

USING CORRIDOS AS A SOURCE FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH COUNTERSTORIES

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

Corridos represent a form of expression for most audiences. Multiple definitions of what a corrido is exist. Martha I. Chew Sánchez, for instance, defines the Mexican corrido as a “[topical ballad that] expresses the entire range of human experiences and feelings: love, war, nostalgia, homesickness, humor, natural disasters, criminals and their activities” (31). John McDowell defines a corrido as a folk ballad in Mexico and applies a formulaic analysis such as an introductory reference to the performance, the setting, narrative details, farewell of the principal (the solution to the problem being referenced), and the closing reference (218). McDowell’s definition breaks down in detail what a corrido is made up of. Américo Paredes defines a corrido as a type of folk song: “[Corridos], especially those of epic themes, taking the name *correr*, which means ‘to run’ or ‘to flow,’ for the *corrido* tells a story simply and swiftly, without embellishments” (xi). Each definition considers the meaning corridos can have and which they convey to the audience.

I focus on corridos because their composers and performers use them to share alternative kinds of knowledge and lived experiences, alternative from the mainstream media and as expressed through narratives, thus making corridos a form of what Aja Martinez, through Critical Race Theory (CRT), defines as a counterstory. As Martinez states,

Counterstory, then, is both method and methodology—it is a method for telling stories of those people whose experiences are not often told, and, as informed by CRT, this methodology serves to expose, analyze, and challenge majoritarian stories of racialized privilege and can help to strengthen traditions of social,

political, and cultural survival, resistance, and justice. (26)

Corridos can therefore be analyzed rhetorically as counterstories, as such a rhetorical approach suggests that corridos can also help advance the literacy of those who listen to them, be they Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and/or college students, specifically college students of Mexican descent. Their value as instruments which can further the literacy of those who listen to them is something I personally appreciate because of the role they have played in my own life which is why I will share my own life story as a counterstory in this thesis as part of my analysis of corridos.

Music has always been an important part of my life. When I was younger, I remember my mom tuning the radio to find the perfect station. The songs she often played always ended up having some sort of immigration-related theme. Also, the music she played on the radio often reminded her of the times she went through during her childhood in Guanajuato, Mexico, during the 1970s-80s. Listening to music always helped my mom cope with the situations she was going through, such as being the oldest female in her family and having to take care of her siblings. My mom, after marrying my father in 1986, was living in Mexico without my dad, as he had come to work in the US. Prior to marrying and during many years of his marriage, my dad came to Texas around 15 different times from 1985 to 1995. In Texas he worked as an oil field worker, seven days a week.

In the summers of 1985 and 1986, he also went to work as an orange picker in Florida where he would hear from workers there that their pay was higher; however, a worker's pay depended on how quickly oranges could be picked. Those fast at picking were paid more than those who picked less because they were not as fast. When he

returned to Texas in the fall of 1986, he became a legal resident through The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. All this time my mom and dad had music in common as a form of shared communication. They would often listen to a song on the radio and ask each other if the other had heard it yet. Music was their conversation starter, and the way those musicians expressed their emotions through their songs kept my parents going strong. The radio was never turned off in our household, which in part explains why I was introduced to musical instruments at such a young age.

My interest in literacy in and through corridos stems from my family background. Both my parents were raised in Mexico on a rancho, a huge piece of land surrounded by sierras (mountain range) and not owned by just one person. A rancho is a type of community where most individuals living on a rancho do not have access to potable water, electricity, or gas. Individuals living on a rancho are those not able to live in a city or town because of the high cost. In other instances, there are individuals who decide to live in the rancho to stay with family and work on the agricultural fields. This rancho's homes are made from a variety of materials ranging from blocks of cement, to ladrillos or adobes (blocks made with mud, straw, or clay). Others build their home with stones from the creeks or the mountains. The ladrillos go through a process that requires high temperatures while the adobe is raw mud and straw block. and water known as adobe, and the roofs range from cardboard to metal. No one has an actual finished floor; instead, most homes have a dirt floor. The houses are built by albañiles, people who make a living by building other people's homes. Many living on ranchos have family members living in the US who send them money to build a better home. Those are the houses that stand out on a rancho, and those individuals are seen as wealthy. Most living in a rancho make their

living as campesinxs, individuals who cultivate different types of crops ranging from corn, chiles rojos, chiles verdes, and frijoles. These campesinxs own their own land, and the produce they harvest is what they sell to provide for their family. Most of these individuals trade their crops with each other to have more food options.

