, "intoxicated by Jenni." Here, although las Tequileras are not necessarily "drinking" water or alcohol, they are still experiencing a form of intoxication from other visceral stimulations vis a vis Jenni and their fan club. In the photo below, we see Ericka, the fan who almost fainted, extend her hands towards Jenni. Ericka's lips are open wide, she is screaming for Jenni. The camera captured her being "ruidosa" and this "ruido" is a component of the cariño Jenni described in her first concert. This cariño was an affective energy that her fans gave her and Jenni returned to them. Their intoxicated erotics were two-way energies co-created with each other.



Figure 19. Jenni and Tequileras at Tulare.

During Jenni's performance, Las Tequileras and Maquina Musical took photos of Jenni, but unlike other performances, Isabel said the security guards did not allow fans to take photos with the artist after the concert. Isabel states,

No nos dejaron tomar fotos en el evento. Porque habia tanta gente que no permitieron tomar fotos. Pero nosotros ya ivamos a venirnos y fuimos a un gas station so cuando estamos echando gas llegaron la van de ella [Jenni] y los de akwid ¿te acuerdas de ellos? llegaron ellos y ella y nos dejaron tomar fotos, Porque ella ya nos conocia. Y ya los muchachos tambien como veniamos de locas por ver a Jenni, se dejaron tomar. Pero ese dia no nos dejaron. Habian muchas veces que el lugar no te dejaba fotos.

They did not let us take photos at the event. Because there were so many people who did not allow us to take pictures. We were on our way back but we needed gas so we stopped by the gas station. When we were pumping gas we Jenni's van pull up. She was with Akwid, do you remember them? They let us take pictures, with them because Jenni already knew us and her boys, too. We were the crazy girls that wanted to see Jenni. But that day the venue was the ones that did not let us take photos.

After the concert Las Tequileras stopped at a gas station to pump gas when they saw Jenni's van pull in. It was here when Las Tequileras took photos with Jenni. By this point, Jenni knew them, she recognized them, and accepted to take photos with them. The fan photo shows ten Tequileras posed with Jenni in front of her van. All Tequileras wore the same shirt to the event. This concert in Tulare shows us fan clubs had more access to Jenni but also it showed that Las Tequileras spent a lot of time bonding with each other. The average drive from Los Angeles to Tulare is 180 miles. During their drive back Las Tequileras played Jenni's music and planned their next trip.

Trip Four

Las Tequileras in the House: Jenni at Mex 2 The Max

On August 14, 2003 several members of Las Tequileras attended the recording of Mex 2 the Max in Los Angeles, a Mexican regional music show hosted by Patricia Lopez. In the early 2000s, Mex 2 the Max was a show aired on LATV and hosting Mexican regional music artists. Because of its Spanglish approach, the show appeared in the documentary "Do you Speak American?" In the film Robert MacNeil interviews Patricia Lopez about the code switching she engages in Mex 2 The Max. Language had an enormous component in the popularity of the show because it represented the language the youth were also using. In fact, the song Jenni performed that night resembles the Chicana touch that she was incorporating to Banda but also the Spanglish culture of Paisa girls, in this case Tequileras.

In her Banda remake of Oldies, Jenni performed her cover of "Where did our Love Go?" by the Supremes.

Baby. Baby. Baby don't Leave me
Ooh, please don't leave me all by myself
I've got this burning, burning, yearning, feelin' inside me

Ooh, so deep inside me and it hurts so bad⁷¹.

As Jenni sung this song in her brown v-neck and blue faded jeans, Las Tequileras were in the audience holding their club banner and swaying to Jenni's Banda remake of this oldie. Aside from having the sound of the tuba and other brass instruments, the recording of "Where did Our Love Go" includes the "talk box" method that was popularized by Black funk artists Roger Troutman⁷², the leader of a group called Zap. In the early 2000s "talk box" was popular among other Chicane R&B singers like NB Ridaz and MC Magic. In an interview about the "talk box"⁷³, Troutman states the sound was hypnotizing and sexy. When he used the "talk box" to do cover songs in nightclubs, he noticed when he used this sonic technique people would look up at him as if they were hypnotized. Interestingly, Jenni used this sonic technique that allowed Troutman to do covers in nightclubs in her albums of covers. In fact, Zapp's "penetrating surrippy" song of "Computer Love" can describe the "digital love" that Las Tequileras would cultivate for Jenni.

*You know I've been searching for someone
Who can share that special love with me
And your eyes have that glow
Could it be your face I see on my computer screen?*

*Need a special girl (ooh yeah)
To share with my computer world
I no longer need astrology
Thanks to modern technology*

⁷¹NellyArr. Jenni Rivera singing English. YouTube. December 12, 2012.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXbLVFX9Zk>

⁷² For more on Mc Magic see: Jason P. Woodbury. "Using His Electronic Talk Box, Phoenix's MC Magic Creates Latin-Funk Futurism. Phoenix New Times. October 14, 2016.
<http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/music/using-his-electronic-talk-box-phoenix-s-mc-magic-creates-latin-funk-futurism-8737114>

⁷³BeyeZee. "Roger Troutman on The Talkbox [Video Soul – 1987]. YouTube. March 11, 2011.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_CBZkd2tGE

Again, Jenni's incorporation of the "talk box" technique⁷⁴ in the middle of "Where did our Love Go" asks us to pay attention to Jenni's own relational fandom, which fostered an erotic sonic relationship between Black and Brown singers. Scot Brown has stated Roger's sound created a Blues/Funk Futurism.⁷⁵ In fact, Lester Troutman, Roger's brother⁷⁶ who gifted MC Magic's his first talk box went on to record a song with Jenni too. Here is another example where Jenni used sonic gestures to highlight her transnational Chicana Californiana side influenced by her experience growing up in Long Beach. In her autobiography *Unbreakable: My Story, My Way*, Jenni states:

We were not allowed to listen to or watch anything but Spanish music and Spanish television at home. However, the neighborhood, the barrio, and my friends introduced me to different types of music. The "homeys" would play what we considered to be hip-hop music. We'd dance to Zapp and Roger's "More Bounce to the Ounce" "So Ruff, so Tuff" and "I Heard it Through the Grapevine" at backyard barbecues... During the Summer of 1983, when I was fourteen, I met a boy named Sergio, my first puppy love. Sergio lived on Summit and Canal in the

⁷⁴ Mike. History of Talkbox, Vocoder, and AutoTune. September 6, 2011.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yA9Xmgt41NA>

⁷⁵ Scot Brown. The Blues/Funk Futurism of Roger Troutman. *American Studies*, Volume 52, Number 4, 2013, pp. 119-123. In 2001, Jenni released two albums *Se Las Voy a dar a Otro* and *Dejate Amar*, these two albums included two different oldies with Banda Sinaloense, *Angel Baby* and *Wasted Days and Wasted Nights*. The twenty-second introduction to *Wasted Days and Wasted Nights* starts with a request from two fans: a pelon and malandrino. After their request Jenni dedicates the song to all the "homies" from her hood. *Wasted Days and Wasted Nights* was the second oldie that Jenni recorded. Her first oldie was a cover of *Angel Baby* which was produced in an earlier album that was also released that same year. In his article, the *Politics of Working-Class Chicano Style*, Marez conducts an analysis of Chicano singer Freddy Fender, who recorded *Wasted Days and Wasted Nights* in 1959. (finish this) In an interview with *Billboard*, Jenni is asked whether she is a fan of Freddy Fender. She responds by identifying as a "big time" fan and shares a story of how she came about recording her second song by Fender, *Before the next Tear Drop Falls*. Jenni's interpretation of oldie songs with Banda was very important because it allowed Chicana girls, in high school, an opportunity to deal with "real problems" of their own generation which tend to be about how to navigate the United States as a second-generation Mexicana/Latina. In an interview for the Estrella TV tribute video, *Inolvidable*, Don Cheto, a radio host for *La Que Buena*, explained that Jenni's music brought together second-generation girls who were "not cholas persay" but were part of clubs (party crews) that liked corridos from Chalino Sanchez, El Gavilansillo, Los Rivera and other artists from Sinaloa. The girl audience Don Cheto describes identified with Jenni because she was from the *barrio* (hood) and spoke more English than Spanish, but they enjoyed listening to Jenni, a singer in the genre of Banda and corridos. Don Cheto's observations about Jenni's second-generation girl listeners explains why Jenni would record this oldie, because she knew that like her, her fans listened to music in English and they might have been struggling to understand their identity. In the late 90s and early 2000s other singers in Banda like Adan Sanchez, El Original de la Sierra, and El Gavillancillo were also making covers of oldies with Banda Sinaloense. Despite giving birth to her youngest child the same year, which caused her to not promote her album as much as she wanted, *Dejate Amar* was the album that "established Jenni as an artist." (Leila Cobo, year)

⁷⁶ MC Magic. MC Magic and Lester Troutman Talk and Talkbox. YouTube. September 16, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPcNPChW5Z>

more dangerous neighborhoods on the West Side of Long Beach. He introduced me to the “oldies but goodies” that all the *cholos* (Mexican thugs) in the neighborhood would listen to and bump on their boom boxes and lowrider cars: Brenton Wood, the Delfonics, Mary Wells, Smokey Robinson. (24)

Trip Five

“La Papa sin Catsup”: The Teasing in Jenni’s Lap Dances

On August 22, 2003, Las Tequileras went to La Hacienda de Oro en Oxnard to see Jenni perform. By this point some of the Tequileras had been dating people they also met from Univision.com. Isabel and Cecilia’s relationships became serious and they would invite their boyfriends to the nightclub shows. During my interview with Isabel, she showed me a photo where her husband also participated in “La Papa sin Catsup” chair tease game. She was very excited for him to participate, in fact most of the Tequileras yelled his name when Jenni was looking for interested participants.

Isabel’s mom: Isabel era chiquilla nomas que andava de arguendera.

Isabel: Si pues es cierto. Mira hasta mi marido andaba de arguendero.

Isabel’s mom: Por eso se juntaron. proque los dos andavan igual.

Husband: What is it?

Isabel: La foto donde te bailo. Fuimos a Oxnard, y as decuenta cuando salio el CD de la papas sin ketchup. Y hacia como un stripteas y subia muchachos y los hacia. Y ese dia todas las muchachas, Las Tequileras estaban gritando que Alex, Alex, y decia ella "yo como siempre le ago caso a las Tequileras, que se suba Alex" y alli le toco que le bailara a Alex.

This performance consisted of several steps: first, Jenni’s team would set up the stage with four chairs while she handpicked four men to join her on stage. As soon as these fans took a seat in their chair, they would have to put their hands behind the chair, as if they were tied up. Once all the men were in their positions, Jenni would announce her rules: “ustedes nomas pueden ver.

Nadamas yo puedo tocar,” (you all can only watch. I am the only one that can touch). As Jenni started singing the beginning of “Papa sin Catsup,” she would start by rubbing the head of the first participant. The rub was slow and included intense eye contact with the participant. Provocatively she would lick her lips and at times she would even stick out her tongue to suggest a messy kiss. It was clear that Jenni wanted the men to be aroused and intimidated at the same time. After rubbing the first participants head for about thirty seconds, she would push their face towards her breasts. This gesture was in tune with the increasing tempo of the song, which also prompted her to move on to the next fan where she introduced new teasing techniques like rubbing her ass against their legs. She rotated at least twice with each participant while singing the song. With this performance, Jenni showed her male fans who was in control. She always portrayed herself as a “desiring women...whose own sexual desires are manifest” (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005, 34). These types of performances influenced Jenni and her femme fans to no longer be subjects of male desire. Sofia described, “La Papa Sin Catsup” as:

Yessica: Let’s go back to Papa Sin Catsup. Can you describe what that is? Que es lo que Jenni hacia?

Sofia: Esa Cancion es de Gloria Trevi. Trevi was the one that composed that song. It is not a love song. It’s more like a hate song. I’m talking about you left and now you owe me something. You left. If you really break down the song, it says that you don’t need a man to validate who you are. Maybe that man was telling you, “hey man, you are putting on some pounds” and you are like, “I don’t need you to be telling me how I look. I look how I look. Period. You are gonna love me the way that I am. And I think that song that’s the way she did it on stage. She is in a wedding dress. The guy never showed up. So now she is all mad and she is like stripping off her wedding dress. Its like burlesque, I want to say, not a stripper but It’s kind of like burlesque. She has a tight garner belt with stockings. Very sexy attire. With you [the husband] the white signified that I was going to be this pure woman but then dude you left me. You turned me into this wild beast, pretty much, to not say another word. You turned me into this wild beast and I feel happy that I am finally who I am. Kinda of like breaking from that whole white, estoy vestida de novia, con mi velo, and I am this nice person and you leave me and I don’t know who I am. But with time I realized that I never needed you. Of course she had always men on stage. The men part was more like comical.

Gloria Trevi first made “Papa sin Catsup” popular in the 1990s. In her book *Erotic Journey: Mexican Immigrants and their Sex Lives*, Sociologist Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez talks about the impact rockera singer Trevi has on the sexuality of Mexican immigrant women. Gonzalez-Lopez explains how this new wave of rockeras singing rock en español in the 1980s and 1990s, “offered a clear social representation of the *mujer atrevida* (the woman who dares to transgress social and moral regulations controlling female heterosexuality)” (2005, 133). Gonzalez-Lopez states Trevi was polemical and “became famous for inviting her male fans to join her in singing her socially provocative songs on stage while she seductively undressed them.” (33). Influenced by Gloria Trevi,⁷⁷ Jenni embraced her “atrevida” sensuality by teasing her male fans. During my interview with Rufo, he shared with me that during the second Tequiler@ anniversary, Tequileras did their own “Papa sin Catsup” dance. The Tequileras had Tequileros sit on chairs and they did lap dances for them. Tequileras engagement with “Papa sin Catsup” was an example of how Jenni’s own atrevidaness influenced her fans. During Jenni’s performances her engagement with “Papa sin Catsup” served as audience foreplay and Tequileras applied Jenni’s own teasing techniques to embrace their own sensuality.

Trip Six

Jenni with Akwid at El Farallon: Polaroid Signing

On September 27, 2003 Jenni performed at El Farallon Night Club in Lynwood California. On this night Jenni wore an all-black outfit including a choker, hat, sexy front zipper blouse with black jeans that had long zippers with silver chains. Like Jenni’s Farallon scene in *Al Otro Lado*, this video shows Jenni entering El Farallon through the back door. In this video we see Jenni

⁷⁷ Kelly-Ann Mills. “Pop Stars Stuns Fans by Pulling Man on Stage During Concert Before Stripping his Clothes. Mirror. March 27, 2018. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/pop-star-stuns-fans-pulling-12260436>

interacting with some of her fans waiting to take a photo with her. Jenni's sister Rosie is accompanying her and helping take the fan photos. The purple Nokia phone that this fan uses is very representative of the technology in the early 2000s. After Rosie takes the photo, she leaves to talk to someone, and Jenni continues to take more photos with her fans. As they are taking photos, you can hear the fans inside shouting "Jenni, Jenni, Jenni." Suddenly the film cuts to the inside of the nightclub and we see the Banda musicians on stage while Jenni's introduction is playing. The intro plays bits of "La Chakalosa," as says phrases like, "Tambien Las Mujeres Pueden." As soon as she steps on the stage, they give Jenni the microphone and the tuba starts playing. "Chicana Jaliscience" is the first song that Jenni performed that night. The concert Las Tequileras attended at El Farallon points us to three intimate acts of fandom that were common among her performances at smaller venues like the nightclubs: exchange of jewelry, fans on stage, and polaroid signing. After she finishes singing this song, fans shout "Jenni, Jenni, Jenni" again and Jenni welcomed them by saying "thank you, como estan mi gente." Fans screamed, "I love you Jenni" to which she always responded, 'I love you too'.

At El Farallon, the distance between Jenni and her fans was less than one foot. Most of the fans stood and constantly extended their hands to touch Jenni. The next song was "Querida Socia," a song Jenni used to reference her size-queen desire. Throughout the night Jenni exchanged jewelry with her fans, shared her drink with them, and took photos with those fans that managed to get on stage despite security. When Jenni's fans asked for her drink, Jenni said, "yo no se porque mis fanaticas son tan borrachas si yo no soy haci." After making this statement, Jenni slightly rolled her eyes with a smirk, since she knew that she was lying.

On this night Jenni invited the duo Akwid to sing with her. During this time, Jenni and Akwid had collaborated on a song titled, "Cuando Me Miras Asi," a song that they also performed

that night.⁷⁸ Before she brought Akwid on stage, Jenni tells the audience that she has a request. Via a television interview, someone told Jenni “Las Consentidas de Akwid,” Akwid’s fan club, were fighting with Las Tequileras. Jenni referred to this dispute as “se querian agarrar del chongo.” She told the audience that Jenni and Akwid were good friends, so if the artists could get along, she hoped that their fans could too. Laughing, Jenni told the audience they did not need more drama in the industry and they were “ghetto enough as it.” The audience yells in agreement and Akwid greet Jenni’s fans before singing “Cuando Me Miras Asi.” The fight between Akwid’s fan club and Jenni’s fan club raises questions about the way music genres shape the way fandom is lived.

When the concert was over Jenni exited El Farallon through the back door and fans were already there waiting for her. Although she was escorted by two personal guards, she stopped to sign shirts, take photos and received kisses from male admirers. Her femme fans hugged Jenni, and the guards told them to “let her go, let her go, form a line.” It was common for Jenni to have photoshoots with fans, but that night she went to the truck to rest and touch up. After several minutes, Jenni opened the door of the truck and started taking photos with fans. Like signing inside the nightclub, Jenni signed cellphones and polaroid photos. Jenni’s signing Polaroids was very intimate and common. These photographs demonstrate fans were intentional about what they brought to a concert. Both Cecilia and Yerika took photos with Jenni that night and they uploaded their photos to the digital archive Cecilia managed. In the archive the photo was signed by Jenni.

⁷⁸ Cintas Acuario Musica. “Video Inedito Jenni Rivera de la Banda Concierto. YouTube. June 6, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ps4gqFNQfY>



Figure 20. Jenni signing Polaroids after performance at El Farallon, summer 2003.

On the other side of the Tahoe was Jenni's sister with several members from Las Tequileras. They talked about their chatroom participation in Univision. One of the fans asked Rosie to take a photo with her and then asked her for her email. The polaroid image became a staple of Jenni's early career and a technology youth consumed to archive the memories they created en las *parrandas* with her. I found the photos taken of this night on the Tequilera archive. In fact, on January 24, 2007, La Femme Latina created a post on the fan forum to invite the other fans to post a picture with Jenni. Several fans posted their photos with Jenni taken after concerts, at album signings. Yerika, another "OG Tequilera," posted two of her signed photos with Jenni. A fan by the name Reina_D_Reinas did not upload a photo but wrote a comment that intrigued me. Reina_D_Reinas wanted to know how some Tequileras like Yerika and Cecilia were able to get their polaroid signed and personalized. She said in all capital letters,

Reina_D_Reinas: Yo quiero saber si es asi en todos lugares or just here...Cuando Jenni Termina sus presentaciones se toma polaroids for 20 bucks luego ni no los firma ni nada. We just gotta keep on walking, no se si ella lo pide asi o es la gente

de donde se esta presentando. Pero its her ppl los que esta moviendo la gente. Ima ask her the time que la vea. Por que yo veo sus pics tan bonitas like bien “personales” y nosotros its like caminando y miando pa no hacer charko... I wish it was something more intimate with the fans like at least ask a name aunque hamas se lo acuerde pero que le pregunte a uno? Ustedes que creen?

Reina_D_Reinas’s post describes the polaroid sales that Jenni Rivera’s team managed during her nightclub presentations. As she explains, each polaroid was sold for 20 dollars. However, she complains that her photos, unlike Yerika, who uploaded two autographed polaroids hours before were not “personales” personal enough. Reina d Reinas details how Jenni’s staff is usually very quick in moving people along the line. Reina d Reinas does not know whether Jenni has any control over these situations, but she wished Jenni could at least ask her for her name. She did not expect Jenni to remember her name but wished that she could still ask. At the end of her post she asks the other Tequileras what they think about this topic. Two Tequileras respond and they explain different experiences with Jenni.

La Femme Latina: Reina d Reinas, I can only speak of the times I’ve seen her around here, and she has almost always stayed to take picture and sign autographs if its in a nightclub or a place like that. The times I’ve gone there have always been lots of people and it gets really crazy, her staff try to do their best to keep the line moving so everyone can get a chance to take a picture, whether it be a polaroid that they sell or with your own camera if you bring one. I have seen her sign the polaroids afterwards and there have also been times when Jenni finishes her set late and its already time to close and even in those cases Jenni has stayed even though they might have to take the line outside of the club.

Bayarea_Tequilera: The times that I have seen Jenni she has always try to do her best to take as many pics as she can. But like Cecilia said it can get really crazy at times. But she tries her best to talk to you and sign whatever you ask her to. I have even seen people sneak back up to her after they have found a pen to get an autograph and she will stop what she is doing to give it to them. When I saw her in Lancaster last year she talked to me and mi hermana for a good 5-10 minutes and gave us autographs. She tries her best.

Both La Femme Latina and Bayarea Tequilera agree Jenni’s autograph signing is usually very hectic and busy. However, in their experiences, Jenni did sign the Polaroids and even spent time

talking to them. La Femme Latina even clarifies that the Polaroids are not the only type of photos you can take with Jenni. If you brought your own camera you can use it. This is important because it gives fans the satisfaction that their artist is invested in fan time instead of just making money from them. An explanation for the difference in these experiences is the time in which both fans encountered Jenni. Las Tequileras fan club shared very intimate moments with Jenni because they met her when she was just starting. Las Tequileras witnessed and attended Jenni's performances at nightclubs. In the next section, I trace Yerika's polaroid photo with Jenni which took place the end of summer in 2003, I describe what a nightclub experience with Jenni felt like.

“Yo Soy Chicana, Californiana:” Transnational Affective Ties

Another aspect of why the fan-ship between Jenni and the Tequileras was so strong was because they felt Jenni was like them and they were like Jenni. Their shared transnational identities linked to their experiences growing up as Chicana-Californianas. Sofia explained:

There is a song that says "Yo Soy Chicana Californiana Y de Jalisco Mis Padres Son, Y mis Costumbres son Mexicanas, Mi Sangre es Brava, Le canto al Amor." So, all of that, is like, it's just me you know, like, I was born here. My parents are from Michoacan. My roots are from Mexico; I lived the American style, but I also lived the Mexican style. There's another song, La Chakalosa. "Por El Famoso Parral, El Farallon y La Sierra, Tambien alla en el Rodeo." Those clubs are the ones that I used to party in. They were the people that I knew you know. So, imagine how it feels when I would go to Mexico with my cousins and we were all singing those songs and they were singing you know and they would ask me, "Esos Lugares donde quedan? Que el Parral, Que el Farallon, La Sierra, Esos lugares que son? Son alla de Los Angeles?" I am like, "OOOHHH Yeah, let me tell you all about them". It was me. She was singing about me. It was my place you know. Imagine somebody singing about where you're from the places that you're dancing the places that you're hanging out and you know. That's why it meant more to us to the fans that you're talking to, to Las Tequileras, because we're local. We weren't a fan club in North Carolina, and we weren't a fan club in Texas. Although once she was out there, she was out there. But we were so close. Her songs were about Long Beach. Her songs were about South Central. Clubs that we were dancing to. You know. That's why she meant so much to us because she exposed what we did. She was singing about our lifestyles. You know what I mean. Her videos, if you want to

look at the video, Las Malandrinas was filmed in Huntington Park, Ritmo Latino. I am like "wow I was walking there. I walked through those streets." *She was us. We were her.* I know it sounds theoretically outrageous, like it's deep. I'm making it sound very deep, but it was that. That is why she meant so much to us because *she was a reflection of us, and we were a reflection of her.*

For Sofia, Tequileras and Jenni's identity mirrored each other's because their *paisaness* was at the heart of their intimate connection. In the song that Sofia references, Jenni was unapologetic about centering the voices of Transnational MeXicanas in the genre of corridos. This was transgressive among artists in Mexican regional music because oftentimes, managers and publicists, believed artists who were US-born should not acknowledge their "pochaness" to avoid the risk of inauthenticity. Therefore, many artists lied about their place of birth to be perceived as more authentically Mexican. This expectation is also common amongst radio hosts and other musicians. However, for Jenni, her Chicananess did not make her less Mexican, it just added a different style to her music and personality.

The song Chicana Jalisience Sofia references in her quotation was first recorded by Graciela Beltran but under the name *La Pochita de Sinaloa*. Graciela Beltran was another Los Angeles-based artist who was also making a name for herself. In fact, Jenni's father, Don Pedro Rivera, was also Graciela Beltran's producer for a couple of years.⁷⁹ Graciela Beltran was also born in the United States, but she claimed to be from the state of Sinaloa, Mexico. In an interview she stated,

He vivido siempre en Estados Unidos pero nunca me hicieron a sus ideas y costumbres, soy, sueño, como, hablo y vivo muy mexicano, porque esa es mi gente, mi raza, y es lo que yo elegí interpretar.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Unlike Jenni, who never had the chance to sing with Chalino, Graciela released an entire album with him

⁸⁰ "Graciela Beltran le canta al desamor en disco inedito" 20 Minutos. June, 2015.

<https://www.20minutos.com.mx/noticia/b291014/graciela-beltran-le-canta-al-amor-y-desamor-en-disco-inedito/#xtor=AD-1&xts=513356>

I have always lived in the United States but they never made me assimilate to their ideas and customs, I am, I dream, I eat, I speak and I live very Mexican, because that is my people, my race, and that is what I chose to interpret.

Noticing the differences between Jenni's version and Graciela's version can help us understand Sofia's connection to Jenni. As Sofia observed, in Jenni's version she sounded geographies of Mexicanidad in Los Angeles with the mentioning of local nightclubs; while Graciela references geographies in Mexico. In her version Jenni also referenced local music. For instance, in the two stanzas where they mention which corridos they sing, Jenni mentions songs by her brothers Lupillo and Juan Rivera; while Graciela mentions corridos by Antonio Aguilar and Los Tigres del Norte. In the last stanza, Jenni also inserts her own corridos like "Las Malandrinas", "Reina de Reinas", and "Mi Vida Loca", branding her own music and including the sonic identities of her fans in the songs, a method that worked well for her because it personalized her music to her fans. She used a multisensorial approach to her music; she knew that fans from southern California would be interpellated by the geographies that she mentioned in her music.