One of the main sources of information people from ranchos have is satellite radios, tv, and cellphones which serve as a connection to the outside world, an outside world campesinxs can enter from afar. Individuals on ranchos receive news from the radio, a medium from which to hear their own stories being told in songs, known as corridos, but told from another individual's perspective. These corridos also represent a way to listen to what they are going through while living in a new country. As campesinxs cultivate and harvest the crops, in Mexico or the US, they listen to someone else narrate their story in corridos, and they further hope that these stories will inspire their children to have a better future. The rhetorical dimensions corridos carry for immigrants about topics like immigration and narco-trafficking are important, as they are often intended for audiences living on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

In this thesis, I focus on the important elements of literacy as well as the rhetorical dimensions found in corridos for different individuals situated in different subject positions. I define literacy as an individual's ability to read, write, and comprehend a topic. I will conduct a rhetorical analysis of corridos which thematically focus on specific issues: immigration, drug cartels in Mexico, and specific events. The corridos I analyze rhetorically are "La jaula de oro" ("The Golden Cage") by Los Tigres del Norte, "El corrido de Juanito" ("Juanito's Ballad") by Calibre 50, "El karma" ("The Karma") by Ariel Camacho y Los Plebes Del Rancho, "En la sierra y en la ciudad 'La China'" ("In

the Mountains and the City ‘The China’”), by Javier Rosas, “La ultima llamada” (“The Last Call”), by Yariel Roaro, and “El corrido del Coronavirus,” (“The Ballad of Coronavirus”) by Los Tres Tristes Tigres (The Three Sad Tigers). Each corrido comes from subgenres that have impactful knowledge that many individuals would otherwise be unaware of were it not for corridos and what they convey.

Through the use of CRT, I analyze each of these corridos and the information within them. Through a rhetorical analysis of these corridos, one can discover how people without access to an education become aware of what is happening immediately around them, or at a distance. People with access to an education can see how listeners can expand their knowledge of immigration, drug cartels, and specific events by rhetorically analyzing corridos as counterstories. Analyzing corridos therefore rhetorically enables us to realize the types of literacy skills corridos provide. So, rhetorically analyzing corridos enables us to determine why corridos have become popular and in some cases feared by certain individuals because of their power to start an uprising.

I also decided to include my own personal family story in this thesis because my family’s immigrant story can help others become aware that they are not alone when facing critical issues related to the specific themes represented in corridos. My family story gives a perspective of how some college students of Mexican descent may often be going through the same situation as those depicted in corridos. My family’s immigrant story serves to bring in members of the audience so they can identify with people like me and my family. It is important to share stories like mine because they show a greater context for how analyzing corridos can promote critical thinking skills through the

literacy developed by rhetorically analyzing corridos.

I relate the most to immigration corridos because they inform the audience about the highly problematic US immigration policy and how it affected my family. The literacy behind corridos, and in all music in general, can be found “not only in the ability to read and write, but rather in a person’s competence to put this new learning to work in determining the path of his or her own life and to think about his or her own thinking” (Saccomano 30). Corridos by composers and performers of Mexican descent often tell a story of a person’s life and of everything that person has gone through to get to where that person is. From them, one gets a perspective of how people of Mexican descent in the US are racially discriminated against because the current immigration policy does not recognize the human rights of people who appear Mexican. Even US citizens, like me, still get discriminated against, and I know I am not the only one. This discrimination is what gives my story purpose and represents yet another motive for writing this thesis, a thesis that aims to analyze corridos rhetorically in order to show how they can be used to advance the literacy skills of college composition students.