Jenni facilitated this intimate connection with them by also inviting them to be a part of the production of TV shows that were very popular among other paisa youth in Los Angeles area. On May 12, 2005, for instance, Las Tequileras were invited to the recording of Que Buena TV⁸¹, a show popular among fans of Mexican regional music. This show would air every day at 4pm and many youths would hurry home from school and watch the show. The Tequileras in attendance were Yerika, Vero, Fernanda, Cecilia and Sofia. As other scholars have stated, La Que Buena radio station was very important to the formation of paisa culture. La Que Buena radio station also hosted their own Premios awards, and even created *Gira de las Escuelas*, a concert offered to different high schools in Los Angeles surrounding area. Students from each high school would submit their

⁸¹ Heidi Entrevista a Jenni Rivera. YouTube. December 28, 2012.

school into a raffle and La Buena would choose the winner. In 2002, Jenni Rivera participated in several of those concerts, including one at Lincoln High School. This type of programming was important because it allowed Chicane/Mexican students to proudly celebrate their Mexicanidad. At this Que Buena TV recording, Sofia had the opportunity to interview Jenni. During this time, Sofia was an undergraduate at the University of California, Los Angeles. She was majoring in Sociology with a minor in Chicane Studies. Together Jenni and Las Tequileras took pride in chunteria, they embraced the nightclubs and the geographies nearby that are often critiqued for being too Mexican.

In addition to the transnational relationships between fans and their families in Mexico, the Tequilera forum created by Cecilia also fostered transnational connections between fans in the United States and fans in Mexico. During a fan party in 2017 in Ciudad Juarez, I met a Tequilera named Elida. When we spoke, she shared with me that in the early 2000s Jenni was not well-liked in Mexico, so she had to fight for Jenni to be heard and recognized in Ciudad Juarez. For Elida, the digital space was crucial to meet other fans and to obtain access to Jenni. In the early 2000s Jenni invited Elida to attend one of their pool parties. In fact, she said getting in the pool was a major part of the Rivera reunions. Las Tequileras became an important fan club because it was the first fan club with transnational members. This became important for Jenni's career, particularly in a time when the Mexican market was ambivalent about Jenni's ability to sell out concert venues in Mexico. Many people had told Jenni that it would be "impossible" for her to obtain popularity there. According to Araceli, a Tequilera from the state of Tabasco Mexico, Jenni's lack of popularity had to do with her wet vulgar aesthetic. On April 13, 2007, Araceli shared a photo with the Tequilera group with the following message:

Hola soi Araceli del estado de Tabasco Jenni no es muy conocida por aca pero kiero ser una tekilera de corazon llevo unos buenos años siguiendo a Jenni y pues deseo entrar a algun club oficial de jenni les dejo muchos besos de parte de una tabasqueña parrandera, rebelde y atrevida bye.

Hi I am Araceli from the state of Tabasco. Jenni is not well know over here but I want to be a heartfelt tekilera. I've been following Jenni for a couple years and want to join an official club. I leave y'all some kisses from my part, from a tabasqueña parrandera, rebelde, y atrevida bye.

Within hours Tequileras from the US responded to Araceli with welcoming messages. Araceli responded again and confessed to the members that she had “envidia de la buena” (good envy) because fans in the US had closer access to Jenni. Araceli shared her email address with the members and asked las Tequileras to consider her “fiel seguidora,” an official member, faithful to following Jenni. Cecilia, the president of Las Tequileras, wrote,

Hola Cheli, bienvenida al foro. Me da gusto que se estan uniendo muchas personas mas de diferentes lugares, especialmente de lugares como Tabasco, donde todavia no es muy conocida Jenni. Espero que te la pases bien aqui conociendo mas fans de Jenni y aprendiendo mas de nuestra diva.

Hi Cheli, welcome to the chatroom. I am glad that you are joining us, more people from different places, particularly from places like Tabasco, where Jenni is not that well known. I hope you enjoy meeting more fans of Jenni and learn more about our diva.

After a couple more friendly welcoming messages from Tequileras, Araceli responds by sharing how happy she was she found other fans who understood her and who were willing to talk about Jenni with her. Araceli states,

Muxo gustos a todas las chikas ke me kontestaron saben ke suerte encontrar chavas ke les encante las rolas de la diva la unica diva de la banda, al fin encuentro a personas kon ken platikar y entenderme en este asunto porke komo a jenni n la koncen mis amigas me dicen ke son canciones de nacas, y de borrachas, claro ke las gente de aca esta acostumbrada a escuchar canciones de grupitos de plasticos. bueno mis tekileras les dejo un mega beso de una tabasqueña parrandera, rebelde y atrevida saludos adios..... (emphasis added)

Nice to meet all of you. Thank you for responding. I am very lucky to find girls who also listen to the Diva of Banda music. At last I find people who I can chat with and who can understand this subculture. My friends do not even know who Jenni is, if they do, they think her songs are uncouth and for drunks. Of course, the people of here (Tabasco) are used to listening to songs of over-produced artists. Well my Tequileras, I will let y'all go. I send y'all kisses from a tabasqueña who is a party girl, rebellious, and risqué, bye.

According to Araceli, in 2007 Jenni's music did not have much circulation in the Southern part of Mexico, in contrast to the following she was building in the North. She promised the group she would take on the responsibility to share her music in the region so people could get used to her. This transnational exchange helps us understand how, despite borders, Jenni fans found each other on the digital space. More importantly, these transnational affective ties combined forces to resist ideologies of deviance and class stigma that Jenni's music created both in the United States and Mexico. Before I end this chapter, I want to return to the digital space that brought Tequiler@s together in the cyber world. As I have shown, the digital space was very important, particularly for fans who did not have the opportunities to travel on the fan tours, or who lived in other states and countries. Thus far I have focused on websites that were not managed by the fans. In the last section of this chapter, I end with a thick description of the Tequiler@s fan forum and introduce Maria, a fan who was very active on this page but did not have an opportunity to travel to the night performances as much as she would have liked because she was a mother.

The Third Digital Setting: Digital Fandom, Motherhood, and Sexy Questions

I created this website in honor of Jenni Rivera, a person that I truly admire. A woman, a singer, who I've had the chance to meet in person and the honor to know. A person, who thanks to her music, her personality, and most of all her smile, has always made my day. I want to express my gratitude and admiration for her through this medium. I would like to make this a site where people can get to know who Jenni Rivera is, and for the people who already know who she is, a place where they can see new pictures and read new things about her. This is my

collection of photos, newspaper and magazine articles that I have collected on line. Thanks to all those people that have helped me with my site, you guys know who you are. Thank you

Cecilia

This is the dedication by Cecilia, a page she created to post photos, newspapers, and a genealogy of Jenni's music. She called her page a "pequeño homenaje" (small homage) to La Diva de La Banda. Because Univision did not provide the intimacy Tequiler@s wanted, this page also had a link to a fan forum titled "Las Tequileras y Los Tequileros de Jenni Rivera." This digital space was managed by Tequiler@s for Tequiler@s. The forum was broken down into two main categories, one related to the fan club and one related to Jenni Rivera. The section for fan related content has two sections: "Club and Jenni events" and "About Us." Jenni's section also had two sections titled "Jenni Info" and "General Discussion." As of February 7, 2019, this digital space has had 247 registered members, 17,722 posts, and 1,724 topics. Tequiler@s posted daily from 2007-2011, keeping track of Jenni's career and each other. Some Tequileras identified their interactivity in this site as a vice. At one point one of the Tequileras tried to detox herself from it but only went on four days without it. At another point the same Tequilerera got a virus in her computer and another Tequilerera started a fundraiser so she could get her computer fixed and participate again. Several Tequileras immediately were willing to contribute because they missed her interactivity in the forum. Compared to Chalino.com and Univision, Ldivadelabanda.net was vital to Tequiler@s, particularly Cecilia, who had full control over the web space. Her page and the forum were a way to distance themselves from haters and have full autonomy in their discussions. Cecilia, who was known as lafemmelatina online participated in La Fat Chacalosa conversation Jenni had with some of her haters in 2002.

Main Page	List All Users	Search	User Details	Calendar
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Las Tequileras y Los Tequileros de Jenni Rivera

Mark All As Read

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
Las Tequileras y Los Tequileros			
☒ Club and Jenni events Find out and help us plan our future club events. Also, find out about Jenni's upcoming shows.	133	1803	Fri Oct 7 12:42 PM, 2011 by Davana
☒ About Us Find out what we are about, information on how to join the club and pictures of past events.	8	201	Sun Apr 3 10:31 AM, 2011 by Jenni_LeeVae123456789
Jenni Rivera			
☒ Jenni info What Jenni is up to. Articles and interviews with Jenni. New Jenni pictures.	291	2551	Fri Oct 7 12:31 PM, 2011 by Davana
☒ General Discussion Anything goes.	1292	13167	Thu Jan 5 5:09 AM, 2012 by customizegoddesign
Forum Statistics			
Registered Members: 247 Topics: 1,724 Total Posts: 17,722 There are currently 0 member(s) and 1 guest(s) online. 18 user(s) visited this forum in the past 24 hours The most users ever online at once was 4 member(s) and 2 guest(s) at Tue Jul 28 12:44 PM, 2009			

Figure 21. Screenshot of Chatroom.

I lost myself in Cecilia’s digital archive. I visited it every day for weeks, months, and years. Yet every time I looked, I found something different or met someone new. I imagined the intonation in their messages. I gave every emoji meaning too. Their messages were evidence that even when Jenni was alive, the erotics of Jenni’s fandom expanded beyond her, they were present in fan-to-fan engagement with each other. In the practice of *Tequiler@s de La Semana*, for instance, fans demonstrated an investment to learning more about each other; their secretes, desires, and aspirations. I also learned so much about affect and multisensorial ethnography from visiting this archive. Akin to Jenni’s songs, the stories from *Tequiler@s* in this archive taught me about pleasure, intimacy and representation. Each *Tequiler@* represented themselves with a desire and a complex personhood.

The forum became my ethnographic site because it allows me to have a glimpse at fandom on the digital space. I was particularly intrigued by the intentionality the *Tequiler@s* had to continue building a community with each other outside of Chuntivision and Chalino.com. This digital fan space was the third home for *Tequiler@s* – the transition was not easy but with time most *Tequiler@s* remembered that to be intoxicated by Jenni also meant to be intoxicated by fan-

to-fan intimacy. The difference between this forum and the past forums was Jenni did not participate in it as much as she did in the former forums. In the fieldnotes below, I identify several techniques Tequiler@s had to get to know each other more. I highlight their sense of humor and their erotic encounters, because they allow us to witness the ways in which they too, like Jenni, played with language and sexual innuendos. Of course, I do not want to generalize that all Tequiler@s engaged in this behavior, I did notice some Tequiler@s who were more reserved, and did not engage the puns, and *albures*, but despite their reservations they still had to negotiate it as part of their fan-to-fan engagement. The conversations and “red” curiosities by fans show how fans also engaged their own atrevidaness. I begin with the practice of Tequiler@s de la Semana.

Among the roll-call section, Tequiler@s also had other topics like “Tequiler@s of the Week” which consisted of a Tequiler@ answering an unlimited number of questions from other Tequiler@s. This process consisted of a nomination practice and Tequiler@s had to vote for the Tequiler@ of the week. The winner for the first Tequiler@ of the week was Maria from Inglewood. On March 26, El Cuatrero created a new post for the first interrogation. He warned the Tequiler@s to ask questions that they themselves would also answer, in other words, “recuerden que si no quieres que te pregunten preguntas “rojas,” no las preguntes tu!” (remember, if you do not want to be asked “red” questions do not ask them yourself). His questions were the following:

1. Donde nacistes? (Where were you born)
2. Cuanto tiempo tienes de casada? (How long have you been married?)
3. Que es lo que mas admiras de Jenni? (What do you admire most about Jenni?)
4. En promedio, cuantas veces al año ves a Jenni en persona, sea cantando o “x cosa” (On Average, how many times a year do you see Jenni, singing or something else?)
5. Cuales serian tus metas para este año? (What are your goals for this year)?

From Maria's answers, I learned that she was born in Rosarito Baja California but raised in Inglewood California. She had been with her partner for 13 years but only legally married for 10. She admired Jenni because she was a humble woman with a great personality. Jenni's voice was also something Maria admired; she liked the way Jenni sang. Maria's answer to how many times she saw Jenni in person was her longest response. She said that maybe, if she was lucky only once. However, she always went to look for Jenni at her non-singing events that took place in the daytime. However, her every time she looked for Jenni at these events Jenni was not there. She admitted to the group that "almost never did I really have the opportunity to see her so many times because I was always putting my family first. I'm criticized for that (LOL) but even though I do not see her, I support Jenni as I can in other ways." Maria's goal that year was to lose some weight and to see Jenni at the Gibson Amphitheater.

Reading between the lines of Maria's third response, I could tell that Maria had been criticized for not attending as many Jenni concerts as other fans. As a fan who is a mother of four children, her time outside the home can be limited. She did attend the recording of Mex to the Max, in fact this was the first time that she met Cecilia, the second president of Tequileras. Maria's response however demonstrates that there were social rules that fans in fan clubs had created for its members and that attending concerts was a major component of their fan-ship.

Abigail's work on Fandom as Free Labor resonates with this as she states that "A great deal of the work of fans consists of the construction of the rules and codes of participating in fan cultures; fans moderate the interactions of other fans, establish the terms of the fans' discussion and play (e.g., make clear what is authentic versus phony), and initiate and teach newcomers to the fandom" (Abigail, 193).

I was interested in reading Jenni's questions, but was very curious about the non-Jenni

questions, particularly the ones that fans identified as the “red” questions, which had to do with sex. For instance, one fan asked Maria, “what is your opinion on feminine masturbation?” To which she responded:

Why are women masturbating? Because it feels good. Because its cute. Because we enjoy it. We crave it. Because we do not have to give explanations nor indications. Because we do not have to moan if we do not want to. We do not have to demonstrate anything. Because we know the exact spot (of pleasure). Because we can do it as many times as we want. Because we can do it as quietly as we want or as loudly as we want. Because we can try new angles and positions. We can experiment new ways to reach an orgasm. Because we will never be hurt nor swore. LOL Because it is fun to talk about with an intimate friend. Because it is a fun way to learn about our bodies. Because orgasms are always guaranteed. Because we do not have fake orgasms...

A fan also asked her if she had the chance to ask Jenni an *atrevida* (red) question what it would be, Maria responded, “I don’t know, I think I would ask her if she was curious to be with a woman, lol.” These questions and answers show that fan club forums were also a space to explore gender, sex, and their own sexualities. Maria’s comfort in responding to these questions shows that she had invested time in making the other Tequileras her girlfriends. L.H Stallings speaks to how girlfriend subjectivity can redefine eroticism.⁸² Stalling states that girlfriends, “openly discuss intimacy and pleasure with each other, and they feel no shame about it. Rather than view erotic material and form as excrement...a girlfriend relationship in which funk can find a space to grow, prosper, and create radical black female subjectivity in wild safety” (76).⁸³ In her response, Maria points to the fun aspects of talking about masturbation with her friends. Fan clubs allowed for a

⁸² L.H Stalling cites Kevin Quashie for their definition of girlfriends, which is describes as “The girlfriend is that other someone who makes it possible for a black female subject to bring more or herself into consideration, to imagine herself in a wild safety. A woman is encouraged by her girlfriend to be herself radically, even as the heft of doing so might be too much for their connection to bear (2004, 18).

⁸³ LH Stallings also speaks about how girlfriend subjectivity can include man into their relationship. In talking about the girlfriendship of Miriam DeCosta-Willis and Rossean Bell, Stallings mentions how they were able to include Reginald Martin, as a third editor of *Erotique Noire*. LH Stalling states, “As a praxis of liberatory black erotics, they offer an example of women and men practicing reciprocating ideas about sexuality and valuing women’s erotic sovereignty across the diaspora.” (76). This can also be said about the relationship that Tequileras and Tequileros had with each other, a topic that I will explore further in the book version of the project.

collective space where formations of the self take place relationally. Even though Maria was not able to attend all the fan tours as the other fans did, she was still able to create intimacy with them through the digital space. During our *charla* she mentioned:

Como mi vida social I didn't have it out there. Cause not even at school con mis hijos que los llevaba a la escuela y las mamás they were older. If I was 19 they were in their 40s. So yo le decia a mi husband yo llegaba contenta cause I took parenting classes, "Oh I found a friend es una señora and she is 45, 36, thirtysomething" I am like '¿uh no aiy mas?' But how, if I had my kids at fourteen. Yes so that [the Tequiler@s forum] was like my way of finding people my age y tener una vida kinda social in my house, in the privacy of my house.

As to my social life I did not have it out there. Cause not even at school with my children who were taking them to school and the moms they were older. If I was 19 they were in their 40s. So I would tell my husband, after coming home happy from my parenting classes, "Oh I found a friend who is a lady and she is 45, 36, thirtysomething" I am, is there younger mothers? But how, if I had my kids at fourteen. Yes so that [the Tequiler@s forum] was like my way of finding people my age y tener una vida kinda social in my house, in the privacy of my house.

Her story shows that digital fandom was a major part of the affinities they created with each other in analog time. Without their digital intimacy allowing them to communicate with each other on a daily basis, these fan-ships would not have happened with each other.⁸⁴

Conclusion // Tequileras Anniversary // Just the Beginning

On August 1, 2004, Las Tequileras had their first fan club anniversary party. The party was organized by Las Tequileras with Jenni in attendance. According to Las Tequileras these were the gestures making Jenni's relationship with her fans unique. Jenni took time out of her day to get to know her fans more intimately. Besides attending concerts and their yearly anniversary parties, Tequileras also gathered for other social events such as Christmas holiday gift exchanges and

⁸⁴Inspired by the work of Kevin Everod Quashie. *Black Women, Identity, and cultural theory (un)becoming the subject*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick. 2004, one questions that continues to linger for me is: how do fan clubs create theories of Latina subjecthood?

picnics. Jenni also invited them to their own family carne asadas at the park. By the first anniversary party, Isabel was pregnant with her first child. After Isabel had her son, she stopped going to most Tequileras events because she moved to Santa Barbara and it was harder for her to travel to these events. However, she never stopped being a fan and she still attended some of Jenni's concerts and purchased her music. She did acknowledge that it was not the same to attend Jenni's performances without the Tequileras.

Most of the events that I analyzed in this chapter took place from 2000 to 2005. For the most part I focused on the beginning of Tequileras to demonstrate the intimacy they were able to build with Jenni when she was performing at nightclubs. I also focused on this time period to show experiencing a celebrity through a fan club experience requires constant communication with other fans. The fan club experience Tequileras created amongst themselves were unique and came from the necessity to feel celebrated as transnational Chicanas. In their love for Jenni, they provided affective fan labor which Jenni appreciated and reciprocated with small acts, such as giving them jewelry, remembering their birthdays, and recording voicemail messages for them. Some fans were compensated via various modes. For instance, Jenni sponsored a graduation and a surgical bypass for Fernanda, who was one the founding member of Las Tequileras. Fernanda also became good friends with Jenni's sister and daughter. The age proximity between her young fans and her own daughters facilitated the intergenerational aspect of her fandom. In the reality show, Fernanda for instance is spoken of as a "friend" not a fan.

Interlude Three // Celebrating Jenni's Birthday in Mexicali

On June 2, 2017, El Cartel de Jenni Rivera, also known as J-Unit Mexico, created a posthumous birthday party to celebrate Jenni's birthday. The event took place in Mexicali, Baja California and was hosted by *La Prieta*, one of Jenni's intimate fans in Mexico. Burronio was a key organizer of this event, too. He was the one who told La Prieta to hold my spot at the event. My payment was late because I needed to find a place to transfer funds to Mexico and I didn't know of any places in La Jolla. I told him that I would transfer the funds the next time I traveled to Long Beach, where I know where all the Mexican stores with Western Unions are located.



Figure 22. Fan made flyer, circulated on social media, courtesy of Burronio, 2017.

The weekend of the event I drove to El Centro, California to meet up with Malandrina, a Jenni fan who was going to take us to Mexicali. Malandrina's house was the meeting point for a

couple of J-Unit fans. For instance, Nancy, a fan from Texas, was also meeting us there, as was another fan who lived in Calexico. I arrived before Nancy, so Malandrina and I stayed in her living room talking and drinking while she was doing her hair. She pulled out her Aquanet hairspray and showed it to me. She was proud that she still used it and said it worked miracles. Malandrina told me she had grown up in Long Beach, which is why her nickname was Malandrina, but she had moved with her family to El Centro because it was cheaper. She also showed me her two tattoos of Jenni. Malandrina's mom and children were also in the home. She told her mother we were going to cross the border to attend a Jenni Rivera fan gathering. Her mother was surprised that fans were still committed to Jenni that they would travel hours. Malandrina explained it was also a way to reunite with other fans and get to meet new ones. Nancy texted Malandrina that she had just arrived in El Centro, so Malandrina and I went to find her. When Nancy arrived, we greeted her with a hug and she asked us to do a "chichis hug," which she described as hugging each other with our boobs. She told me that this is the way that Jenni and her daughters greeted each other on her reality show, so it would be perfect for us to do it too. Here in this moment, boobs were a symbol of pleasure and affinity to each other. When we were driving back to Malandrina's home to get our bags and leave, Nancy told us that her ex-husband and kids were going to stay in El Centro and go to the movies. The ex-husband accompanied Nancy so she would not be by herself and so he could be the babysitter.

When we returned to her house, another fan had arrived and Malandrina's mother dropped us off at the Border. We crossed over into Mexicali and as soon as we arrived, we went to an OXXO to buy some beer for the gathering. The other fans were already in the rancho cooking the dinner. One fan did come to pick us at the OXXO and take us to the fan gathering. As soon as we

got there, we saw everyone was wearing their fan-designed Jenni T-shirts and their hats. Burronio took us inside the cabin and gave us our t-shirts. Fans also had their lanyards with the VIP passes Burronio had created.



Figure 23. Fan reunion in Mexicali, courtesy of Burronio, 2017.

Toward the end of the night, Malandrina got into the pool to swim. Since we had arrived late, the other J-Units had already enjoyed the pool. I joined her by dipping my foot into the water. When Malandrina stopped swimming, she joined me in the corner, and we started talking about how beautiful Jenni was. Malandrina confessed to me that she would totally have eaten Jenni's pussy if she had given her a chance. I told Malandrina that I totally would had done it too. Surprised, she asked me if I was a lesbian as well. I told her that I was more on the bisexual side

of things, and she was a bit surprised. I was used to it, since, annoyingly, I am always read as only straight. However, after I shared this with her, she went to get her rainbow lanyard by her clothes and gave it to me. She said that she wanted to remember that conversation in the pool and celebrate my fluid sexuality. I felt it was a cute gesture and put on her lanyard immediately.



Figure 24. Fan selfie, courtesy of Burronio, 2017.

I appreciated our charla by the pool because it was intimate and real. That weekend Jannette shared with me that there were many J-Unit fans who were also lesbians, but because they had been with men prior to their relationships with women, they too were sometimes not read as such. She also told me that a lot of them had met through the J-Unit fan clubs. In fact, the same week, after we crossed back from Mexicali, I took Burronio and another J-Unit fan to the fourth of July celebration by the Queen Mary. Before taking an Uber to the Queen Mary, we stopped by Jenni's memorial park, which was one block away from my parents' home in Long Beach. During our photo shoot,

I took photos with the one of the other fans, and the other J-Units immediately started liking the photo and commenting that we made a cute couple.

After the pool, we all gathered outside to sing Jenni's music. The fans had rented a *rockola* (*music box*) that had all of Jenni's music. Everyone was sitting in a circle and singing every lyric of each song. There was a fan who had traveled from el DF (Mexico City) with her daughter who was ten years old. The girl was also singing all of Jenni's songs. The other fans were Durango, Taumalipas, and Tijuana. La Prieta, the fan who organized the event, was from Mexicali. She was very welcoming throughout the entire night. However, she did get upset that after singing Jenni's songs for two hours, we had changed the music to a zapatiado to dance. As soon as she heard the non-Jenni song playing, she came outside and turned it off. She said that what we had just done was disrespectful to Jenni. We were all surprised by her reaction, but immediately went back to dancing Jenni's music. "Chuperamigos" and "Inolvidable" seemed to be the most favorable songs to dance to. I added all the fans as friends on Facebook, and since the gathering I have seen half of them again at other Jenni events.



Figure 25. J-Unit Mexico and USA, Photo taken by author, 2017.

CHAPTER 3

“Nosotras Somos Tus Pirujitas Jenni:” Mapping La Deschichadera and Listening to a Body Politics of Piujeria



Figure 26. Jenni performing in Palenque Tijuana, 2007.

On September 1, 2007, *La Frontera*, a Tijuana-based newspaper, published an article titled “Son Socias Tremendas.” In it, the reporter Juan Carlos Gonzalez reported that Jenni’s fans threw thirteen pieces of intimate clothing to Jenni during her concert. According to Gonzalez, Jenni joked with her audience about *la deschichadera* (the bra removing) and told them that she would wear all the bras that would fit her. In the main photo of the article, Jenni appears holding two bras; one is nude and the second is gray with a flower print. Her showcasing of the bras demonstrates this orgasmic moment, the climaxed energy of her concert space, is co-created between Jenni and her fans. *Socias*, in this context translated to the Jenni fans who attended the concert and who gifted their bras to Jenni. In the additional photos that accompany the article, we see Juan Rivera (Jenni’s

brother) singing and holding a tequila bottle, we see Jenni drinking from a bottle of Buchannas, and we see two fans hugging Jenni. The reporter used words like “euphoria” to describe the moments when Jenni joined her fans for a drink. According to the reporter, the fans would erupt into jubilation every moment she accepted a drink of tequila. As it often occurred, fans’ drinking requests intoxicated Jenni quickly. In this suspended *atrevida time*, Jenni and her fans turned the social order around and did not care if they were seen as embodying the unrespectable femininity associated with *pirujeria*. Jenni gave her fans space to turn bra-throwing into a sex positive ritual, something she made acceptable through her intoxicating live performances.

Tequila became a major part of Jenni Rivera’s songs and performances. As Jenni constantly stated, drinking tequila, or the condition of being intoxicated, influences her fans and herself to *aflojarlas mas*, in other words, to be more sexually loose, active, and available. She would perform with it, drink it, and sing many songs about women drinking to overcome heartbreaks. By the time that *la deschichadera* became a fan ritual, Jenni had created more anti-respectable sex-positive affirmations like *salud por el afloje, borracha y encuerada*, and *de cartoncito*. She had also transformed, “se las voy a dar a otro” into an act of profitable exchange – promoting and encouraging women to “venderlas,” to sell their goodies for profit, in a time of economic crisis – with this, complicating the “moral” ideal that sex should always be free, linked to love, reproduction and family. As she did in her last concert, Jenni played with the term *Piruja/Pirujeria* during many of her live performances, she used it to refer to her fans when they were *atrevidas*, particularly when they would engage in any vulgar pleasures.

La deschichadera that happened both at Jenni’s last concert and at the Palenque in Tijuana in 2007 raises the following questions:

- What can the removal of bras tell us about the multisensorial ways women-centered concerts are experienced?
- How does the performance of Las Deschichadas unmasking their bodies by exposing their breasts expand our understandings of queer feminine desire, homoeroticism, homosociality, or female gaze?
- What can the songs and music to which fans undressed themselves tell us about this ritual?

In this chapter, I migrate back to Mexico to situate Jenni in Mexican stages and map out la deschichadera in her live concerts. I read the praxis of la deschichadera as an example of where pirujeria is lived out in the concert space and argue Jenni's fans made her live performances a queer space, not only because Jenni centered and celebrated Latina deviance in songs like "La Malandrina," "Madre Soltera," and "La Socia," but because fans engaged in woman-to-woman desire. I explore how Jenni is queered by her fans and how their fan gestures get recognized, lost, and remembered in live performances.

Although I started chapter one with Jenni's last concert in Monterrey, Mexico, I spent the rest of the chapter analyzing moments of pirujeria in her early career. I argued pirujeria developed first through Jenni's sonic pedagogies of Latina deviance and second through the erotic affinities that she created with her fans. The erotics of Jenni's fandom created a women-centered space that prioritized the pleasures of women. In the United States, most of the fans pointed to their local connection with Jenni and in this chapter, I explore her impact in Mexico, and how Mexican fans make sense of her.

I analyze la deschichadea and other fan practices by using both Jose Esteban Muñoz and Juana Maria Rodriguez's framework of gestures and Jason King's framework of "ass politics." For these three scholars the nightclub, dance floor, and what the body does in these spaces are important sites (gestures) of knowledge production. Muñoz states, "I look at the dance floor as a stage for queer performativity that is integral to everyday life;" (66) and for King, "the body becomes its own intimate dance floor, an even more knowledgeable site where new "steps" are rehearsed and practiced" (439). Following these scholars, I read the concert space as a space of constant climax, where the sound, music, darkness, lights, fans, alcohol, and the sonic drunkenness of Banda, intoxicates people to "get wet." La Deschichadera and the *gritos of fans* is the queer evidence, the ephemeral trace of this wetness.

I argue that La Deschichadera articulates a sex-positive exhibitionist practice, one that thinks through the body and recognizes *chichis/tetas* (boobies) think, breath, and feel music like an "ass does". According to Jason King, Rap music is a *technology of the soul* since its drum machine (dense polyrhythmic layering of the drum track) hits the body, particularly the ass, for the sake of impacting the soul.⁸⁵ King states that "the ass becomes not only a way to think more deeply about the place of soul in cultural studies, but it becomes the way we might imagine the body itself to think..." (432).⁸⁶ Through the praxis of la deschichadera, Jenni fans contend Banda Sinaloense is also a "technology of the soul," here the "brass machine" of the tuba, trombone, and tambora hit the *chichis* (breasts) to undo its bra and this praxis becomes a way to think more deeply about sexuality. Chichis and bras are carnal archives that can help us understand how bodies

⁸⁵ "In rap, the reconstructed and phenomenal hip hop is cultivated through the drum machine: it jumps up to hit the body at the level of the ass in order to impact the soul." (431)

⁸⁶ "Rap and Feng Shui: On Ass Politics, Cultural Studies, and the Timbaland Sound,"

negotiate oppressive moral codes of sexuality.⁸⁷ In Banda Sinaloense, the drum machine is experienced through the tuba, which usually sounds out sonic drunkenness.

In the next section, I explain my methodologies for this chapter, and elaborate on why I think a corporeal politics isolating specific body parts is needed to enrich our understandings of Latina sensual/sexual desires. As an isolated body part, boobs have been rarely addressed in Latina sexuality studies, thus I offer a theory that centers the *chichis*. After establishing my methodology, I map la deschichadera in the United States and Mexico to create an archive of this fan ritual. For the rest of the chapter, I offer a close multisensorial reading of Jenni's first concert at La Arena de Monterrey as a case study for thinking about deschichadera politics and their agitated responses. This chapter is foreplay for the next chapter, which details the controversy of La Arena concert, and the immediate debates about intergenerational fandom that circulated the internet.

Jenni in Mexico: Brief Background

By the time of Jenni's death in 2012, she had become a phenomenon in Mexico. She presented in Palenques throughout most Mexican states and started to obtain a large intergenerational fan base of women there. This process of music cross-over was not easy, particularly because of her embodiment of low-class culture. Even though Banda is originally from Mexico, Jenni's politics were constantly critiqued as "naca," a class marker that is often used in Mexico, similar to chuntiness in Southern California. In fact, many of the members in Jenni's fan clubs in southern California were also accused of being *nacas*. In her study of Banda Sinaloense, Simonnett has stated that Banda obtained a higher-class status in Mexico after it became popular in the United States. Reaching the Mexican market was an important milestone for Jenni, but for her fans in Southern California it meant that they now had to share Jenni with more fans and that

⁸⁷ "If we can also imagine the body to think, then we could imagine the power of the beat as a kind of mindfuck- a find of erotic cognitive anarchy" (438).

her performances in Los Angeles were now scheduled only for the summers because throughout the rest of the year Jenni was touring. Some U.S. fans did commit to also following her in Mexico. According to Lupillo1fan, Sofia, Alex, and Greg⁸⁸ went to a some *palenques* in Tijuana and Culiacan, Sinaloa. Although Jenni's music repertoire was the same, according to these Southern California fans, Jenni's shows in Mexico were different⁸⁹.

Jenni's career in Mexico took place when Mexican president Felipe Calderon had declared war on the cartels. In fact, Calderon's six-year presidency (2006-2012) aligns perfectly with Jenni's career in Mexico. As it was stated in her book, 2006 was the year that she began her crossing over process with her song, "De Contrabando." In *Unbreakable, My Story My Way*, she explains,

In the spring of 2006, I got my first big gig in Mexico, at a Palenque in Guadalajara. (In Mexico, a Palenque is a place where both cockfights and concerts are held, and in my opinion, it is also the best place to perform). "De contrabando", one of her songs on my new album, had hit it big in Mexico, and all of a sudden I was known throughout the entire country. Many people told that a singer who was not born on Mexican soil could never break into that market. People in the industry told me it as impossible, so you can imagine how excited I was to be proving them wrong once again. Though I will admit I was a little nervous, since times were rough in Mexico, and several regional Mexican artists had recently been kidnapped or killed (2013,149).

It might be just a mere coincidence that their years align perfectly, but the historical moment of the time and Jenni's nervousness about her performance is a reminder of Ramon H. Rivera-Servera's argument that "Latina/o queer performance imagines and practices new social formations and modes of being in the world," particularly when numerous forms of violence

⁸⁸ These fans are considered "OG fans" because they were there since the early 2000s.

⁸⁹ For some fans coming from the United States, Jenni's concerts in Mexico were so much fun because their higher incomes gave them easier access to afford front roll tickets and buy alcohol at significant cheaper prices. This material reality is a structural inequality hat fans are reminded of and reflect on when they cross to Mexico.

surround us. As the violence in Mexico increased, many musicians who sang songs about drug cartels became targets. It is in this context that her second fan club was born. In 2010, Jenni was accused of being a drug dealer and in response to this rumor she created her largest fan club – The J-unit. In a video titled “Jenni Rivera-Cartel,” uploaded by La Maruja on December 9th, 2010, Jenni states,

“Como dicen que soy traficante hice mi propio cartel de fanaticos. Entonces yo soy la Jota 1, la Jota de Jenni. Mi manager es J_G1. Y de alli mis fanaticos fueron añadiendo, J2, J3, ahorita vamos como en J400. Entonces tenemos el cartel mas grande en este momento. El cartel de nosotros pues no solamente defienden a la artista. Si no que el cartel tambien hacemos cadena de oracion, hacemos donativos, ayudamos a las familias necesitadas en twitter. Hacemos un gran desmadre positivo. Unanse al cartel de la Diva de La Banda.”

Born during the Twitter era, Jenni’s second major fan club had its own rules of interactivity, and although those fan politics are out of the scope of this chapter, they are important for my overall project and I want to return to this observation later. For our purposes, I mention the fan club because the fans whose archive I use for my analysis of the concert in Monterrey Mexico are proud J-unit fan members. In the next section, I provide a more detailed description of how I used the digital space of YouTube to map out la deschichadera in Jenni’s concerts.

Wet Multisensorial YouTube Methodologies: Following *Chichis* (Boobs) and their *Gestures* through a Transnational Context

La Deschichadera occurred both in the United States and Mexico. In my mapping of the ritual, I have identified bra removals happening as far back as 2001. In la Placita Olvera, for instance, it happened during a Mexican holiday celebration. But when talking to fans, they insist that La Deschichadera was more of a Mexican phenomenon than a U.S. one. Although not shocking to me, because most of the tips I have learned about Latinx erotics have been from *atrevida* immigrant women who were raised in Mexico, this observation disrupts the common

narrative that Mexican women are “more conservative” than their Chicana counterparts. However, it might be we continue to believe these generalizations about Mexicana erotics because we have been looking in the wrong places. The performativity of gender is negotiated on multiple scales every day. Jenni’s concert space was a place where a different cultural poetic of Chicana/ Mexicana sensuality and sexuality was possible; and if we “listen with detail” to fan rituals, we can find the ephemeral moments women engaged in when they gather together to get wet. According to some of the fans that I have interviewed, the location and spatial set up of concerts influences the *ambiente* (ambiance) that fans will have. In Mexico, the venues of concerts make it easier for women to “get wet” – whether with alcohol, boob sweat, or each other’s wet energies.

To trace the transnational aspect of la deschichadera, I had to depend on social media, especially YouTube, because many fans upload their cultural production to this site. Fan Studies scholars argue fan productivity is an important site of investigation to understand fandom, so for that reason, I also wanted to analyze videos made, edited, and uploaded by fans. Navigating YouTube as a site of fan archive building has been an unexpected journey because of its fragmented aspects. It was rare to find fans upload videos of the whole concert because understandably most fans usually prefer to enjoy the live aspect of the concert; plus, getting wet while holding a cell phone or camera is a bit difficult. The fragmented way YouTube is used by fans made it difficult to use these short clips to analyze an entire concert; but the short clips I found were crucial to my analysis. After a creative methodological quest, I appreciate the fragmented aspect of my concert readings, because they allow me to include multiple fan voices. Using multiple videos to analyze the concert space allows me to navigate different seats in the concert space, as some fans are closer to Jenni than others. This spatiotemporality is captured through the frame in their videos. Analyzing a concert through multiple fan videos gives me an opportunity to

listen and compare what fans' scream in the background. Fan-made videos also allow us to recognize fans as rasquache filmmakers and archivists who love capturing stories of their fandom and life. Thus, it is through their frames I search for gestures. Their YouTube videos are the queer evidence that helps me make sense of "lost queer histories and possibilities" (Cruising Utopia, 67). Muñoz introduces ephemera as queer evidence. Ephemera is the "trace, the remains, the things that are left, hanging in the air like a rumor...the remains that are often embedded in queer acts, in both stories we tell one another and communicative physical gestures" (65). Muñoz's understanding of gestures allows me to see how new gestures are left in the archive of YouTube through the process of circulation and reception.

What I did to trace the *deschichadera* ritual was search newspapers both in Mexico and the United States to read what entertainment reporters had to say about it. This is how I came across the first concert at La Arena in 2010. After I collected information on the concerts such as the date, year, location, I searched on YouTube for fan-made videos of that concert. Sometimes, I found concert clips. When I did not find anything, I saved the newspaper articles to ask fans during our interviews. The *charlas parranderas* and oral histories were helpful when trying to make sense of this fragmented archive. In this chapter, I do a close reading of Jenni's first concert at La Arena de Monterrey in Mexico on July 24, 2010. I enter this concert through the archives of several fans who uploaded their videos to YouTube. For instance, I entered the first *tanda* of the concert through the YouTube fan archive of Mellisa. She uploaded a video of Jenni's performance at La Arena titled, "Arena Monterrey 24/07/2010, el vídeo mas especial para mi:)" on November 19, 2012. In the description of this video she states,

es especial porque al iniciar la canción, la sopa del bebe. yo le lanze un rosario envuelto en una blusa morada:) cada que lo veo, me emociono igual o mas, fue lo mejor de mi vida este concierto, AMO tanto a mi Diva hermosa. J157(:

this video is special to me because it initiates with the song, la sopa del bebe, I threw a rosary to Jenni wrapped in a purple shirt :) every time I watch it, I get excited, the same or more, it was the best concert of my life, I love the beautiful La Diva. J157 (:

The video is 57:20 minutes long, and it allowed me to listen to the songs to which las fans se deschicharon. This video became the base for my analysis of the first *tanda* of Jenni's concert, because it's the longest video I have found. It is important to note Mellisa's video did not start from the beginning of the concert, but due to the cyber rhizomic nature of YouTube, I came across other fan-made videos of that night. From Mellisa's archive, YouTube directed me to other videos uploaded by fans. I would have never found these videos if I had not found Mellisa's archive; it was her algorithm that led me to other fan's videos of this night. For instance, my description of the beginning of this concert was found on the patyern63 YouTube Channel.

Rodriguez states gestures are both literal ("actual movements of the body") and figurative. In the literal sense, they are the "actual movements of the body" (4). In the figurative sense, gestures, "reach out to manipulate how energy and matter flow in the world" (4). In our context, the literal aspects of Jenni fan's gestures are their movements to remove their bras, throw them to Jenni, and flash her, along with the movements fans do when they clap, chant, or cheer for/with Jenni. The movements that fans engage in to be in solidarity with other fans, and even the movements they engage in to wait in long lines for Jenni are also gestures in this sense. The figurative sense of those gestures is related to the homosocial aspect of those movements, which raises an important question: *How does the energy of Las Deschichadas impact the affective flow of the concert space and outside the concert space?* According to Rodriguez, this energy and its gestures are always relational, "they form connection between different parts of our bodies; they cite other gestures; they extend the reach of the self into the space between us; they bring into

being a positionality of a “we.”” (2). The We—as in Jenni and her fans; fans-to-fans; her fans and I “the researcher;” Jenni and I “the aca-fan;” and the reader and I “the writer” – we are all part of this we.

An important component of gestures is affect, feeling, and emotions. In my reading of these YouTube videos, I look for the traces of fan affective relations. Their moments of intimacies, which sometimes, because of the distance, I cannot witness in detail visually through the frame. However, I can hear through their gritos, the erotic noise they transmit toward Jenni and each other. Thus, *listening to affect* has been an important component of my reading these YouTube videos. As I have mentioned before, in this dissertation, affect is “not about individual self-contained emotions, but rather how feelings function in the realm of the social” (17). Like Rodriguez, I also deploy “affect, feeling, and emotion” as a critical methodology. Like Jenni’s concert, I break my analysis of the concert into three sets and pay attention to when/why fans se deschichaban. I allow la deschichadera, the “details” fans engaged in during her performances, guide my reading of the concert space; the bras, fans’ boobs, and the way they record their videos becomes my site of investigation and point of analysis. For instance, their deschichadera directs me to the songs I pay attention to in the concert space. The sequence of the songs to which women se deschicharon is the following: “Cuando me Acuerdo de Ti,” “Chuperamigos,” “Damas Divinas,” “Ovarios,” and “De Contrabando.” Most songs were originally written by Jenni and embody atrevida intoxication and pirujeria in multiple ways. I also listen to the way pirujeria is being theorized by both fans and Jenni. I am interested in the ways sexual looseness, *el afloje*, is a source of power for fans. This power is transported through the flesh, which allows boobs and fans’ intoxicating pleasures form a performance fandom reading. After this section, I focus on

Jenni's reference of *calor* and what I refer to as sonic spatial drunkenness, two affective gestures helping us understand the gendered corporeal effects of Jenni's music in live performances.

Raunchy Thermometer: Feeling *Calor/Calentura* inside Sonic Spatial Drunkenness

Borracha Y Encuerada!!!

According to Jenni, *calor* (heat) is the impulse that drives fans to *deschicharse* and be *pirujas*, sexually loose while intoxicated. In Mexican/Chicanx vernacular, *calor* is a pun for *calentura*, a word that properly translates to “fever” but oftentimes, *en la parranda y desmadre*, it becomes *horniness* – “*calor de la buena*.” – sexual fever. Jenni's reference to the visceral effect of *calor*, hotness, raises questions about the spatiotemporal aspects of her concerts. Emma Perez and Aida Hurtado have stated Chicanas have claimed several *sitios* (spaces) and *lenguas* (tongues) throughout history. *Lengua*, incorporates multiple meanings: language, discourse, and even some sexually imbedded connotations (Hurtado, 2003), as in ‘*me voy echar un taco de lengua* and in *albures* (puns). *La lengua* is an essential organ to *lamber*, *chupar*, *mamar*, *saboriar*, y *platicar* (lick, suck, taste, and talk). Hurtado states sexual pleasure has been a key theme among Chicana feminists “to counteract the silence and repression around sex in Chicano communities” (8). The most obvious forms of *lengua* are in the *albures* fans yell at Jenni when they respond to her. For instance, “*nosotras somos tus pirujitas Jenni*,” (we are your little whores Jenni) conjure the ways in which Jenni fans are counteracting slut shaming in MeXican communities.⁹⁰

The sexually loaded connotations of *calor* and *calentura* inspire me to locate the raw uses

⁹⁰ Sociologists Patricia Zavella's work has analyzed different sexual *lenguas*, in other words, different “cultural poetics” of Chicana/Mexicana desire and sexuality. Zavella identified “Playing” and “fire” as two metaphors that her participants used to talk about sexuality. These metaphors “rendered banal in popular culture” defined *playing* as “flirting, teasing, or testing potential lovers” and fire as – “hot,” “passionate,” “boiling” “explosive” – and difficulty to stop.”

of *calor* as a practice in Jenni's *raunchy lengua*, situating Jenni and her fans in different concert *sitios*. In Jenni's autobiography, *Unbreakable: My Story, My Way*, she describes an experience at one of her concerts:

My band and I were set up in the small circle in the middle of the palenque, and thousands of fans surrounded us. The closest fans were less than ten feet from me, and they were handing me tequila shots throughout the night as they sang along to my songs. The *energy was so high and so contained, and when I finished that concert, I was buzzing on alcohol and adrenaline.* (149)

Jenni's anecdote transports us to the concert space, where she interacted with her fans very intimately and describes intoxication as a two-way pleasure experienced both by Jenni and her fans. Inspired by Jenni's contained high energy, I think about *calor*, as a product of this two-way form of intoxication between Jenni and her fans. This *calor* inspires a form of Latina exhibitionism; and I ponder the different sonic dimensions that contribute to a state of hotness and wetness. Carol Queen's work on exhibitionism is important to my thinking of a Chicana/Latina Exhibitionist practice because she redefines our understanding of exhibitionism. Queen defines exhibitionism as "consensual behavior that provokes turn-on." Queen states the way exhibitionism has been defined in medicalized sex makes some women not want to identify with the term. Historically, exhibitionism has referred to "someone (usually male) who floats his boat by whipping his dick out to show innocent schoolgirls, hopefully making them sequel." Like Queen, when I speak of exhibitionism, I am not referring to this male practice, although anti-fans have used a similar medicalized sexual example to shame fans for engaging in *la deschichadera*. Instead, consensual behavior plays a crucial role in the excitement of this practice. Regarding *la deschichadera* ritual, I define its exhibitionist style as a raw naked practice cultivating a collective recognition of the sensual body and celebrating its body parts as philosophers of desire.

The collective descriptor of my definitions inspires questions about the spatiotemporality

of Jenni's concerts. *How does the space of her concerts inspire this calor?* A spatial reading of the concert venue forces me to ask fans questions about their concert experiences, and how the location of their seats in the concert allowed them to feel calor differently. These questions are also inspired by Queen, who states that the environment in which showing off takes place is very important. Queen contends,

Some exhibitionists only want to get down and wild with one special person at home. Others would like to think everyone in the world is watching but may prefer them to hold the applause until we're turned on and masturbating. For still others—and this often holds true for me—other people's responses aren't really what we're looking for; they may even be distracting. *The turn-on is internal—knowing that we're doing it, is what's hot, not who's watching. This is one of the things that makes exhibitionism personally empowering ... I've found a way to express my turn-on...Sure, it is ego-enhancing that I've found other people who want to watch, but the bottom line is that my own sexual capabilities, my own capacity for arousal, have expanded*" (65).⁹¹

In this quotation Queen recognizes every exhibitionist has different location preferences, public versus private, but for both the pleasure from exhibiting the body is internal and having people who support your desires expands your own power for arousal. The sensation of calor can be a visceral reaction of arousal; can calor also signify the internal turn-on that Queen suggests? Or *can we read the calor that Jenni references as a form of audience foreplay?* Audience foreplay is an idea emerging during a fan gathering in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. While enjoying a Jenni-themed party, fans made comments about their partners who were waiting at home for them, and how the gathering was stimulating foreplay for them before they got home. The fan gathering served as a warm-up arousal before they arrived home to their partners. Although this fan gathering was not a Jenni concert, it felt like one because Jenni was everywhere; her photos were on the table centerpieces, her music and music videos were playing in the background and the people who

⁹¹ Carol Queen. *Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of Sex-Positive Culture*. 1997. Cleis Press. Pennsylvania.

attended that night were also her fans. Calor was present in the room from the atmosphere we were creating, so I was reminded that in Jenni's concerts this calor was uncontrollable and felt ten times hotter. In the next section, I apply these ideas of calor, space, and audience foreplay to search for la deschichadera and analyze Jenni's first concert at La Arena de Monterrey in 2010.

Mapping *La Deschichadera*: Bras, Boobs, Booze

In 2002, Jenni performed at a Fiestas Patrias concert at the Placita Olvera in Los Angeles, California. As she performs, Jenni is thrown at least two bras to her from her fans. Like she did during her concerts at El Farallon, every time Jenni received something from fans, she would reciprocate by giving them some of her own jewelry. The first time she gets a bra thrown to her, she says "that's what I wanted" and continues singing, "Se las voy a dar a otro," (I am going to give them to someone else) the song that earned Rivera her first Grammy nomination. She did not play with the first bra instead she set it down with her pile of gifts. However, after another bra is thrown to her she does start to play with it and places it on top of her boobs. Jenni says, "oh my God, another one?" After she looks at the size, she says "38C, esta chichona la canija, yo soy

38 D” (38 C, she has big boobs, I am 38 D). She unties the bra to place it on her boobs and after she says, “quieren ver a la que tiro esto, imagínase como las trae”



Figure 27. Jenni bra, Fiestas Patrias in Los Angeles, 2002.

(You want to see who threw the bra? Imagine how she has them right now!). In this portion of the performance we do not see her get intoxicated, instead we see the intoxication from her fans, who are throwing gifts and bras. We do however get an implied reference to the functions of a bra: women wear them to hold their breasts in a firm position⁹². In *An Intimate Affair: Women, Lingerie and Sexuality*, Jill Fields states that brassieres were “a critical site of gender differentiation, as well as a source of pleasure and power⁹³” (2007, 81). Jenni also plays with the size of boobs and she

⁹² *Uplift: The Bra in America*, Jane Farrell-Beck and Collen Gau.

⁹³ “The mingling of glamour with large breasts, an identification that began in this period, perhaps explains the perpetuation of large breasts’ appeal to American women. Large breasts enhance a woman’s ability to attract male desire because they symbolize a haven of maternal nurturing and are appealing fetish objects in themselves. But the erotic diffusion offered by glamorizing large breasts moves beyond the assumption that women desire large breasts simply because of their attraction to men. Large breasts’ appeal for women may lie instead with the power conferred by the glamour that attaches to them. This power includes the illusionist’s power to captivate even though she, as well as her audience, knows it’s all a trick. Women’s desire to infuse their bodies with the power created by glamour is not merely a means to strengthen their attractive force for men but also a method to enhance their power as a force to be reckoned with in themselves.” (Jill Fields, 2007, 112)

flaunts her own breast as more voluptuous than the fans who threw their bras. As the second bra is thrown to her, we see Jenni's comfort level grow. What may give Jenni strength to play around is that her fan's boobs are free and liberated from the restrictions of her bra. The image of Jenni holding her fans bra on top of her own boobs and bra is very symbolic to the relationship she was building with her fans. The bra symbolizes the ways in which Jenni is also an extension of her fans' gender and sexual politics. This affinity to each other became stronger as Jenni's career grew and crossed to Mexican stages.

As this ritual grew, Jenni created a rule that if a fan accurately guessed her bra size, she would join them in removing her own bra. In 2008, Jenni accepted the challenge to remove her bra during a *Palenque* (rodeo) in Sonora, Mexico. In a YouTube video titled "Jenni Rivera- se quito el brassier...jijiji..."⁹⁴ (Jenni took off her bra...lol) uploaded on June 1, 2008, is a visceral display of Jenni removing her bra with her teeth in front of her audience. In the video, you see Jenni in a ponytail, wearing a salmon pink dress, and you hear the tuba in the background playing to a sexy drunken beat. As Jenni struggles to remove her bra, fans are screaming, clapping, and shouting "Jenni, Jenni, Jenni," and "muchacha" (too much clothing) and even the famous slogan "Si Se Puede, Si Se Puede" (It Can be done). Ethnic Studies scholar Curtis Marez has stated, "Cesar Chavez's famous slogan—*si se puede* /it can be done— encapsulates the 'speculative,' alternative world-building qualities of the farm worker movement, qualities that resonated with postwar decolonization and Third Worldist movements" (2016, 34). Like the farm worker futurisms Marez describes, the unison in which fans start screaming "Si Se Puede" signals a sex-positive "futurity"—a future where *pirujeria* without shame is possible. The "Si Se Puede" chant in this video shows the erotics of fandom Jenni and fans co-created. When Jenni finally takes off

⁹⁴ Translation: Jenni Rivera removed her bra...hahaha

her bra, she holds it front of her and tells the audience “Yo cumplo” (I keep my word) and continues singing to the song “Paloma Negra.” The removal of her bra became a scripted ritual in which her fans engaged, which Jenni welcomed and performed when she felt the “adrenaline” from her audience and fans. Her desire to undress depended on her level of intoxication and the arousals her audience members stimulated inside her.