The most popular recording artists in the US, like Taylor Swift, though, are white Americans, and almost no one in the US talks about the impact artists, like those composing corridos, have on their native audience. The ones most Americans discuss are those found in the media and in social media outlets, like *YouTube*; however, more artists than just those in American popular culture exist transnationally. Without a doubt, importance should also be placed on Mexican-origin minorities and on how corridos continue impacting how they see themselves in the future. Corridos serve to remind individuals from Mexico, now living in the US, of things they left behind when they

migrated; perhaps they abandoned the desire of pursuing an education or seeking work to economically help the rest of their families to overcome their necessities. Music like corridos represents a home away from home for these individuals because whenever they lack motivation, listening to a corrido can serve as a reminder of why they decided to journey to the US in the first place. Corridos serve as a form of counterstory because of the way these composers' voices are being heard and not silenced. Moreover, individuals from Mexico in the US, because of these songs become more aware of their situation in the US. Consequently, through this kind of awareness they continue to realize the importance of storytelling.

In part, because listening to corridos was a prominent part of my upbringing, I learned to play guitar at the age of eight and was able to play for my parents and family. I learned to play songs they wanted to hear, which continues to this day. My parents continue listening to music together and enjoy the past they share because of the songs they like to listen. Although they do not get to spend much time together because of my dad's current work as a construction worker, they still manage to communicate with each other through the music they listen to. Their love for music also made my five brothers and me love listening to many different types of music.

When my brothers and I were younger, my family would take 15-hour trips to Guanajuato, Mexico, at least twice a year. During the 15-hour drive, my parents would listen to music non-stop. By the end of the drive, my brothers and I knew all the words to the songs we listened during the trip. During those times my parents would listen to songs performed by renowned artists like Vicente Fernández, Grupo Bryndis, Pegasso, Joan Sebastian, Ramón Ayala, La Dinastía, Los Rehenes, and Los Tigres del Norte. After

several trips, we knew that every time we would travel to Mexico and back would be made up of listening to these artists and their songs. My brothers and I, on many times were even ready to sing along to songs which had lyrics we did not know. The only thing we knew is that singing them made our parents smile.

After arriving at our destination in Mexico, we always found that my maternal grandma would always play music in her home. During those times we would stay in my parents' home at the rancho in Mexico, but we were constantly at my maternal grandma's house. While there, I would always be intrigued by the stories she would tell after asking her about her childhood. My grandma would tell me stories of her childhood and how she used to be a campesina, that is, an agricultural worker. I was too young to notice at the time that the songs she listened to were not songs of romance, but instead were of real-life events. My maternal grandpa died from cancer before my first birthday, so my grandma had to live with that loss. Losing my grandpa is one of the reasons she disliked romantic music at the time because it brought back memories of my grandpa. She would instead listen to songs that would tell stories of her childhood, songs about the lives of campesinxs.

Unlike my maternal grandma, my parents have always been fans of romantic music, but as their future changed, so has their musical taste. If you were to ask my mom what type of music she listens to today, she would say corridos in which the voice would narrate the journey to the US. My mother has always been a housewife and has taken care of my brothers and me. The transformation in her taste of music was caused by being able to be with my dad after having been separated when he first came to the US. She understands now what it means to live in the US and that living here is not a fairytale.

Many musicians like Calibre 50 (50 Caliber) write songs about romance and also real-life stories. Some of their songs also bring back memories of when my mom first came to live in the US. One specific song, “El corrido de Juanito,” tells the story of an undocumented immigrant coming and living in the US. Another of my mother’s current favorite musical group is Los de la Noria (a name which roughly translates to Those from the La Noria, a town in the State of Sinaloa), a Banda group with songs which tell the story of immigrants coming to the US. Another group she has been listening to since her days in Mexico is Los Tigres del Norte (The Tigers from the North) which has been one of her favorite groups since her days in Mexico.