An example of the impact of Jenni’s sexual pedagogies is revealed in a fan video by Rosabella Sotero. The video shows footage from the same concert where Jenni staged her bra-removing performance; however, in this fan video, we see that before Jenni removed her own bra, a fan had already removed their own bra and tossed it to her. After all, the ritual of Jenni removing her own bra only happened when a woman audience member had removed their own and successfully guessed her bra size. In her YouTube channel archive, Sotero has another video from this same concert where we see another interaction with Jenni and her audience that is very important to my framework of intergenerational politics. Jenni removed her bra in her mother’s homeland of Sonora, Mexico. In this video, Jenni performs her song “La Mentadita”, which is a *contestacion* (response) to Sergio Vega’s song La Mentada. A song about a heart-broken and *ardido* (angry) man who was cheated on and writes a letter to his ex-girlfriend with six words “Vas y Chingas a Tu Madre.” Sergio Vega is also from Sonora, Mexico, Jenni’s mother hometown. Her singing the contestation that night got the audience very excited because she flipped the male script and centered her *contestacion*. In this video, Jenni explains to the audience that performing in Obregon Sonora is very empowering for her because she is reminded of her travels to Sonora when she was a little girl. That night, the performance of “La Mentadita,” became a tribute to her mother’s fierce attitude and roots. In this song, Jenni samples Juan Gabriel’s song “Caray” and the “Dale Dale Dale” piñata song. The sonic and performative details in these videos show us la

deschichadera was a *corporeal contestacion*, a way for Jenni and her fans to show their rebellions side even if some people believed this ritual to be vulgar, pornographic, and *corriente* (cheap). *La deschichadera* was a wet vulgar pleasure that crafted a Latina exhibitionist practice. Carol Queen urges exhibitionists to find a voyeuristic lover who supports them and appreciates their nudity. For las Deschichadas, Jenni was the voyeuristic lover who created a comfortable environment welcoming nudity and its undergarments. (i.e. brassieres, thongs, boxers, boots and other accessories, except beer bottles because she would beat you for that). After situating some of Jenni's deschichadera rituals, in the next section will take us through Jenni's first concert at La Arena in Monterrey, Mexico.



Figure 28. Jenni removing her bra with teeth, 2008

Las Parranderas de Monterrey: Jenni at La Arena de Monterrey, July 24, 2010

10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

Comensamos (We Begin): [fans screaming in the background]

Determinacion (Determination), Intelligencia (Intelligence), Valor, Actitud

(Attitude) = Diva.

Decidida (Resolved), Inolvidable (Unforgettable), Vitalidad (Vitality), Autentica

(Authenticity) = Diva.

The above scene is how a video intro presents Jenni Rivera during her first concert in *La Arena* de Monterrey Mexico on July 24, 2010. Immediately after the intro ends, fans start shouting “Jenni Jenni Jenni” and the Banda Sinaloense starts playing the song “Mi Gusto Es” while Jenni waited behind a transparent curtain to give her grand entrance to the 11 thousand people, mostly women, gathered there that night. As usual, Jenni reinterprets this song to her own personal gendered experiences with phrases like “al amarte papacito” (to love you daddy) instead of “al amarte jovencita” (to have loved you so young?), “ser cuñada de toditas” (being sister-in-law to so many), instead of “aunque me den de balazos” (even though they hit me with bullets). After this song ends, Jenni shouts out, “Parranderas” which signals her next song “Parranderas, Rebelde, Y Atrevida” a song that speaks about an unapologetic wet feminism that enjoys partying, drinking, dancing and undressing to the sounds of rancho tambora rhythms. The song “Parrandera, Rebelde y Atrevida” almost never failed to get all the women in the room hyped up. It was the party anthem for the Malandrinas, this song took pride in going out partying, whether it was for “gusto” (pleasure) or to forget pain. This song is a “*contestacion*” to the pressure of being a “niña buena” (good girl) who needs to tame her sexuality.

Eso de ser niña muy Buena no apetece
Como que aburre y a veces hasta son peor
Ser parrandera la neta si me orgullese
Noche tras noche sea por gusto or por dolor

Hay muchas morras de que ya se les hace tarde
De que no exist una Rebelde como yo

Being a good girl is not appetizing
It's boring and sometimes even worse
Being a real party girl makes me proud
Night after night be it for fun or for the pain
There are many girls coming in late to the game
That there does not exist a rebel like me

Instead, it describes a femme who is confident in herself and is not scared of being rebellious. She likes approaching potential lovers and is not timid about asking for what she deserves. It also speaks about “imperfections,” an affect connecting fans with Jenni. “No ser Perfecta” became a radical expression alluding to accepting the failure of not being a “sanitary citizen,” an expectation imposed on femmes, particularly working-class femmes, who sometimes strive to be “perfect” but later realize regardless of what they do, they never will be. For Jenni, “No ser Perfecta” was particularly important for single mothers who work so hard to sustain their children but somehow a “parrandiando” could erase all that.

Soy atrevida al que me gusta me le aviento
Lo que yo quiero lo consigo si señor
Un hombre macho y muy valiente es lo que pienso
Que necesite una mujer tal como yo

Soy parrandera, soy rebelde, y atrevida
Soy rancherota y lo llevo en el Corazon
Champaña amarga es pa las viejas presumidas
Quiero tecate con sus al y su limon
Soy parrandera, soy rebelde y atrevida

No soy perfecta
Y tampoco soy de lo peor
Mas me defiendo como gata boca arriba
Y echense un grito las mujeres como yo

I'm daring I flirt with whoever I like
What I want I find yes indeed

A macho and valiant man is what I have in mind
That needs a woman just like me

I'm a party girl, I'm rebellious and daring
I'm rancherota and I carry it in my heart
Bitter champagne is for stuck-up old women
I want Tecate with its salt and lime
I'm a party girl, I'm rebellious and daring

I'm not perfect
And neither am I the worst
I defend myself like a cat
So give me a shout all the women who are like me

Along a similar vein, for a Jenni fan, a day “fanning out” could create agitated responses from distant cyber haters, but the reality was that these agitations could also come from their own family members and friends. Chicana/Mexicana/Latina respectability politics have several stages and it doesn't play out the same for all of us because mothers, particularly single mothers, are constantly positioned with unrealistic expectations. There is a common expectation that once you become a mother, you will sacrifice everything for one's child, and forget your individual desires. Chicanas have correlated this belief to ideas about the Virgin Mary –the ultimate sacrificing mother. Despite agitated responses, Jenni fans took the time to come together in a concert space to love one woman –Jenni– and in that process, they loved each other. This love came across every time Jenni asked fans, “Y echense un grito las mujeres como yo” (give me a shout all the women like me). That night at La Arena fans engaged in many “gritos” of solidarity marking them as “parranderas.” Their gritos were so loud and intoxicating that patyern63's video created “distorted sound.” No one threw their bra to Jenni during “Parrandera, Rebelde y Atrevida” but this song became the foreplay, the lubrication, for women to transition into rebeldes that ask, “Cuanto te devo?” (How much to I owe you?)

During this three- and half-hour presentation, at least 10 women removed their bras for Jenni and showed their bouncy boobs to her and the entire audience. The flashing aspect of the ritual was anticipated since videos of Jenni removing her own undergarment had already circulated in social media sites like YouTube since 2008. The rules about bra-throwing in her concerts were simple: if you removed your bra, you had to prove to her that the undergarment was yours. The second rule was that if you threw a bra that was her size on stage, she would have to remove hers too.

The first bra was thrown to Jenni after she finished singing the song “Cuando me acuerdo de ti,” a song for which Jenni yelled “esa no porque me meo” (Not that song because I will pee). As we saw in the previous chapter, fans were very creative in visualizing Jenni’s vernacular, Andrea for instance brought a diaper to Jenni’s concert with that phrase on it and threw it to her during one of her concerts in California. Like the *deschichadera* ritual, the phrase “esa no porque me meo” asks us to be in tune with our corporeal reactions to music, in this case Jenni shares that this song is too relatable to her own story that performing it might agitate a reaction in her body – uncontrollable urination. These types of statements, references to the body and its gestures, reminds us of the necessity to incorporate a multisensorial analysis into Jenni’s fandom. It is very common while drunk to want to wet oneself multiple times, and when urination happens, there is a sense of relief and satisfaction. But during a concert, the size of La Arena which holds 11 thousand people, waiting to “miar” (urinate) can be long. But, like Cindy Garcia has noted in her work with Salsa music, going to the restroom is a ritual in itself.

Before the first bra was thrown to Jenni, you could hear fans yell, “Te Amo Jenni” (I love you Jenni) for which she responded, “I love you too.” After that affectionate greeting, Jenni thanked everyone for their *cariño* (sweetness). In this opening statement, Jenni acknowledged that

Monterrey's regional music was *Lo Norteño*, so she extended her gratitude to her audience for accepting La Gran Señora tour with Banda Sinaloense. During this moment, a fan yelled "tu eres las mas chingona," (you are the most bad ass) "tu eres la numero 1" (you are number 1) and this is the moment the first bra was thrown to her. When the bra reached her, she said "ya vamos a empesar?" (are we starting already?) This first bra was new and it had a note attached to it that read, "gracias por ser tan valiente, y tan autentica [fans scream] no cambies, saludos a tus papas a Lupillo...Dios lo quide de toda maldadad, Alejandra y Nayeli Barragal" (Thank you for being so brave, and so authentic. Don't change. Regards to your parents and Lupillo...May God protect you. With all of our mischief, Alejandra and Nayeli Barragl) Before reading the statement, Jenni picks up the bra from the stage, turns around to the Banda musicians, and asks them to smell the bra and fans start shouting "que lo guelan" "que lo guelan" and "que se lo ponga" (Smell it, Smell it, Put it on). Jenni tells the audience that the bra is new and that it was thrown to her so she can wear it. Although the bra was too small for her, she promises the audience that she will figure out a way to *estrenarlo* (wear it in) that night.

The practice of smelling underwear or bras from fans was also common for Jenni. A practice often criticized by some anti-fans for being too *chafa*, *naca*, or *sucia*. The queer analytic of suciedad Deborah Vargas theorizes is helpful here to understand the importance of smells. Vargas states, "Thus my ruminations on developing a queer analytic of suciedad considers how references to smells of pee and the sticky bodily sensations are structural metonyms for nonnormative constructions of queer intimacy, sex, kinship, and in love in surplus." (722). Jenni's commitment to wearing the bra that night came from fans screaming comments like "que se lo ponga" (put it on). But Jenni made the decision to smell the bras. I read Jenni's decision to smell the bras on stage as a way that she showed her love for her fans and smelling her fans allowed her

to know them better. As Jenni walked to her table with drinks, she gave the bra to one of her managers and told the audience, “espero que se diviertan” (I hope you have fun). She transitioned to her next song, “No Me Pregunten Por El,” a Chayito Veldez song fans knew well. But as Jenni did with all her covers, she developed her own dichos (phrases) that transcribed her own story in the song.

For *No Me Pregunten Por El* fans chanted Jenni’s intros even before she said them. In fact, her phrases like “y a quien se las doy” (who do I give them to), “yo quiero a quien quiero” (I love who I love), and “haci queremos las mujeres rebeldes” (that’s how we love rebellious women) were filosofias by which fans lived. The feeling created by fans yelling these phrases at concerts demonstrate that fans listened to the intros Jenni created in her albums and saw them part of her music too. By this point in the concert, the arena was intoxicated, filled with an energy that centered a wet femme experience. Phrases like “Y arriba las mujeres” (power to the women) were constantly yelled throughout the concert. The second bra thrown to Jenni happened during the song Chuper Amigos. Compared to “No Me Pregunten Por el” or “Con El” which were the two songs that Jenni performed in between the first and second removal of bras, Chuperamigos shifted the energy in the room. Suddenly the tuba started to sound drunk. The sonic drunkenness in the room created a level of intoxication that went beyond alcoholic beverages and was embedded in the music. Chuperamigos is about a woman who celebrates a break-up by going out dancing with her friends. The woman recognizes that all her friends like *el chupe*, which motivates her to *echarse atoditos* “throw herself to all of them” as a form of freedom, agency, empowerment, and validation.

In 2008, Jenni Rivera recorded the theme song for a show titled *Chuper Amigos* for the comedian Liliana Arriaga, also known as “la Chupitos.” The song became so popular that Jenni

would later commonly call out her fans, “Donde estan mis chuperamigos?” (Where are all my drunken friends?). At La Arena, the teasing with the audience started when Jenni, standing next to her table –where she had a tequila bottle, fancy wine glasses, and bottles of water– says “estoy testiendo porque luego me dan agua”(I am testing because later they’ll give me water). As she walks away from her table, to the center of stage, she says “esta cancion la compuse para la gente borracha, esa gente que le gusta el *chupe*! Chuperamigos! Salud! (and drinks her shot)” (I wrote this song for my drunk people, for those who love el *chupe*!) Listening to Jenni’s performances through the screams of her fans, those screams in between – *el chupe*, *chuperamigos*, *salud*– tell us that fans always tease Jenni first and in between, *se la alburaban* (throw sexual double entendre to her). For instance, during this interaction, fans yelled phrases like, “eiy, eiy, eiy,” “que se la eche pa’dentro” (chug them) and “entrale duro mija” (hit it hard girl). For Mexicans, the term *chupar/chupe* is a colloquial term that means to drink. However, the word *chupar* also means to suck and lick (to the point of milking-dry). In “Chuperamigos,” Jenni uses both meanings of the term *chupar*, that of drinking and sucking. Fan shout-outs tell us they also use both meanings. The references to *penetration* are present in fan shout out, and their albur of *duro*. Moreover, in Jenni’s performances of Chuperamigos, Jenni thrust her hands towards her hips, connoting to the audience that she was referring to drinking but also maybe, *just maybe*, also *fucking* Pedro, Jose Cuervo, El Presidente, and El Patron, in other words, all the masculine-identified tequila bottles. At La Arena, Jenni thrust her arms too.

During the middle of the concert performance, Jenni points to some fans dancing in the audience, and asks them to explain “como se baila de cartoncito, sabe bailar de cartoncito usted? Haber volteala” (how do you dance de cartoncito, do you know how? Let me see you turn her around.) and the fans dancing demonstrate. Jenni then explains to the audience that dancing *de*

cartoncito is when a *borrachito* “a drunk” grabs someone from *el carton*, any piece flesh available, but preferably *el culo*, the ass. As Jenni demonstrates *de cartoncito*, she turns around to the audience and dances *de cartoncito* with herself. She grabs her ass, with both hands, and looks back at the audience, to assure fans that they were supposed to look at her butt, that she was teaching them *de cartoncito* intentionally.

She later turns around, and asks, “Y la borachita como agaramos a los hombres? Las mujeres es mas facil, tambien de cartoncito pero con una sola mano” (And how do us drunk women grab the men? For women it’s easier to dance *de cartoncito* but with just one hand). According to the screams of some fans, dancing the *cartoncito* this way is “mas chingona.” “De Cartoncito” is a colloquial reference to a couple dancing, where a drunk man will slowly move his hands from the woman’s waist to her butt. The reference is very heteromasculinist and only assumes the pleasure of men in this act. However, in “Chuperamigos,” Jenni inscribes feminine pleasure to this act by saying that this song can also be pleasurable for women because it feels like both massage and dancing at the same time. Moreover, Jenni teaches her femme fans they can also dance “*de cartoncito*” with men by grabbing them by their penises. Here, Jenni encourages her women fans to flip the male gaze, sexualize men, and prioritize their own pleasure over the pleasure of men. When Jenni warns fans that dancing with a phallus, the *cartoncito* may feel flabby, and she tells the audience the reason why she knows this is because her “*primas las pirujitas*” (cousins the sluts) told her. Immediately, you hear a fan shout, “yo soy tu prima Jenni!” (I am your cousin Jenni!). In this interaction, both Jenni and the fan are performing the Latina slut and recognize them as a *atrevida* site of knowledge production about sexual pleasure. It may seem that Jenni disassociates herself because she references her cousins instead, but this act is done strategically, to play with the audience because in a later reference she calls herself a *piruja* too.

After this interaction with the audience, Jenni sang the rest of the song, which ended with her admitting that maybe after a couple of drinks, the woman protagonist will forget the name of her ex and, while dancing with her friend, her clothes might get in the way of her pleasure and she might take them off. Jenni screamed, “aaaayy borracha y encuerada, que bonita vida me caí” (naked and drunk, what a beautiful life). The song ends with the woman protagonist realizing that with these types of intoxicating pleasures she does not need her ex-lover in her life anymore. The songs “Chuperamigos” is an example of how Jenni offered her Latina fans a refusal of conventional gender norms that transgressed the traditional belief that men are the only ones who find pleasure in intoxication, sexual touching, and getting naked. She created a space in her lyrics and performances that was sex/y-positive for women and assured them *atrevidaness* is pleasurable and empowering.



Figure 29, Fan Bra, 2010.

At the end of the song, a fan throws her another bra and Jenni picks it up (25:31). As soon as the song ends, she tells the audience,

Vamos a arreglar esto de una vez, ya saben las reglas de mis presentaciones, no? Ya saben La ley. Simpren que bienen a mis presentaciones las muchachas no se si sientan mucha calor, y se deschichan, se quitan el brassier no se, yo nunca e ido a un concierto a quitarme los brasieres verdad pero la ley es, la regla es que la que se las quita no las enseña [fans scream] asi que pelele miya.

Now we are going to set things straight once and for all. You already know the rules of my concerts, no? You already know the law. Whenever women come to my shows I don't know if they perhaps feel too much heat, and they remove their bras, I don't know. I've never gone to a concert to take my bra off but the law is the law. The rule is that whoever takes off her bra has to show her breasts, so go ahead and show them girl.

After her explanation about bra-throwing another fan shouts “que enseñen las chichis” (let them show their breasts) and flashes Jenni. Jenni laughs and swings the undergarment in circles. Jenni responds “haber no vi no vi no vi” (hang on I didn't see, I didn't see) and again, the fan pulls down her black strapless dress, and shows Jenni and the other 11,000 people her boobs and even jumps in a circle, bouncing them. Right after, the same women recording the video shouts “esas si son viejas!” (those sure are bad ass women!) This shout references the anti-respectable epistemologies that these fans live by. Studies have suggested that “women's bodies are objects of the male gaze, under which breasts are definitely primarily as objects of male sexual interest and sexual pleasure.” But as these videos suggest there is a transgression of patriarchal voyeurism happening at these concerts.



Figure 30. Fan Boobs, 2010.

After the des-chi-cha-si-o-nes took place with the song Chuperamigos, Jenni performed Dama Divinas, to which another fan (size 36D) also threw a bra to her, this third bra similar the first one Jenni had received that night had a message that read, “Jenni no las enseño por que se emocionan los vatos” (Jenni I won’t show them because the men won’t be able to handle themselves). Jenni replied, “aber si es sierto” (Let’s see if that’s true.) Among the other women that I found on YouTube, this fan was the only one who did not show her boobs to Jenni that night and referenced the presence of the male Banda musicians on stage as the reason why she would not take her shirt off. Jenni’s response to her was “parese mija, aiy mija es facilito, en fin aqui estamos entre familia [laughter] ahorita que te den de tomar mija abersi, es que ya borracha uno las suelta mas facil, las afloja uno, asi me an contado que sucede.”⁹⁵ (Try it girl. Look it’s easy.

⁹⁵ The laughter that occurs in this interaction demands analysis. For Hernandez an important aspect of raunch aesthetics is the mix of explicit sexuality and humor because they generate sexual desire and cultural critique (which in Yo Majesty’s case is mainstream Hip-Hop) (91). Humor is also an important aspect in the gatherings among women at the Jenni’s concerts. Humor and their responses to her, will be a cite of analysis in the next section because they

At the end of the day we are all a family here. Now when they give you something to drink, we'll see if you get looser after you're drunk. It makes you loose, --at least that's what I've heard.) My raunchy thermometer tells me this woman wanted to turn Jenni on, that is why she threw her bra, but she shows us that the bra stood in her for her breast. The gesture of the bra immortalized her fans own breasts and it also came to represent queer desires of each other. The fans written notes became evidence that la deschichadera was for Jenni's own pleasure not for her male musicians. What also stood out to me though, was that this fan decided to remove her bra in this song. The song *Dama Divina* celebrates fat erotics. I argue that with this song Jenni provided sonic pedagogies of alternative modes of sexiness.

also generate desire, pleasures, and cultural critiques of what Marcia Ochoa calls "sanitary citizenships." Women Studies scholar, Michelle Habell-Pallan also elaborates on the importance of humor in Latino/Chicano popular culture, she states that humor "is often utilized to work through moments of crises and to reimagine status quo power relations within and beyond national borders" (5). Moreover Carl Guitierrez-Jones uses the term "engaged humor" to



Figure 31. Fan who threw bra and Fan Boxer Removal, 2010.

According to her autobiography, Jenni wrote *Damas Divinas* during her sex video scandal in 2008. Jenni writes, “Unfortunately, despite the Grammy nomination and the hit album, people were still more interested in the fucking sex tape. I decided to turn the embarrassment into something positive. I wrote “Dama Divinas,” which is an anthem for women to be proud of their bodies and their sexuality even if they do not look like a model or an actress.” The origins of this song also started with advice her dad gave about drinking, a story which impacted her because she always included it in her concert performances. The advice went like this, ‘when guys drink, they find women more attractive regardless of their beauty and size’. Jenni took the advice and incorporated it to the song with phrases like “*si te echas unos tequilas soy una Dama Divina*” (If you drink a few tequilas you’ll see a divine lady.) However, during her performances, she flipped the advice her dad gave her to accommodate it to her own gendered experiences. That night Jenni said, “me gusta ser borachas porque tambien las borachas ven las cosas mas buenas y mas grandotas” (I like to be a drunk because [femme] drunks also find things juicier and bigger). Here Jenni incorporates playful raunchiness to hint at the size of a penis and she openly admits that while intoxicated the phallus looks thicker, longer, and juicier.

Towards the end of *Dama Divinas*, a young man threw a pair of boxers to Jenni and flashed her by showing her his butt. He was wearing a jacket with Jenni’s name in the background. Finding this video reminded me of Manny, a member of Los Tequileros fan club, who threw a boxer to Jenni at the Nokia that same summer. Manny’s boxer had the following message, “Para mi diva de su putito bonito. Hoy voy a tomar hasta que las de atras me traicionen.” (To my Diva from her pretty fag. Today I will drink until my behind betrays me). Both men threw their boxers to Jenni while she was singing *Dama Divina*. As this project continues, I will incorporate a chapter focusing on Jenni’s gay male fans and the ways in which gifting Jenni their intimate clothing also

symbolized a celebration of a broader Latinx erotics. *How is Jenni's politics of pirujeria also played out among her gay Latino fans?*

As I have stated before, pirujeria is in dialogue with Jillian Hernandez reframing of raunch aesthetics because she reads the flesh as site of power that “incites pleasure for subjected subjects” (62). Both *pirujeria* like Jillian Hernandez’s reinterpretation of raunch, challenges Ariel Levy’s sex-negative analysis that polarizes raunchy behavior, liberation and feminisms to be in opposition to each other (2005), mostly because Levy only thinks of raunch as a commercial move. Levy states, “Raunch culture isn’t about opening our minds to the possibility of mysteries of sexuality. Its about endlessly reiterating one particular – and particularly commercial – shorthand for sexiness.” (30). Because Levy’s framework of raunch is common in sex-negative feminist frameworks, I want to return to Levy to avoid misreading of *la deschichadera*, particularly because Levy references breasts in her book *Female Chauvinist Pigs*. Particularly, Levy references raunchy television shows like *Girls Gone Wild*, where women also engage in flashing acts. According to Bill Horn, the Vice President of communication and marketing, flashing your boobs among middle-class college girls on vacations is a “rite of passage.” Mia Leist, the GGW tour manager states that “people flash for the brand” which oftentimes comes in the form of a hat.⁹⁶ Levy states that the reason why raunchiness is a “pretty trashy place” has to do with women asking other women to show their boobs to them. She states that men are no longer the only ones asking, now women are also behind the scenes “making decisions, making money and hollering ‘we want boobs.’” (35). She goes to say that women who ask other women to engage in raunchy culture is because they feel like one of the guys and these women are what she calls “Female Chauvinist

⁹⁶ Moreover, Joe Francis, has compared “the flashing girls he captures on his videos to seventies feminist burning their bras” (12). *Can Las Deschichadas also be compared to feminist in the 70s burning their bras?*

Pigs” (FCP) –women who are post-feminist, and do not mind cartoonish macho responses to them or other women. Within Levy’s examples of raunch culture, drunk fans throwing bras would be a parody of female sexual power, and Jenni’s encouragement of that exhibitionist act would classify her as a female chauvinist pig. While it is true that Jenni’s music genre is dominated by men and only a few women make it to mainstream Banda Music, and it is also true that Jenni tended to be the only woman on stage during her performances, and she also incorporated her male musicians into her acts, I would still not describe her as a Female Chauvinist Pig.

Listening to fans engagement with Jenni allows me to see confidence as a strong component of *la deschichadera*. Queen has noted that confidence is the connection between sex art and performance (or what she calls porno-formance). Queen suggests that exhibitionism and the desire to communicate with others is what fuels the work of sex art and performances about sexuality. She explains these observations are most true for those artists who “work with autobiography, their own lived experience transmuted into image or storytelling—artists who pull their own masks off and use them to pan for universal gold.” Her observation is critical for Jenni because she continually unmasked⁹⁷ herself on stage. She shared her personal stories with the audience and constantly introduced songs with phrases like, “Quiero cantarles unas de mis canciones favoritas, una cancion que cada vez que la enterpreto me llega hasta el corazon porque es la verdad” (I want to sing you one of my favorite songs. A song that reaches my heart every time I interpret it because it is the truth.) Comments like “es la verdad”, unmasked the status of her romantic relationship on stage and hinted at desires that when pronounced out loud, in front of thousands of fans, cultivated spaces for reciprocal unmaskings. As Queen suggests, “Performance

⁹⁷ Can this unmasking be compared to Foucault notion of the confession? Can the confession add the layer of racialization that these women might experience after a confession?

is a process whose raw material include emotion and experiences—and when it clicks, honoring these in front of an audience is heady and sacred indeed” (Queen, 58).

Mellissa, the fan who recorded the concert at La Arena in Monterrey, threw Jenni Rivera a purple shirt with a rosary which Jenni Rivera put on as she was singing a song. Mellisa did not throw a bra to Jenni. but the fact that she decided to throw a rosary shows that she does not see *pirujeria* as a praxis of sexuality that is in tension with Catholicism. This gesture reminds us that the moral codes of religion are social constructions that should be challenged and what a better way to do it but with breasts, an organ which the church only sees for the purpose of reproduction, but fans re-appropriate for pleasure.

Conclusion: Boobs as a site of Pleasure

In this chapter, I listened to fans and their unapologetic reclamation of *pirujeria* in Monterrey, Mexico. The sonic and performative details in these videos show us *la deschichadera* was a *corporeal contestacion*, a way for Jenni and her fans to display their rebellious side even if some people believed this ritual to be vulgar, pornographic, and *corriente* (cheap). *La deschichadera* was a wet vulgar pleasure that crafted a Latina exhibitionist practice. After the controversy at La Arena, Jenni returned to the United States where she lived with her family. A year later, in an interview, on August 2, 2011, Jenni was asked about her concert at the Staples Center in September. The Staples Center was a bigger venue, hosting 21,000 seats, three thousand more seats than La Arena at approximately 17,600. In this interview, the reporter asked Jenni about La Deschichadera, Jenni stated that she had over 500 bras from fans. The reporter even implies the concert at the Staples Center would increase Jenni’s bra collection. In this interview, the reporter acknowledges this bra-throwing ritual is more common among *aficionados* of male-identified artists. Jenni states she does not know exactly why so many fans throw bras to her, at first she says

it is the mixture of the calor (heat) in the room and the alcohol that inspires women to throw them, but later she says that women might feel liberated, and feel comfortable to be themselves with her. She states she enjoys watching the transformation of her fans throughout the concerts, they first start off very serias (serious or shy) and later they get *descompuestas*. She states, "No sé qué pasa por la mente de las muchachas pero lo tomo como algo bonito, como un homenaje, como algo especial" (I don't know what crosses their minds but I take it as something beautiful, like a homage, like something special).

In a world where Latinas are constantly framed as “baby machines’ who give birth to “anchor babies,” their breasts are viewed as only organs of reproduction, particularly in contexts of racialized reproductive labor. Jenni Rivera and her fans, flip the script and make breasts about pleasure among women. They provide us a framework to think about a Latina sex-positive future where women can pose for each other unapologetically. Where Latinas are agents of their bodies, and where girls are organically taught to be sex-positive. Through Jenni’s concerts, these fans teach us que la *pirujeria*, *si se pudo*, *si se puede* Y *si se podra*.

Interlude Four // Impersonating Jenni

On December 23, 2018, my mother and I drove to Homeland, California to see a private party with Gracie performing as Jenni. We had met her for the first time in 2015, at one of her anniversary parties at Playas de las Tunas in Los Angeles. Every year since, I have taken my mom with me and we have so much fun watching Gracie's Jenni performance; we danced, I drank, cheered for Gracie, and met other Jenni fans. We had seen Gracie as Jenni that Friday, too, at Guadalajara Grill in Baldwin Park, but because she had to attend an after party, we were unable to interview her then. Instead, her manager invited us to the private party the following Sunday. I took my mom with me because she and my sister have helped me with "fieldwork" throughout the years. When we got off the freeway, my mom and I acknowledged that Homeland felt like the rancho because of the dirt and rocky roads. The houses had so much space and they were spread out from each other. I even struggled to park because it was so dark, and I did not know which part of the dirt pathway was safe. Though my mom and I were happy because we loved rancho-like environments, Gracie and her manager apologized to us when they arrived. "We didn't know it was going to be like this," they said. I replied, "its ok, I just have a fear for driving up hills, and we are not familiar with the road, but my mom is super happy because she feels that she is back at the rancho." We laughed and my mom agreed.

Gracie, as Jenni, was finishing up her makeup in the truck. Gracie had two fans with her; they were presidents of her own fan club in Indio. While I was setting up my camera to record Gracie as Jenni, the client who hired her went to the truck to ask her what type of tequila she wanted. He was very generous and wanted to make sure our needs were met. After setting up the music with the DJ, Gracie's manager came to the truck to tell us it was time. He asked us to get in our positions. I struggled with my camera but did not want to miss her grand entrance. Like Jenni

Rivera, Gracie also has an introductory music mix before her performances. When she entered the party, the birthday girl, Maria, who was referred to as a “quinceañera” throughout the whole night was seated in a chair front and center. Maria is a mother of nine children. Gracie performed just for her for a couple of songs. Maria was the queen that night.



Figure 32. Gracie performing as Jenni, photo taken by author, 2018.

At private parties, Gracie engages the audience, like Jenni did, with *charlas parranderas*; drinking, dancing, engaging in storytelling and singalongs. Gracie views her job impersonating Jenni as a way to pay homage to her. Her private performances are usually two hours long. That night, Gracie performed in her La Gran Señora outfit, which usually refers to the beautiful dresses Jenni wore in her Mariachi performances. Because she has impersonated Jenni for many years,

even before she died, Gracie has at least twenty different Jenni outfits. At her yearly anniversary parties, she usually switches outfits twice. Although she never had the chance to meet Jenni, Gracie worked with Don Pedro Rivera and opened the show at his performances. When they were working together, Don Pedro Rivera told Gracie that Jenni had seen a video of her performing and knew who she was. Because Gracie is from Los Angeles, the Rivera family knows about her performances. She was even invited to share the stage with them during the L Festival performance showcasing Jenni's hologram presentation.

For an impersonator, having the Rivera family's approval is important because that can avoid lawsuits or miscommunications about their intentions in impersonating Jenni. Since Jenni's death, the Rivera family has condemned the work of some impersonators. Mexicali-based impersonator Tania Soto has been one of the most critiqued imitators of Jenni, even though she received Jenni's own endorsement during an impersonator contest. The debate between Tania and the Rivera started because they felt she had crossed the line of impersonating. Tania was accused of wanting to become Jenni, and they felt she was taking advantage of the fame Jenni's legacy provided for her. Tania defended herself by saying she never wanted to be Jenni and when she is not imitating Jenni, she is proudly Tania Soto. The debate around wanting to become Jenni brings up questions about surrogation⁹⁸, which Joseph Roach has defined as "the enactment of cultural memory by substitution." It also points us to debate about who has the right to profit from Jenni's legacy. I saw Tania Soto perform live on May 17, 2015 at the Long Beach Pride parade. Tania Soto was also wearing La Gran Señora attire with a beautiful purple and yellow pattern. As soon as she entered the stage, people in the audience started waving their rainbow flags. To this queer

⁹⁸ *Cities of the Dead*. Circu-Atlantic Performance. Joseph Roach. Columbia U Press. New York. 1996. Also Selenidad page 99. She talks about surrogation too.

audience, the conflict between Tania and the Rivera family did not matter, they enjoyed feeling Jenni through Tania's homage of her.



Figure 33. Tania performing at Latinx pride in Long Beach, 2015. Photo courtesy of Tania YouTube Channel.

What is similar between Gracie and Tania is that they both center Jenni's parrandera, rebelde, y atrevida persona on stage. Also, we find playful traces of *pirujeria* in their performances. During her performance at the private party, Gracie played with many of the phrases Jenni would say in her concerts. She engaged the *socia* (mistress) personality by asking women how they felt about sharing their husbands with her. The women often laughed and replied with phrases like "quedate con el" (stay with him) or "te lo regalo" (I give him to you). Gracie also performs "Chuperamigos" and asks the audience if they know how to dance *de cartonicito*. She invites people to the dance floor so they too can dance and grab each other's *culo* (butt). Gracie also used Jenni's references to El Pelon in her performances. El Pelon, is one of Jenni's intimate lovers, to

whom she constantly referenced in her concerts. Jenni used El Pelon as a muse for performing heartbreaks and dedicated many songs to him. During her performance, Gracie scanned the room for Pelones and found one at a table. She used him as her prop for the rest of the night and asked his partner if she could share him with her. The audience loved Gracie's teasing that they showed it by inviting her to drink more. During our interview after the party, Gracie shared with me that an important part of her performance is getting intoxicated. She shared that declining the drinks her clients send her is one of the hardest parts of her job. Oftentimes her manager must tell the clients to not give her anymore drinks.

While she drinks, she also reminds the audience of what Jenni called "el afloje" (the looseness). Like Jenni's concerts, Gracie tells them the more women drink, the more loose they become. Gracie also talks about her curvaceous body and tells the audience that she got her faja, girdle shapewear from *Los Callejones* in The Santee Alley in LA fashion district. Gracie uses this point of the charla to sing *Dama Divina* and to talk about how being fat is in now. She tells thin women to eat more and to not be afraid to become like her, because being fat is what people like nowadays. She uses her curvaceous body as a place for admiration and with her performance she recreates most of Jenni's working-class gender, sexual, and body positive messages.

Throughout my research, I have met roughly ten Jenni impersonators, both in Southern California, and Mexico (Monterrey, Ciudad Juarez, and Mexico City). Each adds their own style to impersonating Jenni. However, they talk about the intimate ways Jenni fans receive them and oftentimes share intimate stories with them because they personify her songs. During one of Gracie's performances in Los Angeles, I witnessed how one of Jenni's fans started weeping when Gracie was singing "La Gran Señora". As a form of acknowledging her pain, Gracie went up to her and sang in front of her. They finished singing the song together and their erotic exchange of

affinity was powerful. Through her performances, Gracie, along with Jenni fans, extends Jenni's gender and sexual politics. Many of Jenni's fans pay for impersonators so they will feel that they still have a pedacito of Jenni.

CHAPTER 4

Que Alboroto Traen con Jenni and her Fans?: Mapping the Agitated Discourse of Latina Deviance and Fat Pirujeria

“Ella [Jenni Rivera] quiere ser *Diva*, quiere ser *Reina*, quiere ser *Jefa*, quiere ser *Madre*, quiere ser *Señora*, quiere ser. Pero *Dama, dama*, jamas va ser.”

(She [Jenni Rivera] wants to be a *Diva*, she wants to be a *queen*, she wants to be a *boss*, she wants to be a *mother*, she wants to be a *Woman*, she wants to be. But a *Lady*, a Lady she will never be.)

– Graciela Beltran

“Que Alboroto Traen Connigo?” is Jenni Rivera’s introduction to her corrido, “Ovarios” (Ovaries), a corrido that was written as a “contestacion” to Graciela Beltran, another woman artist in the genre of Mexican Regional Music. “Ovarios” tells a story of Jenni’s success in the music genre despite haters’ critiques of her “indecent” femininity⁹⁹. The corrido attributes Jenni’s fierce *chingona* attitude to growing up in “Playa Larga,” Long Beach, California and to what she describes as her oversized ovaries that provided her the courage to navigate a male dominated music genre. Through this corrido, and her live performances of it, Jenni activated a platform to respond to rival artists, haters, and media outlets that were constantly critiquing her for getting into fights with audience members, getting drunk, being sensual on stage, or making a sex tape. The epigraph above comes from an interview that Graciela Beltran did for the Spanish language television talk show *El Gordo y La Flaca*, where she tells the hosts that Jenni will never be a lady, or lady-like. I open this chapter describing “Ovarios” and its context to remind us that although Jenni’s phenomenon was in large part one of love, erotics, pleasure and desire for and among Chicanx women, there were also people who loathed her performances and strongly critiqued her.

⁹⁹ Fonovisa Records. “Jenni Rivera Habla de Ovarios.” YouTube. July 9, 2009.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0Q_LxznkAA

This chapter explores the agitated discourses of pirujeria among anti-fans and use the introduction of Jenni's corrido "ovaries," to ask: *que alboroto traen con Jenni's gender, sexual, and class politics?* What about Jenni has anti-fans so worked up?

From mapping la deschichadera along with my ethnographic research both at tribute concerts and of social media archives, I have realized that this "alboroto" (fuss) or what I call "agitations" toward Jenni also extends to her fans. This process, which I call anti-fandom interpellation, allows me to ask: *How and why are fans attacked for loving Jenni? What can the framework of anti-fandom – both against Jenni and her fans – tell us about the Jenni phenomenon and women of color fandom more broadly particularly as it relates to gender and sexual politics?* Following Raymond Williams and Mark Duffett's method of keywording "as a heuristic device," I examine anti-fandom through what I call "agitated discourse." The Merriam Webster dictionary defines agitation as a feeling of disturbance. The vernacular usage of this term also relates agitation to anger. In Ethnic Studies, *agitate* often carries a positive connotation, as in, "You agitate the status quo." In my research, Jenni and her fans agitate. However, those who police Jenni and her fans' transgressions of gender and sexual propriety get *agitated*. What I find intriguing is that Jenni's anti-fandom is not only about her music--the "text" – but also about her body and the bodies of her fans, their ontologies, and existence. While agitated responses refer to the hater comments that anti-fans (or non-fans) make towards Jenni, *agitation* is the carnal disgust that anti-fans display when they police the behavior of Jenni and her women fans. Agitation is the disaffection – the visceral aggression or enmity – that people who hate Jenni express when they *write, say, or gesture* agitated responses towards her.

In my ethnographic research, I found that Jenni has often been portrayed as the *agitator* of erotic im/morality who rouses fans to enjoy themselves and embody drunkenness, an activity that

many anti-fans disagree with due to their investment in respectability politics. I argue that the anti-fans' agitated-responses signify a *disassociation* from stigmatized populations: single-mothers, hyper-sexual girls, whores, working-class culture, and fat bodies. Significantly, most of these agitated responses exhibit a moral panic over Latina, Chicana, and Mexicana women *aflojandolas*: losing control, displaying sexual agency, and refusing heteronormative respectable femininity. Moreover, the panic intensifies due to the intergenerational "women-centered" dynamic of this fan culture. It was and continues to be very common to see mothers, daughters, cousins and friends watch, listen, and engage with Jenni's cultural production and attend her concerts, album signings, movie screenings, and tribute events. Jenni's girl fans are often called "putas/pirujas" for enjoying their erotic selves—the same epithets flung at "single mothers." In short, the intergenerational unapologetic sex-positive environment that Jenni and her fans had created is at the core of the anti-fans' agitation.

In this chapter I also engage in a conversation about fat sexuality. I do this because many of the agitated discourse online reference Jenni's fat body as a site of disgust. The perfect site to start this conversation is Jenni's sex tape, which was circulated in October of 2008. I ask: What if the sex tape can be mined for its potential to envision a fat *pirujeria* politic? What can the sex tape tell us about fat Latina erotics? I argue that via the sex tape Jenni demonstrates fat femme sexual agency because she was in charge of her own desires. The sex tape also allows for theorizations of the futurity of *fat pirujeria*, a praxis where fat sex-positive women are not constantly attacked for their fatty sexual desires. Moreover, by contextualize Jenni's sex tape within the pornographic industry shows us that in 2008, the agitated discourse that Jenni's sex tape received was not lived in isolation, fat sex workers were also receiving similar fat-phobic harassment, making it clear that fat sexual liberation is always imbricated in broader structures of power, that need to be

decolonized to make spaces for racialized fat erotics. For now, let's begin by returning to the agitations that the Jenni's concert at La Arena received. The agitated discourse around *la deschichadera* (as discussed in chapter 3) show us that intergenerational fandom is viewed as threat because girls "mimic" the sonic pedagogies of deviance that *pirujeria* incite. Following this discussion, I analyze a list of "Twenty characteristics of Jenni's Fans" that I found while researching *la deschichadera*. The list shows that antifandom is motivated not only by Jenni's but also by her fans' despised characteristics: low-class Mexicanidad, drunkenness, hypersexuality, and again fatness.

Agitated about The Nakedness of La Deschichadera: Intergenerational Fandom as Threat

aqui mi diva en los espectaculos un dia despues de su gran concierto en la arena monterrey 2010 y despues dio una entrevista :) ahh como la amooo a esa gran señoronaaa ella si es la #1 la mas chingonaaa tii amooo

Adry, J-unit (Aug 19, 2010)

At a 2010 concert at La Arena in Monterrey, as Jenni sang "Ovarios," two fans engaged in *la deschichadera* and flashed her. After the concert at La Arena in Monterrey in 2010, Jenni went backstage for a media press conference, where some reporters asked her about *la deschichadera*. The way the questions about *la deschichadera* were posed interpellated the "children fans" that attended the concert. To which Jenni responded "el publico es el publico, sean niños o sean menores es lo que ellas hacen y asi es como ha sucedido y asi es como seguira siendo" (my audience is my audience, children or adults, that is what they decide to do, that is how it has happened, and that is how it will continue to be). After the press release that night, the media turned Jenni's concert into a controversy and in response, *La Direccion de Inspeccion y Vigilancia*

de Monterrey (DIVM) sent a message to the Arena Monterrey accusing Jenni's performance of constituting an immoral act. Part of the complaint was that she instigated women to undress themselves with children present among the audience.¹⁰⁰ Jenni's response to the media was heavily criticized by anti-fans who left several agitated comments on numerous news reports of the concert online. Someone by the name of Miguel wrote,

Que Bueno que por fin la prensa y las autoridades se den cuenta de lo *corriente* que es la artistilla Jenni Rivera, pero sus fans! Me vale fans de Jenni que les *arde*, pero la misma Jenni contesto como una estúpida cuando la prensa le commento que habian niños en la arena, y ella contesto pues en mis conciertos pasa lo que pasa! Que manera tan inmoral de contestar! A ver fans de Jenni, en el concierto de su ARTISTA, le gustaria que cualquier hombre X, con aliento alcolico, se les acerto con su pene en ereccion y las bese, nomas porque es concierto de Jenni? Y pero tantito, que a tu hija, hermana etc, la paso los mismo!? Digo, UDS defienden a capa y espada y su artista que ni verguensa le dio que *un video en actos sexuales* saliera al aire. Bravo fans de Jenni y bravo a Jenni, eso es la gran cultura, educacion, y esfuerzo que muchos de nuestros paisanos va y se parte el alma, para que Jenni venga a Mexico y digan, EN MIS CONCIERTOS PASA LO QUE PASA! Jenni nos cataloga de promiscuous todos los Mexicanos, y sus fans se hacen tontos! FUERA DE MEXICO JENNI!

I am glad that the media and the authorities have finally realized how cheap the artist Jenni Rivera is, but her fans. I could care less Jenni fans if this agitates you, but Jenni answered stupidly when they asked her if there were children in the concert. She responded, "well, in my concerts anything is possible" That was such an immoral way of responding. Let's see Jenni fans, what if any man with alcoholic breath came close to you with an erected penis and kiss you just because it's a Jenni concert? O wait, would you like that be done to your daughter, sister etc? Well, y'all defend Jenni so much and she did not care that there was a sex video of her circulating online. Bravo Jenni fans and bravo to Jenni. That is the culture, education, and effort that many of our people work hard to achieve so Jenni can

¹⁰⁰ Jenni's accusations of immorality echo those of her predecessor Gloria Trevi, a Mexican rockera from Monterrey who was very famous in the 1990s. Trevi also offered a transgressive representation of the *mujer atrevida* "the women who dares to transgress social and moral regulations controlling female heterosexuality" (33). She became famous for inviting men on stage to invite them to sing her songs while she un-dressed them, seductively. Without a doubt, Jenni Rivera's career was influenced by Trevi and her radical expressions of sexuality and feminisms in her music. In fact, in 2003, Jenni Rivera released an album titled *Homenaje a las Grandes* where she interprets a cover of "Una Papa Sin Catsup" which she also performed in her concerts that included men in the stage to which she would dance for. "Sorprende destape en concierto de Jenni" However, in this statement she also references that the intoxicating pleasure of bra-throwing and un-dressing happens not only in Monterrey but in several cities throughout Mexico and the United States. "En una presentacion de Jenni Rivera pueden suceder muchas cosas, esos de los brasieres en todos lados, sea aqui, en Tijuana, el DF, Los Angeles. Les da calor, no se, les da calor y se encueran.

come to Mexico and say, “In my concerts anything is possible!” Jenni categorizes all Mexicans as promiscuous and her fans ignore that. Out of Mexico Jenni!

In this comment, Miguel critiques Jenni for responding to the media with “en mis conciertos pasa lo que pasa!” (In my concerts anything is possible!). This anti-fan is upset that Jenni is so unapologetic about the nudity in her concerts and that her fans admire her for that. By staging the imaginary scenario that he does – “what if any man with alcoholic breath came close to you with an erected penis and kiss you” he justifies rape culture and takes Jenni’s concerts out of context. As we saw in the previous chapter, the concert at La Arena was a women-centered space that made women feel comfortable to explore their sexuality. Thus, the anti-fan’s comment appears to be a reminder about male dominance, sexual surveillance, and the control of women’s bodies. In *Rape, Race, and Representation: The Power of Discourse, Discourses of Power and the Reconstruction of Heterosexuality*, Elizabeth Iglesias, uses the image of the “sacred prostitute” to offer alternative narratives of feminine sexual identity, which will help “re-examine the male/female relations inscribed within the virgin/whore dichotomy”¹⁰¹ (1996, 934).

Miguel’s comments indirectly recognizes Jenni’s Chicananess as the reason for her *atrevidaness* (sluttiness) and her “visits” to Mexico as a negative representation of who Mexicans are. Jenni’s Chicananess is not acknowledged as a hypersexualized identity among the fans whom I have met during tribute events in Mexico. In fact, because Jenni was skilled at code-switching between Spanish and English, fans often forgot that she was not Mexican born. Here, the anti-fan is framing Jenni’s presence in Mexico as a threat because her performances intoxicated fans to be comfortable with their sexuality. When referring to education, Miguel references it in relation to Mexican culture and labor from immigrants which as he states, work really hard to make a living,

¹⁰¹ Nancy Qualls-Corbett, *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternel Aspects of the Feminine*. Inner City Books. 1988.

giving up their soul in exchange, just for Jenni to come to Mexico and ruin their image. As with several comments by anti-fans, the sex video was also used to shame Jenni and to demonstrate that her indecent womanhood made her *corriente* (cheap). The reactions to Jenni's performances raises many questions about the way class stigmatization migrates across transnational borders, in this case Mexico and the United States, and how these differences can help scholars in the fields of Ethnic Studies, American Studies, and Women Studies create new language to understand the intersections of class, gender and sexuality in more complex ways.

In response to Miguel's comment, a commenter by the name of Lola wrote, "Shut up....jenni is #1... aunk te duela.. envidioso(a)¹⁰²" Miguel responded by attacking Jenni's fans:

Yea, she is the number 1 slut! And her fans act like her. Slutty tramp and a whore! All her fans are like her, that's why you are defending her so much! You are all young and stupid single moms that were so dumb and got pregnant, now you are bitter at the world because you live in a trailer park, make minimum wage, but whoa, Jenni understands you! Dress like a tramp, act like a tramp, must be a tramp! FUERA DE MEXICO JENNI.

Attempting to understand the Mexican nationalist motivations of this rhetoric is outside the scope of this chapter but his agitated discourse stimulates a rich conversation of Chicana/Mexicana class politics and how these forms of community policing take place at the expense of the femme body. As E.P Thompson states, class is a historical phenomenon. He does not "see class as a "structure", nor even as a "category", but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships." The attack against femme bodies and sexuality is a structure that has been used to colonize, dominate, and police their bodies, culture, language, and land. In this comment, Miguel switches from writing in Spanish to English to slut shame Jenni's fans with English vernaculars like tramps, sluts, and whores. He situates them as young single mothers who

¹⁰² The parenthesis used by the fan is very telling, as it references both a men and woman.

get pregnant and live in trailer parks. His comments sound very familiar to the culture of poverty discourses that dominated anthropological and sociological literature in the 1960s¹⁰³; framing single mothers and families of color as damaged for practicing what Stalling has defined as funky love, “publicly radical configurations of family, love, and relationships where monogamy and marriage are not situated as the ideal praxis” (2015, 122). His comment in both agitated responses about expelling Jenni from Mexico is very telling and forces me to ask transnational questions of class, sexuality and *pirujeria* as it signifies differently depending on place.

Although the media and reporters seem to be responsible for framing *la deschichadera* as an “immoral” activity, the response by the state of Monterrey point us to a moral panic about intergenerational sex-positive cultures. The reporters’ mentioning of the presence of children in the concert underscores the belief that children should not be exposed to sexually explicit content. Some reporters framed this fan ritual as a question on censorship, suggesting that Jenni provoked fans to undress and in order to prevent the nudity from happening again would she consider censoring her performances. Those questions prompted this response from Jenni:

"Nunca me han censurado, si así quieres seguir y así quieres hacer tu nota, allá tú... Es la manera en la cual el público actúa y es la manera en la cual yo lo recibo, yo no me ofendo"

They have never censored me, if this is how you want to continue, if this is how you want to continue your note, that is up to you... It is the way my audience acts, and it is the way that I receive it, I do not get offended.

The questions from the media along with the agitated discourse from anti-fans return us to the topic of intergenerational fandom, particularly the presence of children among the audience at live concerts or even girls performing as Jenni. Reading these reports reminded me of the videos I had watched on YouTube about girls and mothers attending concerts and watching Jenni’s concerts

¹⁰³ See most of Oscar Lewis’ work. See the Negro family: The Case for National Action by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. United States Department of Labor. 1965.

together in their living room. For instance, a YouTube video titled “Her first concert to Jenni Rivera” captures a mother recording her daughter’s reaction to the news that she was attending her first Jenni concert. The girl in the video is around five years old and is laying in a Hello Kitty and zebra print bed, holding a concert ticket. The dialogue in this 56 second video along with the girl’s reaction tells us how intergenerational fandom is transmitted multisensorially, through her listening to Jenni’s name and music:

Daughter: (giggling) I am very excited¹⁰⁴
Mom: Turn it around
Daughter: What is this?
Mom: Try to read it
Daughter: Where? Where do I try to read it?
Mom: Right here (pointing) wait, wait, right there what does it say?
Daughter: Wait, the P one?
Mom: No the J
Daughter: Oh the J and the R?
Daughter: Jeee-nnni, ni, Jennii, Jenni
Mom: Jenni what?
Daughter: Rivera (the girl giggles) Can I go?
Mom: You are gonna go with me to go see Jenni Rivera!
Daughter: Kicking her legs and giggling, she jumps off the bed

When the girl is reading Jenni’s name, she reads it three times before she realizes that the name on the ticket is the same one that her mother, the radio, and other family members have pronounced repeatedly. This moment is telling as it demonstrates that knowledge is heard, felt, and transmitted multisensorially. In the description of the video, the mother shares that her daughter was very excited and asked her “momi can Jenni play my song, Querida Socia.”