I forget memories easily, therefore, there are only a few things I still remember from my childhood, but not as many as I would like. My mom would always listen to the radio while I was growing up, and it was because of her listening to the radio, as I have already said, that I came to enjoy music. Although I literally did not speak for many years when growing up, as I only said my first word at the age of seven, my mom says I would nonetheless dance and point to the radio when it was not on. The moment I spoke my first word became a moment of great joy for my family because they were being told I was mute. Eventually, I began talking with the help of a speech therapist and music. One of the first songs I learned was by the group Bronco, a song which was one of their hits at the time. My mother would play their music all the time. As I kept getting older and attending mass, I asked my parents if I could be part of the church choir. They thought it was a great idea, so that represents another big influence in my life for liking music. I was 8-years-old at the time, and my uncle, as the director of the choir, had me playing the tambourine and singing. The choir members quickly caught on that I was playing exactly

to the beat and encouraged me to take guitar lessons. I picked up a guitar the following week and quickly learned how to play it. I was in the church choir for thirteen years and became the director after my uncle quit because he had to work. He trusted me, and directing the choir was one of the biggest accomplishments I have ever achieved. We never competed in any sort of way, but we were honored to be a part of many church members' celebrations. I eventually left the church choir because I needed my own time to focus on school and work.

Although the church choir has been a great influence for why I decided to learn how to play an instrument, my brothers began encouraging me to play outside of church. It was my oldest brother who encouraged me to learn how to play corridos. At the time I did it because I liked being thought of as being cool by my brothers, not just because of the song's meaning. My brothers became excited when I would learn a new song. I am not as fast today as I was then at learning new songs, but when I say I was fast, I mean I was able to learn the requinto (a guitar riff) to the songs in one sitting. I was very determined to learn new pieces because it made me feel musically accomplished.

Around 2010, in between leaving middle school and entering high school, social media started popping up everywhere. We were from a small town, so it was really exciting when someone got a smartphone at school, but my parents had not purchased one for me because they simply thought I did not need one. Social media nevertheless had a great impact on how I learned music. Because I learned to play guitar by ear, I did not know how to read sheet music. However, then as now, I am able to listen to a song and can then figure out how to play it. My oldest brother once posted a video of me playing a corrido, and he said it got a lot of likes on social media. He continued to record

me frequently, and everyone was quite proud of me. In my sophomore year of high school, I began listening to the lyrics of the songs instead of just the instrumental part. Although I loved the instrumental part, I learned that the lyrics of a song have meaning. I began asking my brothers about the music they listened to and asked them to create playlists of them on my iPod. I would listen to them and found that the thematic focus of the songs would range from romance to stories about drug dealing.

Corridos used to be written about everything currently going on, including events like defying the Mexican government. However, some musicians who sang about narco-trafficking were killed by drug cartels when the musicians performed in Mexico. These musicians include Rosalino “Chalino” Sánchez, Valentín Elizalde, Tecno Banda Fugaz, Zayda Peña Arjona, Sergio Gómez de K-Paz de La Sierra, José Luis Aquino, Jesús Rey David Alfaro Pulido “*El Gallito*,” Los Herederos de Sinaloa, Sergio Vega “El Shaka,” Fabián Ortega Piñón, La Quinta Banda, Jesús “Chuy” Quintanilla, Tomás Tovar Rascón “Tito Torbellino,” and Jenni Rivera. Jenni Rivera, though, was not killed for performing songs about narco-trafficking, but the plane in which she died was owned by Christian Esquino, a drug smuggler (“DEA Investigates”). Most of these musicians were killed in Sinaloa, a state with the biggest and most powerful cartel—the Sinaloa Cartel. These musicians went to the most dangerous Mexican state to sing narcocorridos about drug cartels, songs which thematically were also often anti-government. During high school I constantly listened to most of these musicians. The death of Tito Torbellino, on May 29, 2014, for instance, was one that saddened me because I had learned to play most of his corridos on my guitar.