¹⁰⁴ Mayrai5. “Her First Concert to Jenni Rivera. YouTube. September 5, 2012.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sV4jljjUY>

Another example of girls' fandom is present in a video titled, "El video mas visto en todo el mundo" (the most viewed video in the world) and has around 93,315 views on YouTube. Introduced as "las nuevas divas de la banda" (the new divas of banda music), the two girls are wearing cheetah print outfits, high heels and lipstick, as they co-sing the song "Ajustando Cuentas" by Jenni Rivera and Diana Reyes. The girls appear to be around seven or eight years old and their performance of the song is so vivacious; they embody the storyline of the characters in the song which is about two women who have a relationship with the same man.



Figure 34. Girl in Leopard outfit singing Jenni Rivera.

The video has 68 comments as of April 12, 2017,¹⁰⁵ and these comments mark the girls as “las futuras pirujitas” (the future little sluts). Some of the agitated responses vilify the girls’ outfits and deem the content of the song as inappropriate for their age. Unpacking the comment “Las futuras pirujitas” brings us to a conversation about futurity and the moral panic about girl fans becoming Jenni, thus becoming pirujas.

The references to what the girls should not be wearing shows how aesthetics play an enormous role in the policing of girls’ sexualities. In her forthcoming book, *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment*, Girl Studies scholar Jillian Hernandez states that her theorization of sexual-aesthetic excess is inspired by Black and Latina girls and women who *make their class burn* because they “embrace ostentatious styling, hyperfeminities and hypermasculinities, raunch, camp, voluptuousness, glitter, pink, and gold.” (27) She cites the film *Paris is Burning*, a film based in New York City that documents drag fashion competitions of working-class queer and trans people of color. Participants in the film state that their amazing embodiments would “set the fashion metropolis of Paris on fire with their fierce inventiveness.” In other words, Paris, a leading fashion capital in the world, will never be able to handle their spectacularity. Instead of punishing girls and women of color for “reproducing negative stereotypes,” Hernandez argues that we should view the sexual-aesthetic excess as indexing “ethnic pride, personal confidence, and non-normative sexuality” (“Miss you look like a bratz doll”, 66). The case study of Chongas in her book, is crucial to my analysis of *Paisa Girls* because la chonga is often described as “low-class, slutty, tough and crass young women.” (*Miss you look like a bratz doll*, 64) Thus, Hernandez’s theory of sexual-aesthetic excess calls for a reevaluation

¹⁰⁵ Other videos that show girls and grandmothers dancing to Jenni are: Adrian Alejandro. “Karen y Mary Cantando Ajustando Cuentas de Jenny Rivera y Diana Reyes.” YouTube. April 27, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZyHwO471Uc>

of hypersexual representations that complicates dichotomies of good versus bad girlhoods and femininities. This call is influenced by Shimizu's theorization of the "productive performance of perversity" which argues that engaging in hypersexuality "as a politically productive perversity pays attention to the formulations of sexual and racial identity that critiques normative scripts for sexually and racially marginalized subjects" (2007, 21). Shimizu's theory invites "feminist and critical race scholars to complicate approaches to stereotype analysis as many critique of sexual representations of women can "unconsciously get caught in an agenda of moralism and propriety" (ibid, 18). The chettah print outfits and the high heels that they wear is a signification of aesthetics of excess, and how it plays a role in the policing of pirujeria as an intergenerational sex-positive filosofia.

In dreaming of a sex-positive future that allows girls and women of color the opportunity to engage in their music fan cultures as spaces that allow them to explore their bodies and sexualities, I am reminded of Jose Esteban Muñoz and his critique that the futurity of "heterosexual culture depends on a notion of the future: as the song goes, 'the children are our futures'" (49)¹⁰⁶. Muñoz states that this notion of futurity is problematic because it is "not the case for different cultures of sexual dissidence," and asks "can the future stop being a fantasy of heterosexual reproduction?" The agitated responses to "El video mas visto en todo el mundo" force us to interrogate this heterosexual reproductive fantasy and think about the different layers of this notion of futurity. Thus, the question is: "*what children, and whose future? And how does respectability politics play out in these ideologies of futurity?*" Clearly, the girls in these videos threaten this romanticized idea that "children are the future," which quickly disappears when their mothers are poor women whose embodiments are viewed as too deviant, vulgar, and hyper-sexual. Juxtaposing

¹⁰⁶ Also see: Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Duke University Press, 2004.

this video in relation to the concert in Monterrey motivates me to argue that for these anti-fans, intergenerational sex-positive sexuality is pathological because it teaches women to repeat deviant behaviors that leads to becoming loose women, which is a threat not just to the nation-state of Mexico, but to the institution of heteropatriarchy. In fact, in the culture of poverty discourse, transmission of intergenerational conocimientos are often viewed as broken and damaged because they carry traits of sexual pathology. In the next section, I move to a close reading of the list of 20 characteristics that I found as I was researching la deschichadera. I analyze several YouTube videos, throughout my interrogations of the list, to illustrate that despite these agitations, fans enjoy the erotics of fandom and embrace *pirujeria as a way of life*.

“Perfil de las ‘fans’ de Jenni Rivera:” Marked as an Agitator of Indecency

The first time I encountered the anti-fan list “Perfil de las ‘fans’ de Jenni Rivera” was on June 14, 2016 while I was researching news reports and videos where Jenni was engaging in deschichadera.

“The 20 Characteristics of Jenni Rivera Fans”

1. They are obese but they feel like models
2. They have at least 3 kids from different fathers and have pride for it.
3. Only have an elementary education
4. They smell like urine
5. They get naked for a bucket of beer
6. They leave their kids with their mothers so they can go be whores
7. After every sentence they use the word “verga”
8. They wear [a] ton of makeup
9. They swear that they don’t want to know about their ex-partners but they cry for them, and beg them, and every time they get drunk they cuss them out
10. They live comforted that Karma will terminate with their exes
11. Their famous quotes “vieja piojo” and “grabaselo mija para mi ninguan vieja es competencia”
12. They dye their hair, blonde, red, and sometimes black.
13. They have bad fucken grammar.
14. They don’t even know how to write [Jenni’s] name
15. They live waiting for the day that a guy will hook up with them so they can get as much [money] as they can from them.

16. They don't know how to dress.
17. Do not take care of their home, nor know how to cook.
18. They insult you for telling them the truth.
19. By listening to her [Jenni] they think they are invincible, and can handle anything, but when they get cheated on they cry ridiculously
20. Their greatest achievement in life is to defend her [Jenni] in social media networks (but from a computer at a cybercafé).

As analyzed in the previous chapter, the YouTube video “Jenni Rivera- se quito el brassier...jijiji...” shows Jenni removing her bra with her teeth in front of her audience. This video garnered 1,872,477 views and 341 comments, a mix of fan admiration, agitated responses and fans’ “contestaciones” to the agitated responses. Most of the agitations to this video mention Jenni’s fat body, her immoral sexuality, and her working-class behaviors. For instance, someone critiques her breasts for being *aguadas* “saggy;” another calls her *deschichadera* ritual porn, and yet another suggests that Jenni struggles to take off her bra because she was fat. An agitated response slut-shames Jenni: “Esta Puta fue famosa entre la pura *chusma*, y todas las que defienden esta...son putas como ella. Nada mas una puta...que mas se espera de esta marrana si asta hay videos en YouTube donde mama verga” (This Slut was famous among the *chusmas*, and everyone who defends her are sluts like her. Only a slut. What would you expect from a pig who you find videos of in YouTube sucking dick). Performance studies scholar Jose Esteban Munoz defines *chusmeria* as:

a form of behavior that refuses standards of bourgeois comportment. Chusmeria is, to a large degree, linked to stigmatized class identity. Within Cuban culture, for instance, being called *chusma* might be a technique for the middle class to distance itself from the working class; it may be a barely veiled racial slur suggesting that one is too black; it sometime connotes gender nonconformity. In the United States, the epithet *chusma* also connotes recent immigration and a general lack of “Americanness,” as well as an excessive nationalism- that one is somewhat over the top about her Cubanness.

Muñoz states that a *chusma*’s identity is aligned with what sociologist Erving Goffman calls a “spoiled identity,” or “an attribute that is deeply discrediting.” According to Munoz, another

implicated component of chusmas is sexuality: “The prototypical chusma’s sexuality is deemed excessive and flagrant – again, subverting conventions. There is something monstrous about the chusma” (1994). The monstrosity of Jenni and her fans is linked to their pirujaness. This is evident in the reference to the sex tape, which circulated in social media the same year of this concert in Obregon Sonora. In her discussion of black women’s sexuality,” Mireille Miller-Young defines “ho theory” as “an analytic for black illicit erotic performance aesthetics, identity formations, and labor tactics from the point of view of the purported ho” (2014, 147). Similarly, pirujeria is another form of “ho theory” where Latina fans embrace their nudity, sexual vulgarity, as sources of power rather than sites of shame. In *Erotic Journeys: Mexican Immigrants and Their Sex Lives*, Gonzalez-Lopez observed that there is a “respeto a la mujer” ethic that circulated among both the Mexican men and women she interviewed, which indicated that “a man who invites a woman to engage in sexual activity is being disrespectful.” Following this logic, Jenni’s self-invitation to remove her own bra is viewed as disrespectful to herself and the patriarchal nation, especially since the person who invited her to take off her bra was a woman and because it was done for public consumption. As Miller-Young states, “the hoe does queer work. She destabilizes forces of race, gender, and class even as she constitutes them” (2014, 179).¹⁰⁷

Another site where the agitated response “Perfil de las ‘fans’ de Jenni Rivera” was also posted was in a TVNotas article, titled “Fotos Asi enloquece Jenni Rivera a sus fans! Que no usan Calzones!.” Translate title and say when it was published In this article, Susana Heredia and Liset Gonzalez describe how Jenni asked a fan to come on stage to help her demonstrate how to dance

¹⁰⁷ Another explanation towards the agitation by anti-fans to call Jenni Rivera puta is that she served as a “networking” figure for Mexican immigrant women and Chicanas/Latinas. Jenni’s concerts served as site where emancipatory networking about sexuality occurred. Gonzalez-Lopez argues that women “use networking to revisit and reconsider new possibilities to express and experience desire.”

to “tambora” music. While Jenni’s fan was on stage, Jenni asked a musician to demonstrate to her fan how to dance “de cartoncito,” which allows men to hold women from their waist or butts, a movement which Jenni enjoys because it feels like a massage. However, Jenni also encourages her women fans to flip the male gaze and grab men by their penises. To everyone’s surprise, the fan who went on stage was not wearing underwear so when the musician asked her to demonstrate “de cartoncito” with one of her male musicians, her butt was exposed for everyone to see.

The third site where I saw this list circulate was on the official Jenni Rivera Facebook page. On May 3, 2016, the Rivera family who manages this site after Jenni’s death posted a video of Jenni performing the song “Madre Soltera” (Single Mother) in her concert at the Nokia Theater in Los Angeles in 2010. The description linked with the video said “Y Pa Que Quiero Padre, Si Les Sobra Madre Mijo!!!” --Jenni Rivera. Felicidades a las madres que son “Madre y Padre” a la vez.” (Why do I need a dad, if I have more than enough with my mom?” a quote by Jenni Rivera. Congrats to all the mothers who are both mother and father at the same time.) Most of the comments to this Facebook video post were positive. Single mothers or the daughters of single mothers related to her and acknowledged that this song was a celebration for Jenni and themselves. Some fans have even called “Madre Soltera” an anthem for themselves since it portrays – with dignity – their role as both a mother and father:¹⁰⁸

Esta cancion es muy cierta lo mismo me paso a mi el mal nacido decia q mi hijo no era de el y de castigo tosa la ficha de el pero mis hjos no han necesitado de el y pa q quieren padre si le sobra madre y a todo dar (This song is very true, the same thing happened to me. The asshole said my child wasn’t his. Up to this date, my children don’t need from him. Why do they need a father, when they have more

¹⁰⁸ Luis Alvarez’s research on Zoot Suiters influences the way I think about dignity. He states, “The struggle for dignity by zoot suiters was thus a politics of refusal; a refusal to accept humiliation, a refusal to quietly endure dehumanization, and a refusal to conform...Some claimed dignity by voicing displeasure with second-class citizenship.” (2008, 8).

than enough with their mother.)

--Wendy Pineda

“Y con mucho horguyo lo digo soy madre soltera y que gracias a Dios aquí sigo de pie” (With a lot of pride, I say it. I am a single mother and thanks to God I continue standing).

– Beatriz Amaro

However, on May 11, 2016, a day after Mexico’s version of Mother’s Day, hater Alex Travieso Morales posted “The 20 Characteristics of Jenni Rivera Fans.” Adopting Jenni’s *contestacion* style, fans quickly responded to Morales: “Mire mijo, a un que tu comentario ya tiene rato, yo apenas lo voy leyendo. Y le voy a responder a su lista.” [Look, mijo. Even though your comment has been posted for a while now, I am just seeing it and I will respond to your list]. As the above analysis suggests, the sites where the agitated response “Perfil de las ‘fans’ de Jenni Rivera” was reposted demonstrates that this post was not simply about a “dislike” of Jenni; it was also about shaming her for being fat and expressing disgust for her fans, their sex-positive spaces, and their single-mother solidarity. Analyzing the sites where anti-fans re-posted this agitated response provides us with the gender ideologies that Chicanas/Latinas/Mexicanas are expected to “adopt” in order to be seen as “respectable subjects.” I found that the anti-fans who posted this type of agitated response tended to use male-identified names. The heterosexist men’s phenomenon of antifandom displays forms of fear and fragility towards Jenni and her women fans because they perceive them as a threat. In the next section, I perform a close reading of the agitated response – “Perfil de las ‘fans’ de Jenni Rivera” – as a feminist “contestacion” in the style of Jenni, to not let haters have the last word.

Anti-Fan's Interpellation: Analyzing The "Profile" of Jenni Rivera's Fans

The list that was posted on these different online sites is called "Perfil de las 'fans' de Jenni Rivera" (the profile of Jenni Rivera's fans). In this list, instead of describing Jenni's fans as individuals with "relatively deep, positive emotional conviction about someone or something famous" (Duffett, 24), anti-fans listed twenty characteristics that depicted Jenni's fans as uneducated single mothers who have failed at motherhood because they do not know how to cook and leave their children with their mothers to go out partying. In a similar way to how the body is central to the way Jenni and her fans live the erotixxxs of *pirujeria*, this list highlights sex-positive corporality and affect as a site of agitation. The body is present in his framing of Jenni's fans by how the women dress, how their bodies are framed, how they reproduce, and what they decide to do with it. The intoxicated erotics of Jenni's fans and their sexualized fatness are among two of the things that anti-fans always attack. Thus, in this section, I trace anti-fans interpellation of Jenni's fans corporality as a framework of antifandom that moves beyond the text or Jonathan Gray's model of the atom to one that is attentive to the body, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship/nation¹⁰⁹. I use this model because it takes seriously the hailing/interpellation that anti-fans practice towards Jenni's fans. An anti-fan model that centers corporality is important because it helps us understand why dislike turns into disgust. I center the anti-fan's voices here because I think these agitations need to be taken seriously. However, I undermine these agitated responses by asking fans about their reactions to the list and citing the work of women of color that have

¹⁰⁹ Althusser argues that "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject" (1970, 173). He also states that the Subject that hails other subjects is centered. The centering in which the process of interpellation occurs is very similar to the atomic model that Jonathan Gray proposes to understand anti-fans. However, in Althusser's model the center is the Subject and not just a text, one can argue that Subjects and bodies can also be reduced to ideology and discourse. In fact, Althusser argues that everything is within Ideology and not outside of it.

responded to similar agitations about women being “rebellious, indecent, and libertine” (Urquijo-Ruiz, 113).

As a digital feminist ethnographer who writes about fandom, it was important for me to ask Jenni fans their opinions on the list of twenty characteristics. Asking them about this list also allowed me to have them “contestar”. As expected, many of the fans whom I showed the list to thought these “characteristics” were senseless, and that the person who wrote it and circulated clearly had the wrong perception of Jenni and her fans. As Nancy, a fan of Jenni and Lupillo for 18 years stated, “this says more about them than it says about Jenni fans.” I immediately agreed. When she read the list, she looked annoyed, the first thing she asked was, “where did you find the list?” I told her that I found it in numerous cites online while I was researching *la deschichadera*, a fan ritual that she witnessed numerous times in Tijuana and Culican, Mexico. As she finished reading the list, she rolled her eyes and sighed numerous times, she acknowledged that Jenni had a lot of haters and recognized those agitated responses as their own phenomenon. Nancy said that the list described una persona “ardida” (form of being agitated). The agitation that Nancy described stemmed from the rebellion of specific gender and sexual norms like drinking, but also from being fat. She shared that most haters endlessly attacked Jenni for being “fat.” She also mentioned that some of those characteristics pertained to the generalizations that people had of the music genre. She referenced that in general women who listen to Banda and Jenni are associated with association vulgarity, cheapness, chunteria, and paisaness.

When I showed Rufo (a member of Tequileros fan club) the list of twenty characteristics, he was laughing as he was reading them. When asked, “how do you make sense of this?” he responds, “I think it’s hilarious, I read a similar list about Paquita La del Barrio Fans on Chuntivision.” I immediately tell him that I have not seen that list but that I will look for it. Because

the Univision chatrooms no longer exist, I have not found the list but I mention it here because Rufo told me that Paquita's list also had a similar comment about her fans being obese. When Jenni was alive, Paquita was probably the other popular artist that was fat on a Mexican regional music stage. According to Deborah Vargas, Paquita was popular among women from "lower social and economic strata as her" and among Latino gay men (2012, 104). In relation to Paquita's body Vargas states, "it is not only the brash bolero renditions condemning abuse and adultery by Mexican men but the body of Paquita herself that makes for what Catherine Ramirez refers to as an inadequate or aberrant femininity. Unlike other Latina singing icons popularized in drag forms such as Shakira and Thalía, Paquita is large, full-figured woman with a deep voice. She is not the hyperfeminine Latina with the prototypical long, dark, flowing hair" (2012, 105).¹¹⁰In fact, Jenni and Paquita shared the stage numerous times, and both of them have also been called "man haters." I mention this not to compare Jenni and Paquita, but to show a trend on fat racialized sexuality. But also to point at Rufo's reaction to the list compared to Nancy. Rufo's laughter signified the different gendered ways in which he experienced Jenni's fandom. It appeared that his fandom towards Jenni did not have such a loaded significance.

Inspired by the charlas with fans, I read this list through three categories of descriptors of Jenni fans: 1) *Vulgar y Corriente* 2) *Putanness/Pirujaness* and 3) *Fat Fans*. I use songs and performances by Jenni to explain why anti-fans post agitated responses. At times these themes also overlap, given the intersections of fatness, gender, racialized sexuality and class. Critically

¹¹⁰ Deborah Vargas situates Paquita la del barrio as a successor of Chelo Silva. Vargas argues that Chelo Silva's boleros "form a queer temporal genealogy that moves back and forth across time and across genders" (102) Vargas, following Ann Cvetkovich analysis of queer culture archives, considers "drag performances of Silva and Paquita as part of a queer archive. To borrow from Cvetkovich, drag performances of Silva and Paquita are such historical practices where "fan cultures queer certain stars." It is not solely the drag performances or personas themselves that are inherently queer, but they are made so through an archive assembled through gossip, performances channeling nonheteronormative desire, and alternative histories of the fans." (105).

analyzing the list helps us understand why a working-class majority space like Jenni's concerts created the agitations that they did, because when Jenni was alive, she and her fans agitated MeXican respectability politics and refused to be policed because they believed in the radical politics of their Latina deviance.



Figure 35. Jenni Rivera y Paquita La del Barrio flyer.

“Para irse de Putas”: Madre Solteras and La Gran Señora

They have at least 3 kids from different fathers and have pride for it; They leave their kids with their mothers so they can go be whores; Do not take care of their home, nor know how to cook; They insult you for telling them the truth; By listening to her [Jenni] they think they are invincible, and can handle anything, but when they get cheated on they cry ridiculously; They swear that they don't want to know about their ex-partners but they cry for them, and beg them, and every time they get drunk they cuss them out; They live comforted that Karma will terminate with their exes;

-Anti-Fan

After talking about Paquita I asked Rufo to go over the list again and identify which characteristics would not fit Paquita but instead was written anew to target Jenni's fans. Immediately, we looked at number 6 and he says, “this cannot be a Paquita la del barrio fan because then who would they leave their children with, if their mothers would probably be the ones attending Paquitas concert in the first place.” The characteristic Rufo pointed to said, “They leave their kids with their mothers so they can go be whores.” This characteristic stood out to Rufo because according to him Paquita's fans are mostly older women. Unlike Jenni, Paquita did not have a vast intergenerational fan base and her fans were not called whores.

In the anti-fans list, mothers are portrayed as irresponsible for prioritizing their own pleasures and letting their “hormone-driven” ego guide their actions. What is notable is Perales' assumption that most of Jenni's fans are *single mothers*. One reason Perales creates this fan imaginary is because Jenni was an unapologetic single mother who enjoyed engaging in the pleasurable activities of sex or night life. In fact, women fans are infantilized for wanting to be fans after “girlhood.” As Cavichi states, “The obsessive activities of fandom—collecting artifacts and photographs, imitating a star's dress and manners, camping overnight for concert tickets, creating fanzines, joining fan clubs—are accepted only as the temporary behavior of hormone-driven (usually) female teenager, when reaching adulthood, are expected to settle into the more

mature behavior of work or motherhood.” (Cavicchi, 6) In the same way, Cheryl Cline notices that it is “normal” for girl rock fans under the age of 18 to have crushes on male rock stars. However, for young adults and older women, to demonstrate that they have matured, they are “supposed to give up their crushes on famous people” and “pack up all” their fan memorabilia (70).

When talking about Latina fans who are mothers¹¹¹, especially single mothers, one has to keep in mind what women studies scholar Elena Gutierrez calls the “politics of Mexican-origin women’s reproduction.” Gutierrez states that the moral panics over population control and illegal immigration has produced the discourse of Mexican origin women as excessively fertile. Gutierrez argues that compared to Black women, Mexican origin women “are typically cast as overly identified mothers and reproducers,” images that are “embedded in a framework of racial domination” (12). Moreover, anti-fans’ comment about Jenni fans leaving their children at home to go partying echoes Cindy Garcia’s ethnography of Salsa participants. In *Salsa Crossings*, Garcia

¹¹¹ The pleasures of single-mother fans is a topic that has been unexplored in popular music fan studies, but for my work, I cannot write about Jenni without writing about her single-mother fans. An exemption to the topic of motherhood is Frances Aparicio’s work on the reception of Salsa music. In *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures*, Aparicio argues that Latinas who are active listeners and consumers of Salsa music “continuously rewrite patriarchal and misogynist salsa texts” (1998, 188). She applies John Fiske’s term of “productive pleasures¹¹¹” to show that women find productive “significations that are relevant to their everyday lives.” In her book, Aparicio interviewed eighteen Latinas to understand the liberatory meanings of salsa in their lives. She found that by listening to Salsa Latinas were able to “negotiate power differentials with men in their lives” (197). The (hetero)sexual working-class Latinas that she interviewed traced their practice of listening to salsa to their mothers. Some of these fans listened to salsa music in the car while driving to church, in the kitchen while cooking and cleaning. For working-class Latina women, salsa music was “a distraction, entertainment, escape...[and] a tool of survival.” (202) Viewing music as a “tool of survival” allows us to understand the affective sensibility of “invincibility” that anti-fans reference in their agitated response. Although they associate this with a disgust over single mothers feeling unbreakable, without men of course, a study that privileges single mother fans can tell us about the “love” and “magic” (in Nancy Guy’s way) that Jenni provided for these fans. Moreover, applying Cathy Cohen’s call to center the voices and experiences of Black [and Latina] single mothers (including those that are on welfare) can help us understand not only why anti-fans view their “fannish” pleasures as “deviant practice, defiant behavior” but how these fans might view their reception as “political resistance.” Thus, I agree with Cohen that if we want to queer a field, we have to do it from “the centering of those most marginal” and our analysis cannot be “with an eye toward pathologizing or even justifying their behavior, but instead with an eye toward recognizing and understanding the possible-subversive potential, we can reorient our respective field to focus on the potential liberatory aspects of deviance.” (2004, 38)

contends that the representation of Mexican women as hyper-breeders and illegal border crossers places them at a lower social capital in Los Angeles based nightclubs. Garcia argues that women attending salsa clubs thus have to disassociate themselves from their Mexican identity in order to be considered desirable.¹¹² Anti-fans likewise portray Jenni's fans as disposable, undesirable and distinct from normative forms of femininity.

Jenni fans are also portrayed as having children from different fathers and refusing to do domestic work. With the many characteristics about single motherhood, these anti-fans are linking Jenni's fandom to discourses of the "culture of poverty."

Vulgar y Corriente: Las Malandrinas, Chuperamigas, y Parranderas

They wear ton of makeup; They get naked for a bucket of beer; They dye their hair, blond, red, and sometimes black; Their famous quotes "vieja piojo" and "grabaselo mija para mi ninguan vieja es competencia;" They have bad fucken grammar; They don't know how to dress; They smell like urine; After every sentence they use the word "verga." Only have an elementary education; They live waiting for the day that a guy will hook up with them so they can get as much [money] as they can from them.

-- Anti-Fan

According to Perales, Jenni's fans wear tons of make-up, dye their hair in unnatural color, and dress indecently. I labeled this category "*vulgar y corriente*" (*vulgar and cheap*) because the anti-fans logic is that all of Jenni fans, regardless of their different sonic identities, are bad-mannered. What distinguishes this category from the single mother fan category is that it is usually associated with girlhood and young adulthood. The assumption is that "if these young women don't change," their deviant behaviors will lead them towards single motherhood. An example of this category, discussed in the beginning of this chapter, is the agitated discourse directed at the

¹¹² Talk about dancing to Salsa and sequined and unsequined.

girls singing “Ajustando Cuentas,” labeling them “las pirujitas del futuro” because they are dressed in what Jillian Hernandez calls a “stylistic deviancy with sexual impropriety” (Hernandez, “Intro” 25). In another example, a three-minute YouTube video posted by the party crew Las Malandrinas de Long Beach starts off with a GIF that states, “I rep Malandrinaz notin more ok, changas!” In the upper right-hand side of the image, we see a barcode that says “fuck a hater.” This barcode and the numerous times Malandrinas reference “haters” suggests that they were often critiqued for their perceived deviant performances.



Figure 36. Las Malandrinas de Long Beach, 2008.

In each photo, Malandrinas represent themselves as a group of girls who celebrate their present moment by drinking, partying, and simply having fun. According to the culture of poverty rhetoric, it is the girls' leisure activities that prevent them from escaping poverty. The premise behind that violent logic is that living in the present moment forecloses your ability to "escape" that lifestyle because you should always be planning a different future. However, for many working-class girls, "kicking it" in the present moment is an act of "social cohesion" and a radical refusal of capitalist gender expectations (Hunt et al, 2000, 342).

Las Malandrinas de Long Beach show how Jenni's transmission of sonic pedagogies of Latina deviance expanded beyond her fan clubs, because although these girls were not linked to Jenni's career, they still chose a song by her to represent their party crew identity. The social organizations of Party crews in Long Beach are often compared to gangs. However, for several members, party crews were the alternative to gangs because it was "safer" to be part of a club whose purpose was to create parties than to be part of gang "que tirara barrio" (that claimed territory). In fact, the literature on the experiences of girls in gangs demonstrates similarities between the role of drinking within party crews, fan clubs and Jenni's concerts. In general, the literature about women drinking shows that "women find themselves judged by a 'double standard' whereby women are expected not only to drink less but also refrain from becoming drunk and out of control in public" (332, Hunt et al).¹¹³ Las Malandrinas's engagement with intoxicated erotics is what agitated a conservative response from anti-fans. Working-class Latina women drinking and having fun seems to always stand in as evidence that these girls are going to become single mothers. For instance, one of the commenters to Las Malandrinas video wrote, "some of those

¹¹³ Geoffrey Hunt, Karen Joe-Laidler, Kathleen MacKenzie (2000) 'Chillin', Being Dogged and Getting Buzzed': alcohol in the lives of female gang members, *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 7:4, 331-353, DOI: 10.1080/dep.7.4.331.353

bitches are living as single mothers now lmao.. bitches go collect ur checks now...making la raza look bad.”

The other comments to this video also label these girls *pirujas*. A commenter posted, “Cuanto cobran estas pirujas?” another anti-fan said, “drunk paisa gurlz,” “Les puedo apostar que esas pinches viejas no saben hacer una salsa bandera nomas saben abril las patas y ponerse de perrito” (I can bet that those girls do not even know how to make salsa, they just know how to open their legs and get on doggy style) and “ay que meterles la verga a esta bola de pirujas que esos son borrachas” (lets insert our cocks to these drunken whores). The infuriating part about the rape tone in one of these comments is their complete lack of foundation, these girls do not engage in any sexual suggestiveness, and if they do, it is with their liquor bottles and each other. But even if the girls (who identified as heterosexual) did engage in sexual suggestiveness with their male party crew members, men should never feel entitled to post comments harassing women and girls for their engagement with intoxicated erotics.



Figure 37. Las Malandrinas drinking Buchanas, 2008.

Mireille Miller-Young's description of the term ho is crucial here because she states that "as a subaltern figure, the ho troubles black heterosexists attempts to put her in her proper place in the home, in the church, or alongside a breadwinning husband." Moreover, Miller Young states that tropes that are similar to the ho ("her dysfunctional siblings" i.e. freak, hoochie, hoodrat, golddigger) also trouble

the notion of black collectivity that rests on ideologies of racial uplift and moral citizenship. As public women who use sex for their own interest (be they profit or pleasure) rather than for the reproduction of the racial community, hoes are not only outside of black respectability politics, they are utterly loathed. The slur is used to describe a class of women who are perceived to represent multiple legitimacy crisis – the "disappearing" black family, epidemics of teen pregnancy, HIV/ AIDS, and even the materialism and consumerism of black youth culture" (163).

In this list, we see how the "puta" fan also becomes a gold-digger because "They live waiting for the day that a guy will hook up with them so they can get as much [money] as they can from them." However, part of the agitation for these anti-fans is that some of these women *do reproduce*, an act that according to them should be foreclosed because of their deviancy.

Drinking alcohol seems to be the marker that makes these anti-fans believe that women and girls are available to them whenever they want. As I showed in the last chapter, Jenni did have phrases like "cuando tomamos las aflojamos" (when we drink we get sexually loose), *salud por el afloje* (cheers to sexual loosenes) but these phrases centered women's "erotic sovereignty"—that women decide who they want to be sensual with. In a study about girls in gangs, the researchers found that "alcohol operates both to join the women together in one unit, and separate them from the men. In a world defined by the men, this sisterly union around drinking was very important for the women in enhancing their own sense of solidarity" (Hunt et al, 342). Thus, it appears that the girl and women-centered spaces that Jenni's songs and concerts generated among fan circles, and

in this case party crews, point to homosociality and homoerotics.¹¹⁴ For anti-fans, the contradiction of heterosexual women not needing patriarchal protection or penises for penetration is a joke. Curtis Marez's has argued that Jenni contradicted dominant representations of poor women as passive and in need of patriarchal protection (2004). Women-centered spaces like party crews, fan clubs and Jenni's concerts eliminate the common harassment that cis straight men feel entitled to towards women and girls.

Juxtaposing Alex's anti-fan comment with Las Malandrinas de Long Beach lets us see that agitated discourses are moral manifestos that police women for living a sexually nonconformist womanhood and girlhood. The problem with the circulation of these respectable ideologies is that for these girls and women being a Malandrina is a reality, not a stereotype. Anti-fans' agitated discourse is a form of classist epistemic violence directed against the hypervisibility of groups of women who make "la raza look bad."

"Damas Divinas in the House!": The Agitations of Fat Bodies on Stage

"They are obese but they feel like models;"

- Perales

According to Alex and Perales, Jenni's fans are fat yet they *feel like* models. In this framing, and the hundreds of other agitated responses about fat bodies that I have encountered in my research, having a fat body should foreclose pleasure, desire, and love for themselves because they

¹¹⁴ "Although their right to drink as girl gang members, even from a relatively early age, and in certain circumstances their right to get drunk, was largely uncontested, this did not mean that they were able to conduct themselves in an uncontrolled manner. To do so would be to lay themselves open to accusations of being unfeminine, thereby breaking acceptable behavior codes" (350).

are an “asco,” and break the respectable Latina curve. Their excessive flesh marks them as women with markers of suciedad and “unsanitary subjecthood” (Ochoa, 2014). Many of these agitated responses no longer are about personal taste, but about the agitations that arise from watching non-normative bodies—Jenni’s but also her fans’—at Jenni’s events. While not all of Jenni’s fans are fat, I have encountered a majority of fans who medically would be categorized as fat and Jenni’s body is a site for their identification as such. Deborah Paredez has also argued that Selena’s fans identified with her body, particularly her butt and dark complexion. She argues that this identification allowed her fans “a way to speak out against dominant U.S. representations of feminine ideals...and to highlight how the dark Latina body is marked and policed by multiple forces” (2009, 138). At Jenni’s concerts, *Damas Divinas* is one of the songs that fans get so excited about that they throw their bras to Jenni. It is important to note that fat women undressing themselves in public, throwing their bras, is not just about having fat bodies on stage, but about having fat bodies that can get naked and center their sexuality and desires on stage. For Jenni, “fluffy/chunky/gordibuena” women are erotic and “got some game/*tenemos pege*.” I argue that part of the agitation by anti-fans towards Jenni is influenced by her filosofía of not excluding fat women from her sex-positive environment; and the agitation towards Jenni’s fat fans has to do with their refusal to shame themselves and curb their sexuality for being fat. In fact, the productive agitations that occur when fat women view their bodies as erotic have been documented by feminist fat activists and BBW porn stars.

In the anthology *Fat Sex: New Directions in Theory and Activism*,¹¹⁵ Art and Design

¹¹⁵ The authors in this anthology recognize the DIY ethos behind the literature of fat sex and its activism. They mention anthologies like *Hot and Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love, and Fashion*. However, what is important for these scholars is the tendency that these activists “include sex (and sexual pleasure) as an integral part of their diverse political projects.” For instance, “Within this riot grrrl tradition, then, sex – whether painful, problematic, or pleasurable – is shown to play an important role in fat embodiment.” Moreover, “The self-publishing tradition also

scholar Frances Hatherley explores the intersection between fatness and class in Britain. She uses the word *corpulence* instead of fat because it “describes a body that is overabundance, of almost pure corporeality,” which allows her to play with pleasures of vulgarity and sexuality. According to Hatherley, in British popular culture, the working-class body has lost its respectability in terms of “hard-working” and instead has shifted to a hated, ridiculed, physically and socially unfit body. Hartherley underscores that “by depicting the working-class body as stereotypically fat, we frame it as out of bounds, out of control, undisciplined: fat, here is the personification of the unruly masses of ‘lumpen’ proletariat.” Hartherley’s work reminds us of the monstrous aspect of the *chusma*, “the fleshy body that doesn’t display the strict boundaries of slim discreetness is often treated as monstrous” (2015, 77). For Deborah Vargas, *suciedad* also operates via large body shapes of women of color and she places them in the first category of racialized discourses of difference, “the hypersexual and undisciplined body.”¹¹⁶ In my reading of Jenni, following Hatherly, I want to “take pleasure in that which is deemed ‘unfit’ to subvert bourgeois tastes and value judgment that decide who is ‘good’” enough” (Hartherly, 2015, 75)

As stated in a previous chapter, Jenni wrote *Damas Divinas* during her sex video scandal in 2008. The origins of this song also started with advice her dad gave one day about drinking: When guys drink, they find women more attractive regardless of their beauty and size. Jenni incorporated the advice into the song with phrases like “*si te echas unos tequilas soy una Dama Divina.*” However, during her live performance of Dama Divina at the Staple Center in 2011, she

gives fat punks the space to run against the received wisdom about sex, size, and their intersection.”

¹¹⁶ She cites Fred Moten’s article “The Subprime and the beautiful,” to reference how important “the big mama” and “larger-size Black women’s bodies were key to racist discourses of deceit and suspect citizenship during the mortgage foreclosure crisis.”

did not mention her dad's advice; instead she took the time to acknowledge anti-fat sentiments:

Donde estan todas aquellas mujeres que las critican porque tienen unas libritas de mas?/ Porque, tienen unas lonjitas por aca, donde estan? /This is for all the chunky women in the world/ Aquellas Mujeres que tienen mucho peso aca tras/ Aquellas Mujeres que les sobra de estas (pointing at boobs)/ It's all right, its ok /Cause we got some game!/ Tambien las fluffy girls tenemos pege

In this interaction with the audience, Jenni asked her fans to move their hands. This performance by her fans made fatness visible and what is often seen as “pollution” in the media (i.e. saggy arms) in this concert space was viewed as pleasurable and erotic. Fat-phobia was directly challenged in Jenni's concerts.

Alex and Perales' choice to describe Jenni's fans as “obese” calls attention to the way obesity has been medicalized and stigmatized as a “Mexican” problem. In 2013, the American Medical Association named obesity a disease and according to Sandra Solovay and Esther Rothblum, the United States declared a “war on fat” with the obesity epidemic. Understanding the “war on fat” helps us understand why singing about being a *Dama Divina* mobilizes agitations from some anti-fans.¹¹⁷

The agitated discourse that circulated about Jenni's fat body should be referenced here because it forces us to reflect on the violence that fat-phobic ideologies create towards women. Throughout Jenni's career she had liposuction, and this can appear to contradict my argument that she created a safe space for fat Latinas. However, the reality was that the fat safe space that Jenni created in her concerts with her fans was carnivalesque because outside of the concert space they were constantly bombarded with fat-phobic ideologies that impacted the way they saw their

¹¹⁷ Two cultural texts that scholars have written about in relation to Fat Latinas is the play and film *Real Women Have Curves* and *Ugly Betty*. Most of the literature about Latina bodies focus on their curves and emphasize their butts.

bodies. Jenni was open about her liposuction/tummy tuck. Some of Jenni's closest fans even saw her dieting. In my interview with Maria, she shared a story about seeing Jenni at an event and being so close to her that she saw what she was eating. After noticing that her plate had little food, Maria asked Jenni if that was all she was going to eat. Jenni said yes and shared that she wanted to lose some weight. In the mid 2000s Jenni also sponsored a weight loss challenge with her fans. The person who loses the most weight would win a lunch with Jenni. Nancy won the challenge and she told me that her weight loss journey was very empowering to her. I mention these stories to show the complexity of fat-positivity in a world where fat-phobic messages circulate on billboards, advertisements, popular culture and social media. It appears that Jenni's fat positive message came be with no guarantees, to use Stuart Halls' reference. Jenni still impacted many of her fans, the numerous agitated discourses about her body is evidence of this, but they also had complex ideas about their own bodies and regardless of how much weight Jenni lost, she was still considered a plus size women on stage. Thus, even if it was for a utopic moment, the safe fat spaces that she co-created with her fans outweighed the fat-phobic spaces that society imposed upon them.

The Sex Tape Scandal: Fat Latina Perversity

Since Jenni's sex tape appears numerous times in agitated responses, I want to spend time analyzing it. I argue that if we pay attention to the dialogue surrounding the tape, we can understand how fat-phobia is central to the agitated discourse around Jenni's phenomenon. Ethically, analyzing a sex tape that was released without Jenni's consent gives me mixed feelings about including it in this study but lying about not having seen it feels dishonest too. I watched the sex tape in 2009, a decade ago, when I could not even imagine I would be writing this dissertation. In fact, the sex tape inspired a productive conversation about fellatio with my partner who had

seen the sex tape too. We also watched the Cristina episode with Jenni where she discussed the tape and why she had recorded it in the first place. I argue that the sex tape controversy raises productive questions about fat Latina sexuality, consent, authenticity, and what it feels like to work in a male-dominated space like Banda Sinaloense. The scandal and agitated discourse behind it also prompt us to interrogate where the fat Latina body fits in conversations about authenticity, and pornography more broadly. First because some agitated discourse that I have found online attack Jenni's cellulite as disgusting and unworthy of being captured by a camera. The comments do not shame Jenni for engaging in the sex act itself, but notably, they mention how her fat body is too vulgar and should not be visible to the world. For that reason, I also analyze the sexual performance Jenni engaged in during the sex tape and argue that Jenni embodies a Latina fat erotic sovereignty through her confidence.

The sex tape was released when Jenni was thirty-nine years old¹¹⁸. Some Youtubers believed that she was too “grandesita” (old) to make a mistake this big. Unlike other celebrity sex tapes – Jimi Hendrix, Kim Kardashian, Pamela Anderson, or Tommy Lee – Jenni's sex tape was not released by an erotic film entertainment company, instead it was circulated via video messages between Banda musicians in Mexico. After circulating for a couple of days, the sex tape was uploaded to the internet and was reproduced in numerous sites. Once on the internet it was able to get to the hands of fans like me who lived in the United States. Today, Jenni appears on Pornhub, Xhamster, XVideos, and CelebrityTube.

¹¹⁸ “Noelia y Jenni Riera, ‘compañeras de dolor’ por videos íntimos.” October 17, 2008. El Siglo de Durango. <https://www.elsiglodurango.com.mx/noticia/185622.noelia-y-jenni-rivera-companeras-de-dolor-por-videos-intimos.html>

The day I told Marysol, that I would write about the sex tape we had an interesting conversation around it. First of all, she wasn't impressed by it. She told me that she could have taught Jenni a couple tips on the art of fellatio. When she mentioned this, I started laughing because I was still waiting on tips from the queen of fellatio herself. Like me, she also had seen the sex tape several times. In fact, when I told her that I would write about it, she said something along the lines of, "is it because she also includes it in the song?" I said, "yes, but also because haters reference it all the time." Here, Marysol was referring to Jenni's own incorporation of the sex tape into the song "Dama Divina." It was conversations like the one with Marysol that made me feel more comfortable about writing about the sex tape.

No me parezco a Lorena No tengo nada de Sofia No tengo nada de Daisy Fuentes Ni el cuerpo de la Niurka No tengo aires de la Salma Con la Machado nada que ver No tengo fama de la Trevi Estrella porno no queria ser	I do not look like Lorena I do not have anything like Sofia I do not have anything like Daisy Fuentes Nor Niuka's body type I do not look anything like Salma With Machado nada que ver I do not have fame like Gloria Porn star I did not want to become
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Marysol shared that the first performance that Jenni had after the tape was at the Morongo Casino in Palm Spring, California and that she knows because Lupillo went to the concert to show her his support. After the Morongo concert, a Tequilera posted a report about the concert on the forum. In reference to the sex tape, she wrote, "Jenni also apologized to her audience for the tape, she publicly apologized to her family, to her father... she cried. I felt so bad." Another fan responded and said, "I agree yo la e visto en alguna entrevista y she look very sad y avergonzada, pero is up to us her fans to make feel love and support in moments like these." These fans reference the shame

Jenni felt when she found out the sex tape was uploaded to the internet. Her shame came from being a mother, and the worry that her children, brothers or father would see the tape.¹¹⁹

In an interview with Cuban-born journalist and show host Cristina Saralegui in 2008 she asked Jenni, “a lot of people are asking, why would you record yourself if you are famous, somehow you had to know this video would end up on the internet?”¹²⁰ Jenni responds, that she had a lot of trust towards her ex-lover and that she did not mind recording herself. Jenni states,

Porque me deje grabar? Porque estaba en una relacion con el. Porque le tenia confiansa y porque soy una mujer que haci como canto, haci como cocino, soy una mujer que quiere ser completa. Canto, conico, lavo, plancho, se cambiar una llanta, se como usar un cuerno de chivo, una pistola, se tambien hacer el amor. Y el queria eso y yo se lo di. Pero confias. Soy una mujer que se atreve a complacer a su pareja.

Why did I let myself be recorded? Because I was in a relationship with him. Because I trusted him and I am a woman who the same way she sings, the same way she cooks – I am a woman who wants to be complete– The same way I sing, cook, wash, iron, change a tire, I also know how to use a gun, I also know how to make love. And he wanted that, and I gave it to him. But I trusted him. I am a woman who dares to please her partner.¹²¹

In “Celebrity Sex Tapes: A Contemporary Cautionary Tale”, Darci Doll states that the attraction of taping oneself comes from various desires: 1) “it may add more excitement of sex” 2) “adds elements of the taboo and intensifies the voyeurism” 3) “extends porn experience” 4) “high levels

¹¹⁹ Duncan Riley. “Jenny Rivera’s Sex Tape Shame.” December 8, 2008.

<https://www.inquisitr.com/11216/jenny-rivera-sex-tape/>

Jenni’s sex video also reminds me of Jenni’s first biopic that was created to portray her life, *La Vida de Una Diva*. This biopic received many bad review from fans and part of that had to do with the hypersexualization of Jenni. In the film she was portrayed as an active sexual being, who slept with several men. Fans reacted negatively because they felt this portrayal attacked her ability to be a good mother. It was as if single mothers had to hide and sacrifice their sexual desire in order to be labeled “good mothers.”

¹²⁰ Beanerlicisousfrijole. “Jenny Rivera – Sex Tape.” December 9, 2008.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FyGzFnhvr4>

¹²¹ Latin Gossip. “Jenni Rivera Talks Sex Tape on El Show de Cristina. December 9, 2008.

<http://www.latingossip.com/television/jenni-rivera-talks-sex-tape-on-el-show-de-cristina.html#more-11582>

of trust” 5) “sex tapes have been a lucrative career move” (2010, 109).¹²² Jenni identifies trust¹²³ as the primary reason why she recorded herself but she also alludes to the excitement that the sex tape afforded to her ex-lover. We are left wondering whether the sex tape also added excitement to her sex life, or if it was only recorded to please him, however she does identify herself as a pleaser, and this self-identification usually means that people obtain excitement from the act of giving pleasure to someone else¹²⁴. Doll also notes that it is common for trust to fail and for ex-lovers to be “motivated by pure spite.” At the end of the day, although Jenni and other women artists like Gloria Trevi supported Jenni, and teamed up to emasculate the male musician for having a small penis, the sex tape is considered revenge porn. The fact that male musicians from *Bandas* in Mexico were circulating it says a lot about how women negotiate the male-dominated space in the industry. It also accounts for the double sexual standard that women go through with their male music colleagues, heterosexual women are often slut-shamed if they decide to engage in a sexual fantasy with one of her musician colleagues.

When I interviewed Marysol about the sex tape, she mentioned that the tape did not surprise her. She said to me, “who doesn’t have a sex tape nowadays?” She said that the tape became a big deal because it was 10 years ago, in 2008. She believed that if the tape would have come out now, it would not have been a big deal. The surprise for her was that Jenni decided to engage in a sexual relationship with one of the musicians from her band. She felt that Jenni was lowering her dating

¹²² Porn: Philosophy for Everyone: How to Think with Kink. Editor Dave Monroe . August 2010.

¹²³ “In such scenarios, the taping is an extension of that trusting relationship; it is a means of expressing the intimacy, trust, and respect in their sex life. This extension of trust can be sexually enticing and may contribute to the motivation to tape.”

¹²⁴ Jenni’s response to Cristina, “se tambien hacer el amor” (I know how to make love) hints at her own excitement, but that unfortunately due to respectability politics she could never embrace publicly, and places her in respectable ambivalence. For further research I can compare her responses about the sex tape and how space has a lot to do with her response. There is another interview with Gloria Trevi where Jenni is more open about it there. After she saw that her fans supported her unconditionally she also humored the tape in her concerts.

standards tremendously. But we both agree that “la calentura es tremenda.” Translate Adrine Cruz states that “Pornography’s penchant for authenticity – authenticity of the celebrity body, authenticity of sex (real sex resulting in tangible visible pleasure), and most of all, racial, sexual authenticity” (69) is an important topic in pornography and sex tapes in particular. In her analysis of Jimi Hendrix’s sex tape, Cruz analyzes the epoch (the 1970s Golden age of pornography) in which Hendrix’s sex tape was allegedly filmed (1969) to contextualize the spectatorship around it¹²⁵. During the early 2000s, fat Latina femininity was beginning to have a bigger market in the porn industry, but this process came with a lot of agitated responses too. According to the BBW porn performer April Flores, when she started in the mid 2000s, the big beautiful women (BBW) porn category “mostly showcased a very specific type of person. The models were all exactly the same in body size and ethnicity. There wasn’t a significant range or variety of body sizes represented that we as plus size women inhabit” (Tovar, 123)¹²⁶. In fact in 2009, April Flores responded to a fat-phobic article from Adult Video News (AVN) that described BBW performers as “heifers.” The article said that that BBW films allowed “those too embarrassed to actually be seen with fat chicks the opportunity to jerk off to them in the privacy of their homes.”¹²⁷ In April Flores’s response to this article she wrote,

The second paragraph commends Zero Tolerance for giving the BBW genre a makeover in the Waist Watchers series saying that they “successfully showcased the heifer as glamour model.” I am on the cover of Waist Watchers 4 and did my first boy/girl scene for the series. I am in no way a heifer. I was recently called a cow, but that was by a drunk crazy person in Downtown. I had no idea that I would

¹²⁵ Ariane Cruz; The Black Visual Experience: Hendrix, Porn, and Authenticity. *Camera Obscura* 1 May 2011; 26 (1 (76)): 65–93. doi: <https://doi-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/10.1215/02705346-2010-015>

¹²⁶ April Flores. “Voluptuous Life” in *Hot and Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love and Fashion*. Edited by Virgie Tovar.

¹²⁷ April Flores, “Being Fatty D: Size, beauty, and embodiment in the adult Industry.” *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*. Edited by Taormino, Tristan & Shimizu, Parreñas & Penley, Constance & Miller-Young, Mireille. New York: The Feminist Press, 2013.

read the same ignorance in an industry magazine. I wonder if the author ran out of ways to describe plus sized women, or if he really is that big of an asshole? Either way, he should not be given a platform to perpetuate negativity.

The way in which fat sexuality is written about in the porn industry during the mid 2000s resembles the way anti-fans also responded to Jenni's sex tape. In the following three messages we see how Jenni is referred to as a "puerca" (cow) and her cellulite is perceived as undesirable in a sex partner.

I saw the video of this fat cellulite ass, hella it was fucken pink and red. Nasty. She don't even know how to suck. Fuck this bitch who would ever fuck her. Hahahahahaha.

The only embarrassment this fat greasy Mexican should have is showing herself without makeup (can someone say 2 hours of work) plus showing that cellulite fat ass. Really, she shouldn't have filmed herself. She's not worthy of people watching it and *fapping* to it.

Esta vieja selulitica esta pendeja. ¿a kien se le va a entojar una vieja selulitica, digo puerca mantecosa.? esta loca de tanta manteca q tiene (This cellulite-looking woman is stupid. Who would sexually desire her with her cellulite, I mean as a greasy pig? She got demented form all the fat she has).

These comments raise questions about the "voyeuristic appeal" of sex tapes. Porn scholars have made claims about why society is obsessed with celebrity sex tapes. One reason is that

you're not just seeing people having sex, you're seeing famous people having sex. In our culture, this may be the penultimate form of celebrity watching: viewing them in their most intimate moments. Additionally, a person not only gets to view the sex but can also become engaged in it. By viewing celebrities having sex one can become involved (granted, in a very distanced and removed way) in the act; it is an opportunity to participate in sex with a celebrity. Celebrity sex tapes strengthen and elevate the ability to imagine oneself having sex with a celebrity' (Doll, 108).

However, according to the anti-fans sex with Jenni is worthless because her fat body fails to incite pleasure. In fact, one of the anti-fans includes that he refuses to masturbate to the sex tape. The fat-phobic response to the sex tape inspires me to say that Jenni's tape joined the radical work that fat Latina sex workers are doing, which is transgressing the stereotypes of fat Latina sexuality. As

April Flores states in relation to her work, “I am trying to challenge the norm of what is thought of as beautiful and sexy. I want other women to see what I am doing and be inspired to explore and express their own sexuality regardless of their weight or size” (2012, 123). Similar to April Flores, Jenni Rivera did fat sex positive work with her music, performances and the sex tape added a paratextual companion to her sonic pedagogies of deviancy. In fact, the Deschichadera phenomenon occurred in a post-sex tape period. Having this in mind, can la Deschichadera be read as an act of solidarity in response to the sex tape, or an incitement of it, what can these two cultural sites tell us about how Jenni’s fans flip our perception of voyeurism and how they create a fat Latina gaze?