The musicians playing narcocorridos would defy all odds and risk everything,

even if it meant dying, to sing that the Mexican government was corrupt by working alongside and being complicit with drug cartels. The causes of the deaths of some of the musicians at the hands of drug cartels ironically only increased the hatred of the public over what they saw as a corrupt Mexican government. The impact of their deaths has caused most current narcocorridos to be about being high. They no longer are against the government, and this change in theme is due to the fear being instilled in these musicians. My younger brother, also a corrido fan, agrees with me on this and says that the thematic focus of the music has changed. The music of these corridos has a good rhythm to play on a guitar, but corridos no longer seem to have the same feeling behind them because the lyrics are about a different, less contentious theme. I used to enjoy listening to just the instrumentals of the music, but the lyrics behind the music inspired me to want my voice heard as well.

It is sad that some of these musicians had to die for exposing the Mexican government as corrupt. Many people in Mexico are constantly worried about their daily life because of drug cartels and their violently competing against each other along the border. The Laredo border, for instance, is constantly shut down in the mornings. Shootings tend to happen at least twice a month, or at least those shootings are made public. I was 14-years-old, too young at the time to notice how powerful words can be to cause the government or a cartel to want to kill you for speaking the truth. It makes sense to me that newer musicians are scared of what is going to happen to them if they write rebellious corridos.

Aside from narcocorridos, another important topic corridos engage is American electoral politics. In 2014, during election time in the US, corridos engaged US political

themes. Back then, some corridos were composed to favor Hillary Clinton and against Donald Trump and were an attempt to get more Latinxs to vote. For instance, Vicente Fernández, a legendary Mexican singer in the Mexican community, wrote and video-recorded “El corrido de Hillary Clinton,” where Fernández encourages viewers to vote for Clinton instead of Trump. The corridos about Trump were written as parodies, listing all the reasons why Trump was not qualified to run for office. Different groups listed multiple reasons encouraging viewers/listeners to vote for Clinton.

In 2007, Los Tigres del Norte released a corrido about electing a proper official, one who would not build walls. They became more inclusive of their audience by singing this song in German, French, Arabic, and English. The corrido resurfaced during the 2014 election cycle in social media. My parents previously had never really paid much attention to elections until this time. These kinds of political corridos were shown on television and were also played on the radio. Additionally, controversies about minorities voting for Trump were raised in some songs. This election cycle made my parents become more involved, as they wanted to know more about what was going on. So my parents began asking my brothers and me questions about what exactly goes on during US elections. They wanted us to clarify if the songs they heard on the radio were truly reflecting what was going on the political arena.

Corridos of all kinds are heard all around Mexico and parts of the United States. The intended audience of corridos can interpret them in many ways. The composers of corridos write them and give them a meaning, and then hand the lyrics to the corridista who records the song and then sings it in front of an audience. In other instances, the corridista him/herself writes the corrido. In either instance, the composers of corridos

consider everything happening around them and how the government is treating the community. Corridos can thus be responses to real contemporary issues and events. The intended audience of the corrido is up for interpretation, though. For some corridos, the audience can be the community of affected individuals.

In other instances corridos are written to bring attention to a current issue the community is facing. Martha Chew Sánchez discusses issues related to interpreting corridos, stating that,

Through ambiguity and the use of metaphors, the core of the content of the corrido is often accessible only to the intended audience and becomes opaque to those audiences the corridistas do not want to include. Sometimes the excluded audience may consist of middle- and upper-class Mexicans and white Americans, monolingual English speakers, or people who are not familiar with this musical genre. Some may not identify the contrapunctual content of the corrido. These elements of the folk culture genre make it difficult for audiences to contest the potentially subversive messages of the corridos, since the existence of multiple meanings allows any performer to claim that the message was different due to its polivalency. (43)

So it is important to note that corridos can have encrypted messages within them. It is then up to the audience to break down the message. This aspect of interpretation is where most audiences face difficulty in not understanding a hidden message known only to those within the affected community.