Conclusion: *Pedacitos de Jenni* (Pieces of Jenni)

Within cultural studies, the body has been an important site where cultures and subcultures make sense of themselves. Stuart Hall argues that the body has often been the only “cultural capital” people of color have. He states that “We have worked on ourselves as the canvases of representation.” Moreover, women of color have argued that the body, its corporality and “flesh” is a site of struggle and contestation. For Gloria Anzaldua, the face is a metaphor of constructing one’s identity through “making faces.” Anzaldua states, “When our *caras* do not live up to the “image” that the family or community wants us to wear and when we rebel against engraving our own bodies, we experience ostracism, alienation, isolation, and shame” (1990, xv). The body has not been a popular site of investigation for scholars studying anti-fans; however to understand Jenni’s fandom, and the agitated discourses anti-fans produce about *pirujeria* via the list of characteristics, the body is central. The body is present in his framing of Jenni fans by how the women

dress, how their bodies are framed, how they reproduce, and what they decide to do with it. Fat racialized sexuality is also central to the agitated discourse generated by anti-fans.

In an interview with Jenni conducted by Carolina Sandoval, a TV host of the Mexican show *La Tijera*, add year Jenni told Sandoval that identification was a major reason why her fans militantly defended her when the media, family, anti-fans, or other celebrities attacked her for not being a “dama,” lady-like. In fact, Sandoval attended the concert in Monterrey, the summer of 2010. In her report about Jenni’s concert she asserts that Jenni’s fans felt that they themselves were all Jenni clones and that speaking badly about Jenni was akin to speaking badly about them. Jenni responded to her observation and said, “*yo soy de ellas... ellas se sienten que dentro de ellas aiy un pedaso de mi.*” (I am theirs. They feel that inside of them, there is a little piece of me.)” These *pedacitos* of Jenni inside of fans points us to the erotics of Jenni’s fandom and how deep their relationship was. It was this deep passionate identification that created fan clubs, *deschichaderas*, and the transmission of sonic pedagogies of deviance. Despite the mockery that is enacted in the 20 characteristics of Jenni fans list, these women use the *pedacitos* of each other to imagine and live a different world, one where fat *pirujeria*, as a way of life is valued. In the epilogue, I end with a framework of metamorphosis that was critical to the way fans viewed Jenni’s life and their own. Following the fine farewell tradition of the *corrido*, I end this chapter with Jenni’s own farewell in Ovarios: “Thought I wasn’t, Biatch, yeah, yeah, yeah.”



Figure 38. Fuck the Haters, Las Malandrinas, YouTube video, 2008.

Interlude Five // Visiting Iturbide

The trip to Iturbide, Nuevo Leon, the site where Jenni's plane crashed was two hours and fifteen minutes from La Arena of Monterrey. The weather was cloudy the day we left, and Marcela, the J-unit who I had met with Burronio and Myrthala on December 9, 2016, had her friend take us with his truck. Marcela has been to Iturbide a couple of times. She is usually the J-unit point person who takes fans up there. This time Marcela had a special reason to go to Iturbide. She had a letter from a J-unit she promised she would deliver to Jenni's memorial site. When we arrived at Iturbide, we visited the owners of the land where the plane crashed. Because the memorial site is an unmapped place in the *sierra* (mountains), people who decide to visit have to be taken by the family—the only ones who know the route. Without them as guides, people would get lost. The family of the land own a *tiendita* (store) in Iturbide, and they are very welcoming. The guide told me that he could let me borrow the stick that Lupillo Rivera used when he hiked up there too. The stick is signed by fans who have also taken the trip there. He promised the stick would help me with my balance.

During our trip, Marcela and I talked about our past relationships, and she shared with me stories about the fans she has met since Jenni died. She told me that she has met many fans through Facebook. Marcela is the administrator for a Jenni Facebook fan page. She said that she has met Jenni fans from all over the world. The fan letter that she was delivering that day was from a fan in Venezuela, with whom she had become really close friends. Marcela's friend stayed mostly with our guide, asking questions about the land and what he remembered from the day of the crash. The guide shared that they heard a really loud noise and that they arrived to the location before the police could investigate what had happened.



Figure 39. El Camino para llegar, memorial site in Iturbide. Photos taken by author, 2016.

About ten minutes before getting to the top, Marcela started playing Jenni's music. She told me that she was saving the battery of her cell phone to have enough juice to play her music while we were up there. She asked me which songs I wanted to hear and I told her to put on "Mi Vida Loca", "Parrandera", "Rebelde y Atrevida", and "Ovarios". As soon as she played the music with her loud speaker, I felt Jenni's presence with us. It was very emotional and there are no words to describe all the memories running through my mind in that moment. The tears just ran down our cheeks; we could not control the sadness our hearts felt. Listening to those songs made it feel real, she had died in this site that we were so close to. The first thing that came to my mind was that she had died so far away from her home in Southern California. I thought about her Tequileras and J-units from the United States who have not had the opportunity to come to see her. I also thought of her thousands of undocumented fans who would probably never have the chance to see her. I thought about the radical ways Jenni's fans have used social media and their digital fandom to disrupt borders. I thought of the erotics of Jenni's fandom and the cheering that her fans did before, during, and after her performances. "Jenni, Jenni, Jenni, Jenni!" "Que Viva Jenni" "Jenni Vive" In that moment, I felt intoxicated by Jenni like never before. I was haunted by her memory and her tragic death. Marcela found a piece of the steel she said was part of the airplane. She gave it to me and told me to save it forever. Whether that little piece of steel was from Jenni's plane or not, it holds a special place on my Jenni altar.

Even in the middle of the high sierra, her fans had personalized the space for her. Her memorial site in Iturbide also had butterflies, the symbol she used to represent herself. I also decorated some rocks for Jenni. I wanted her to know that her Playa Larga missed her, so I wrote, "Jenni LB Loves You."



Figure 40. La Gran Señora candle and cross. Photo taken by author. 2016.



Figure 41. Fan selfie with Jenni's cross. Photo taken by author, 2016.



Figure 42. J-Unit banner and Jenni Iturbide statue. Photo taken by Author, 2016.

After they showed me all the crosses on the memorial site, Marcela opened the letter she had from the J-unit from Venezuela. She read it out loud in front of Jenni's cross.



Figure 43. Fan reading letter. Photo taken by Author, 2016.

EPILOGUE

Mariposa(s) de Barrio: Living Latina Metamorphosis as a Praxis for Healing

*Aqui Estoy
Vengo desde muy lejos
El Camino fue Negro
Pero al fin ya triunfe*

*Here I am
I come from far away
The road was dark
But I finally Succeeded*

-Mariposa de Barrio (song by Jenni)



Figure 44. “Jenni Vive” tree at Doña Rosa’s house, courtesy of JR YouTube Chanel, 2016.

After Jenni’s death, I made the decision to focus my research on Jenni’s fans, because I wanted to document *Latina survivance*, which Juana Maria Rodriguez calls life stories that refuse victimhood and instead center agency and pleasure.¹²⁸ From my upbringing, I knew many of Jenni’s fans had also experienced complex personal lives, and I wanted to tell a story that celebrated their resiliency. I wanted to argue that, like Jenni, her fans were and continue to be *Mariposas de Barrio*, butterflies in transition and constant growth. But I knew this type of project

¹²⁸ Pornographic encounters and interpretative interventions: Vanessa del Rio: Fifty Years of Slightly Slutty Behavior. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0740770X.2015.1124669>

would be very emotional, and I avoided that component for a couple of years. Instead, I decided to focus mostly on Jenni's concert space, a place where the moments of joy, pleasure and desire were evident and intoxicating. However, during my trip to a Jenni Vive concert in Mexico City in November of 2018, I had a moment of reflection when interviewing some fans, and then later debriefing with Lupillos1fan. We both agreed that I needed to return to this component of the project, even if it meant talking about the trauma of domestic violence, sexual abuse, divorce, and depression: topics I am still not prepared to discuss because I lack the language to describe the ways music and mental health are correlated. Particularly, because I fear the effect of the confession, their confession and my own. My own proximity to some of these topics is very scary as a researcher, but like Lupillos1fan told me that day, these life stories are part of the reason why many women and girls became fans, and I needed to celebrate their stories by giving those topics a space in my work. I promised her I would write about this, and in this epilogue, I end the dissertation with my attempt at that conversation. I use the song "Mariposa de Barrio" as an entry point to think about the way Jenni's music spoke about trauma and provided a way to transform through it. The song "Mariposa de Barrio" is my "archive of feeling," to use Ann Cvetkovich's phrase, which allows me to theorize a process of Latina metamorphosis. Despite trauma, she transfigures by becoming a butterfly.¹²⁹ Many times in her concerts, Jenni used the analogy of the butterfly to describe the metamorphosis of her life¹³⁰. Since Jenni's death, "Mariposa de Barrio"

¹²⁹ Ann Cvetkovich. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Duke U Press. 2003.

¹³⁰ To see Jenni Rivera her sing "Mariposa de Barrio" in which she compares her life to that of a butterfly visit "Mariposa de Barrio (en vivo Nokia Theater Los Angeles 2010)" [January 31 2011], video clip, accessed December 10, 2012, Youtube, "<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DJ6S8UYxJc>

has become an anthem for Latina resiliency and therefore integral to the legacy of Jenni's memory¹³¹.

The symbolism of butterflies has been popular in migrant campaigns and queer Latinx art. In *Towards a Mariposa Consciousness: Reimagining Queer Chicano and Latino Identities*, Daniel Enrique Perez examines the way queer Chicanos and Latinos employ and reappropriate butterfly metaphors for “non-heteronormative gender and sexuality.”¹³² Perez noted, how “Chicana and Latina writers and artists have employed moth and butterfly imagery as powerful symbols of transformation, life, death, resilience, migration and the soul” (99). In this epilogue, I follow Perez's steps of creating mariposa theory and use Jenni's song “Mariposa de Barrio” as a site that can help us explain how other mariposas thrive in the borderlands.

<i>Me arrastre Vivi todos los cambios Y aunque venia llorando Mis alas levante</i>	<i>I came crawling I lived all life changes And although I came crying I elevated my wings</i>
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As soon as the news broke that Jenni's plane was missing, several fans gathered at Jenni's mother's house and in front of All Souls Cemetery in Long Beach to hear updates about her status. During the month of December 2012, Doña Rosa's (Jenni's mother's) house constantly received visits from fans. The tree outside her house became known as the *Jenni Vive* tree, because fans

¹³¹ The eros that Jenni provides in the process of metamorphosis flips the “sweetbitter” process that Anne Carson uses to describe eros. For Jenni, in the process of metamorphosis, we have bitterness, pain, and then through resiliency we achieve sweetness, pleasure in life.

¹³² Daniel Enrique Perez, *Towards a Mariposa Consciousness: Reimagining Queer Chicano and Latino Identities*. Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies, Volume 39, Number 2, Fall 2014. Pp.95-127.

would leave flowers, photos, and other memorabilia. Since then, the tree has appeared in several posthumous videos where fans also appear, speaking about Jenni's legacy.



Figure 45. “Jenni Vive” tree at Doña Rosa’s house, courtesy of JR YouTube Chanel, 2016.

In the posthumous video homage for “Dos Botellas de Mezcal”, closeups of the tree appear with butterfly signs that have “Jenni Vive” written on them. This butterfly sign is accompanied with many more butterflies representing the way her fans also flew high with her. After the butterfly imagery, we witness three different fan rituals that fans engage in to keep Jenni alive.

1. The first fan transports us to a living room where we see him opening a box with Jenni’s CDs and other memorabilia. He tells us that on December 13, 2012, he decided to put away all of his Jenni collection because it was too hard to look at it, knowing he would never be able to physically see Jenni again. This fan has cassettes, cds, and Jenni’s perfumes.
2. The second fan appears writing a letter to Jenni. She is wearing a J-Unit shirt, and in the background, we see her Jenni altar with posters, tequila bottles and Jenni hats. After she is done writing the letter, she rolls it up and wraps it around three balloons. The fan releases the balloons into the sky. We see both the balloons and letter fade away.

3. The third fan appears opening a La Gran Señora Tequila bottle and pouring a shot into a Jenni shot glass.

After these three fan rituals, we are transported to a clip of Jenni on stage, and a montage of some of her performances. This homage music video became a part of other fan-inspired videos produced by Rivera Enterprises. Along with these fan-inspired videos, the family also created several concerts that came to be known as Jenni Vive.

The first posthumous event the Rivera family hosted was *Jenni's Graduacion Al Cielo*, “graduation to heaven,” which took place at the Gibson Amphitheater on December 19, 2012, ten days after the announcement that the plane was missing. This ceremony was the public despedida for Jenni. It was a day fans could come mourn her before the Rivera family had their own private goodbye at the All Souls Cemetery. Several of the fans I interviewed years later attended the despedida and shared the pain they felt knowing they would never see her again. Kamelia, a fan I interviewed from South Central, California said:

It was just this whole awkward [experience] because muchisimas veces las vimos ahi cantar, muchisimas veces fuimos a sus conciertos (so many times we saw her sing, so many times we went to her concerts) and now I'm here looking at her casket like it was surreal. It was surreal like I'm here. Like a fan. We're all here but we're listening to her services. It was mind boggling, mind boggling. Like I was just here for your concert in September. You were singing and now I'm looking at your red casket.

After the Gibson Amphitheater, the Rivera family created annual Jenni Vive concerts to bring Jenni fans together. I continue to meet many fans through these events. Meeting them is always a beautiful experience, because, although we do not know each other, it feels like we have known each other for years. Having Jenni as our common denominator creates an intoxicating bond transcending life and death. Witnessing that the erotics of Jenni's fandom still transcends to Jenni Vive concerts has forced me to reflect on how death, grief, and the afterlife are affective

registers also shaping Audre Lorde's own theorizations of the erotics. Knowing Lorde wrote *Uses of the Erotics* while she was dealing with cancer and grieving that process forces me to ask: *What are the erotic registers of grief? How is grief manifested in Jenni's fandom today? How is grieving Jenni's death through her music during Jenni Vive concerts an embodiment of the erotics of fandom?* For some fans who knew Jenni very well, Jenni Vive concerts are impossible to attend because they confirm the reality that we will not have her in the flesh again. To those who never had a chance to meet her, Jenni Vive concerts allow fans an opportunity to dress like her and collectively continue her memory.

The song "Mariposa de Barrio" appeared in Jenni's album *Mi Vida Loca*, which won several awards. *Mi Vida Loca* was critical for Jenni's career because she introduces each song with an intimate autobiographical sketch. The topics in this album (single motherhood, being a daughter of immigrant parents, fat-shame, resiliency, divorce) set the foundation for the teachings her fans responded to during her concerts. Take, for instance, the first three introductions to the album:

Intro: Escuchame (Listen to me):

Mucho se habla. Mucho se comenta. Mucho dice la prensa. Pero ahora te lo quiero contar yo. Acercate, Escuchame, Conoce un poco mas de mi vida. De mi Vida Loca.

Much is spoken. Much is said. The press has a lot to say. But now I want to tell you. Come. Listen. Know more about my life. My Crazy Life.

Intro: Mi Primer Amor (My First Love):

Mi Primer Amor. La Violencia Domestica. La Vivi, La Sufri, La aguante, Y me canse. Al final a la carcel lo mande. Para cuando el salio, ya era tarde. Ya me abia gustado estar sin el.

My first love. Domestic violence. I lived it. I suffered it. I put up with it. I got tired. In the end, I sent him to jail. By the time he came out, it was late. I already liked being without him.

Intro: Look at Me Now

Nunca Olvidare sus palabras. “Dejate de la cantada, nunca vas a llegar a ser alguien. Con ese mismo hombre ahora peleo en corte el caso mas importante de mi vida. Y aunque se que me puede costar la vida, no descansare. Por el amor a mis hijas y a mi hermana, por mi orgullo de mujer, y la dignidad de mi familia. Y para ayudar con mi voz a otros niños que an sufrido el mismo tipo de abuso. Lo que son las cosas, mirame, look at me now, idiot.

I will never forget his words, “Stop singing, you will never become someone.” With this same man, I now fight in court the most important case of my life. And although I know that it can cost me my life, I will not rest. For the love of my daughters and sister, for my pride as a woman, and the dignity of my family. And to help with my voice the other children who have suffered the same type of abuse. How strange things are, look at me, look at me now, idiot.



Figure 46. Mi Vida Loca, album back cover, 2007.

In less than two minutes of audio, these three introductions tell us about Jenni’s experience with domestic violence, the sexual abuse case between her ex-husband and her sister and daughters, and the use of her voice for her political interest. According to Gill, we should consider how the erotic can be a hermeneutic with which we listen. Gill states, “the erotic compels us to listen for the political, the sensual, and the spiritual in precisely those places where other kinds of listening,

informed by other epistemological moorings, have turned a deaf ear” (2018, 109). Using the erotic as a hermeneutic to listen, allows me to recognize that if we were to remove all the music in this album, we would still have a complete understanding of Jenni’s *Vida Loca*. In an album, while the music should be the main focus, the introductions seem to have the same amount of value, or even more. Without a doubt, the erotic here is found in Jenni’s voice as a *mujer*, which became crucial to her fandom. Jenni used the erotic and her singing voice to “examine the ways in which our world can truly be different” (Lorde, 55). With *Mi Vida Loca*, she lets her fans know that despite her ability to have numerous functions of her voice (her ability to sing her life), she also uses it to share her *testimonio*, an ability that fans also have. Even if they do not feel comfortable singing, they can talk about their story and not stay silent. With this use of her voice, she tells her fans that it is not the singer who is committed to fighting for a better world, it’s the *mujer* in her who came from the same background as most of her fans. Listening through an erotic lens allows us to hear the resonance of her metamorphosis as it echoes in her voice.

“Mariposa de Barrio” is the last song on this album. Jenni created every introduction in this album as a symbolism of her own metamorphosis. In *Mi Vida Loca*, Jenni also has an intro titled, “Madre y Padre” which says, “Por el Amor a mis hijos apesar de todo nunca me raje. Ellos no podian verme derrotada. Yo era todo lo que tenia. Eh sido su madre y su padre tambien y sin capitan me la avente.”¹³³ I thought of this introduction from *Mi Vida Loca* when I met Esmeralda and her daughter at the Grammy Museum. These fans were also from Long Beach, and during our *charla* they identified Long Beach as a significant component in their identification with Jenni. Esmeralda was also interviewed by a reporter who was there the day of my ethnographic *charlas*.

¹³³ Because of the love I have for my children, I never gave up. They could not see me defeated. I was everything they had. I have been their mother and father too. Without a captain, I proceeded.

I filmed their exchange, and during the interview, Esmeralda's eyes got watery. She got emotional when she explained to the reporter that she felt sadness when looking at some of Jenni's stuff.

Esmeralda: Es una experiencia muy bonita venir a ver sus vestidos, sus zapatos, la biblia, todo lo que tenga que ver con Jenni este va dejando un bonito recuerdo de ella. Todas sus cosas (starts getting emotional) muy triste a la vez, pero muy bonito.

It's a really beautiful experience to see her dresses, her shoes, her bible, everything that has to do with Jenni is leaving a beautiful memory of her. All of her things (starts getting emotional), very sad at the same time, but very beautiful.

Reporter: Triste porque? (Why sad?)

Esmeralda: Pues como es de Long Beach, yo tambien soy de Long Beach so este por eso. Su mama vivia como a una cuadra de mi casa. Y nunca nos toco crusarnos pero por eso me siento haci. Porque tambien vivimos muchas cosas casi igual. Madre Soltera yo tambien...por muchas cosas que me identfico con ella. Siento mucha tristesa que ya no este con nosotros.

Well because she is from Long Beach, I'm also from Long Beach so that's why. Her mother lived like a block away from my house. We never crossed paths but that is why I feel like this. Because we also lived very similar experiences. She was a single mother and I was to...there are many ways that I identify with her. I feel a lot of sadness that she is no longer with us.

Reporter: Tu como fanatica, (You as a fan.)

Esmeralda: Hasta ahorita no lo creo. Casi todas la mujeres no identificamos con Jenni en muchas maneras.

I still do not believe it (that she has passed). Almost all women identify with Jenni in many ways.

Esmeralda identifies her single motherhood as a major factor in her fandom of Jenni. She shares with the reporter that they lived very similar lives and those *conocimientos* are why she identifies with her. I am still waiting for a follow up oral history with this fan, but from our *charlas* at the Grammy Museum while she was looking at the glass cases, I was astonished by how Jenni's story allowed her to open up about her own life and how she also used a metamorphosis analogy to explain her resiliency. This recognition of each other's process is also visible in a video titled

“Amor de Fan, La Oruga” (Fan Love, The Caterpillar) which appeared in *En Vivo Desde Monterrey Parte 1*.

In “Amor de Fan, La Oruga,” we find that an integral aspect of Jenni’s memory still centers around the metamorphic process, because it promises to transform fans closer to their “wholeness.” To produce this video, the Rivera family asked fans for their support, they created an open call for fans to submit a thirty second video explaining what Jenni meant to them. The fan videos that made it to the DVD represented fans from around the world. Some of these fans had never met Jenni but they still shared how she intoxicated them to “keep going” and not give up. The video starts with stories from Jenni’s childhood and continues to her adulthood, motherhood and womanhood. She is presented as a woman who used the microphone to heal her pain and hardships. Jenni is described as an “oruga,” a caterpillar, that had to overcome many challenges to find unconditional love – a type of love that she could only find with her fans.

The symbolism of “orugas” can be explained through the definition of erotics. Audre Lorde associates the definition to the erotics to the Greek definition of *Eros*, that which means “love in all its aspect” and “born of chaos.” “Birth” and “chaos” can be aligned with the process the caterpillar goes through. Jenni describes the sonic vibrations of her fans clapping as an important aspect of her fandom, which kept Jenni strong during challenges. This exchange performs erotic trinity – political, sensual, spiritual – in one single sonic landscape: the claps of her fans. In the following passage, Jenni’s fans are also described as “orugas,” (caterpillars) that looked up to Jenni, a caterpillar herself, undergoing transitions. In addition to orugas, fans are also described as followers, protectors, and soldiers.

Llegaron a ser millonea de orugas detras de ella, cuidandola y convirtiendose en sus soldados. La Oruga Conocio el Amor de Fans.

They became one million caterpillars following her, taking care of her, and converting themselves in her soldiers. The Caterpillar found the love of her fans.

In this video, fans mention “Mariposa de Barrio,” as a song that has empowered them. This song, which resembles the process of Jenni’s life, is a symbol of “love in all aspects,” particularly because, for Jenni, her fans are intertwined in this process. The pedagogical component between Jenni and her fans arose from her own openness, vulnerability, and investment in the process for her fans. Of course, not all fans were able to receive the same access to her, but even fans who did not even know her felt close to her. A fan who did not even get to meet her said, “ella nos enseña que hay que levantarnos cuando caemos” (She taught us how to get up when we fell). For this fan, the metamorphic process and overcoming traumatic hardships was integral to her listening to Jenni because she taught her growth, courage, and solidarity. Jenni’s music had a therapeutic effect on her fans and her fans also had the same effect on her. After her death, these sonic pedagogies are still transmitted vis a vis the Jenni Vive concerts, because the family intentionally chooses to make “Mariposa de Barrio” the theme song encompassing all of Jenni’s career.

This process has been very empowering for fans and has made Jenni’s posthumous memory more consumable; however, this process has also entailed an attempt at erasing her sonic pedagogies of deviance. For instance, during the public approval process to determine whether the city of Long Beach would name a park in her memory, a resident by the name of Andres stated that he disapproved of the park because he believed Jenni would represent the city in a negative fashion (Nelson, 2014). Via a translator, Andres said, “unfortunately, the idea that people have of her is that she induces other people to be alcoholics” (Nelson, 2014). Comments like these demonstrate how intoxication is read as deviant when it is engaged in by women. His comments are influenced by respectability politics and moral panic about Latina women losing control.

Nevertheless, intoxicating feminist pleasure is not about being an alcoholic, but metaphorically drinking Jenni and being intoxicated by her power, music, performance, and sex-positive futurity.



Figure 47. Mariposa de Barrio mural. Jenni Rivera Memorial Park in Long Beach, 2015.

The story behind the “Mariposa De Barrio” mural in Long Beach shows how, despite the power Jenni and her fans felt about the process of metamorphosis, Jenni’s fandom was constantly critiqued because she and her fans engaged in drinking. *But why do respectability politics surface when talking about drinking or engaging with these wet erotic gestures?* It seems to me Jenni’s ghost, and now her fans and the way they remember her through drinking her, stand in, as signs of a haunting that “investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life” (Gordon, 8). Jenni’s fans remind us the apparition of her ghost and respectability politics emerge over and over again. Taking Jenni’s phenomenon seriously makes it apparent we are still haunted by the discourse of the culture of poverty created by anthropologists and

sociologists in the 1960s. We need to find ways to escape these discourses because under this framework of damage, Latina/x communities will always be shamed for the pleasures in which they engage. Even if they refuse to engage in those pleasures for the sake of maintaining a good image, they will find, at least in the United States, that does not guarantee being saved from damage because structurally, the working-class population is constantly framed as monstrous.

For Jenni, the broken was never just broken, instead it was in the process of metamorphizing. Listening to the details of her fans allow us to see them decide to approach living poverty through this lens, because it allows them space to maintain their complex personhood. In this study, fandom and anti-fandom became the perfect sites to study working-class epistemologies because fans are creating their self-representations through their own cultural production. Working-class Latina fandom challenges us to create new concepts for understanding the affective ways fans make sense of their complex lives. Within musical cultures, respectability politics can be disguised by conversations of “musical taste.” But I have shown that Jenni’s anti-fandom did not emerge because of “musical taste” but because of the “disreputable” women tropes Jenni sang about: 1) the Latina party girl who is viewed as promiscuous, hypersexual, and deviant for drinking; 2) the queer single mother who is constantly viewed as broken, damaged, and critiqued for breaking the heteronormative household; 3) and the fat, working-class, Latina who is marked as visually disgusting for not having proper “Latina curves.” With this in mind, after death and during her life, we can read the intoxication of Jenni as a co-creation of sex-positive MeXicana futurity, where the continuous climax of this fandom, produces a form of “group eroticism,” “communal ecstasy” and it “entails an erotic, carnal pleasure in worshipping¹³⁴” each other.

¹³⁴ These are some of the components Karl Toepfer uses to define and orgy. Please see *Theatre, Aristocracy, and Pornocracy: The Orgy Calculus*. New York: PA, 1991.

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