At times no hidden message is withheld in the corrido; on the contrary, the message is said directly to the audience. These corridos tend to be written for those

outside the community and showcase what is happening in their communities. Corridos, though, can serve as a way for outside individuals to understand and listen to what is happening in those communities and serve as a way to distribute a message otherwise left unsaid. Coded messages in corridos are intentionally written to benefit the corridista because if the corridista believes the corrido might not be played on the radio, then he/she will encode the message by using figuratively coded language that serves as a rhetorical device where the writer creates a story that discusses the issues about certain events. The audience becomes aware of the message and can choose to agree or disagree with the writer, as the message is often of a real-life event happening in the community.

There are also some important contextual aspects in corridos such as where the story take place. The setting of the story is important because it can determine who the audience is, like those living in the US or Mexico. An audience's awareness of context and their understanding in the situation of the US and Mexico are important for understanding a corrido. As discussed previously, corridos can be filled with coded messages about what happens in different settings. It is also important to note that Spanish speakers who write corridos obviously intend the corrido for an audience both in the US and Mexico that knows Spanish. The audience often must have a Mexican identity to relate easily to the corrido without a translation. When corridos are successful, it is obviously because the audience connects with the stories and events conveyed in the corrido. So when the writer and artist coordinate their efforts, it results in a rhetorical win-win.

The literacy skills of those composing contemporary corridos, and in all music in general, can be found “not only in the [song writer's] ability to read and write, but rather

in a person's competence to put this new learning to work in determining the path of his or her own life and to think about his or her own thinking" (Saccomano 30). Corridos thus tend to tell a story of a person's life and of everything that person has gone through in a specific event so the audience can get to identify with where the person is situated. Corridos can be used to help individuals identify within a corrido outside of the traditional classroom teaching. This new source of education can increase students' knowledge by learning new information in new ways. Students learn a broader view of literacy through identifying with and analyzing corridos.

Narcocorridos tend to be about defying a corrupt government and speaking out against it. Corridos are important because they can serve as a way for people of Mexican descent and with a recent immigration background, including college students of rhetoric and writing, to take a look at their parents' history. Sometimes talking about one's personal life can be difficult. However, they can share a song that they feel brings out the best description of their situation. Or if the student is like me, their parents probably have listened to the same song over-and-over, yet the student has not analyzed why their parents listen to the song. Students can conduct a rhetorical analysis to become more aware of where they come from and how music can help them share their family stories. These stories need to be heard by American audiences because the US is turning into a minority-majority nation overtaking the white population. The minority is turning into the majority, but they are not all of Mexican descent. In the future there are going to be more blended families in the US, more LGBTQ+ families, more interracial marriages, more students interested in their own background stories. One way many use to communicate is through music, so music can be the source of where we all learn about each other.

Corridos can also help students become biliterate. In many cases second and third generation Mexicans are already having issues speaking Spanish. Their bilingualism also depends on whether these next generation students are taking Spanish classes. Yet Spanish classes might not be enough for students to become fluent in Spanish if they are not speaking it at home. Conducting rhetorical analyses of corridos can help these students to listen to a message and interpret it. One present issue is how English speakers interpret a corrido if they do not know Spanish. By using English translations, they will be able to read and interpret the words being sung, as some of a corrido's meaning will be lost because some sayings do not translate exactly.

In this thesis, I interpret and critique corridos by first translating them. I will also interpret the story or message the corrido is sending, as some members of the audience might not know the context of events which led to a corrido being written. If students understand the message, they can understand who they are and the message being sent through corridos. There are certain college students, like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, for instance, whose parents are immigrants. DACA recipients are born outside of the US and were brought to the US at a young age. They continue facing a daily battle of living in fear of their legal status being discovered and deal with taking on different roles. At home, these students might face many family struggles, while they take on a different persona at work so as not to lose their job because of their ethnic identity and immigration status.

At school, other students might say certain negative remarks to a DACA student, but this student does not say anything back. The multiple roles the student takes is a way an individual interacts with an audience and forms a communicative repertoire, “the

collection of ways individuals use language and literacy and other means of communication...to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate” (qtd. in de los Rios, “Los Músicos” 183). Unknowingly, these students are practicing their language and literacy skills when going in and out of different communities. It is a role students like these have grown accustomed to in their daily lives. These students have to find their own ways to find a better future. They come and go to different communities every day and take on many different roles. Because of the different rhetorical situations in which they find themselves, providing students like these opportunities to analyze corridos rhetorically will help sharpen their communicative skills as they maneuver their ways through different communities and situations. There are increasingly more students in the same position of having to negotiate different rhetorical contexts. Should they ever enter a first-year college composition class where corridos are the subject of a rhetorical analysis, analyzing corridos could prove to be invaluable for them because of the literacy skills they can learn.

There are also students who have never been exposed to corridos, so teaching them about corridos can bring them an awareness of the counterstories showing what is happening in places depicted in corridos. Academia likes bringing certain topics into the classroom; however, as Martinez states, “The core curriculum is the occupied space of white racialized perspectives, while the voices and stories of the racialized ‘other’ are pushed to the margins in elective courses, at best, or footnotes and asides within the core curriculum, at worst” (117). To counter this kind of racist curriculum, I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explain how certain corridos act as counterstories in order to present perspectives the dominant group suppresses but which the dominated group uses to fight

against oppression. I argue that corridos, as counterstories, create a way for individuals to expand their knowledge of the literacy working in corridos by rhetorically analyzing them. So I will analyze specific corridos to show how they operate rhetorically and to show what elements of literacy make them work.

In chapter two I examine two popular corridos about immigration. I conduct a rhetorical analysis of the two corridos, “La jaula de oro” (“The Golden Cage”) by Los Tigres del Norte and “El corrido de Juanito” (“Juanito’s Corrido”) by Calibre 50. They were written 33 years apart and resemble each other by focusing on the fight for a working immigration policy. Some students may know someone or may themselves be experiencing an immigration issue in their life and also might be experiencing literacy practices related to their immigration status. This status often requires the development of important literacy skills intergenerationally via corridos within entire families. For as Cati V. de los Ríos states, “Literacy practices deeply rooted in corridos include intergenerational relationships and apprenticeship, not just a set of skills that reside in a single individual” (“Toward a” 462). Analyzing these corridos rhetorically brings out important aspects that require specific literacy skills. If students are not able to relate to the corrido personally, they can discuss how corridos affect their peers, thereby building a relationship that gets students to begin having these conversations.

In chapter three I analyze narcocorridos, a contemporary subgenre of a traditional corrido which are usually seen as a bad influence on audiences because many believe that if individuals listen to narcocorridos, they will want to become a drug dealer. One the two analyzed narcocorridos I explore the reasons why an individual decides to pursue selling drugs. “El karma” (“The Karma”) by Ariel Camacho y Los Plebes del Rancho is

about the journey of a young man selling drugs to get out of poverty and eventually becoming a drug lord. However, these men or women who rise to wealth tend to give back to their communities. The second corrido, “En la sierra y en la ciudad ‘La China’” (“In the Mountains and the City ‘The China’”), by Javier Rosas praises “La China,” a female drug lord. In Mexico, females tend not to be seen as capable of becoming drug lords and instead are seen as stay-at-home mothers. This corrido was written so as not to underestimate the capability of females.

These two corridos bring into perspective why individuals pursue selling drugs. They help give drug dealers a voice to explain why they undertook drug dealing. As José Pablo Villalobos and Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta say, “The *narcocorrido* parallels the traditional ballad in its depiction of those who—in order survive in a less than hospitable social environment—are often forced beyond the judicial norms established by unfair and authoritarian governments” (135). As counterstories, narcocorridos are a way composers of corridos showcase how many drug lords do not choose to become drug lords like the media say, as they turn to drug dealing because their career choices are limited.

In chapter four I analyze what I call event corridos which are written to address a contemporary issue. Corridos are an outlet for individuals to write about what is currently going on currently. Recently, the death of Kobe Bryant caused many corridos to be written about him. Yariel Roaro wrote “La última llamada” (“The Last Call”) for Bryant’s wife and is told from the point of view of Bryant to his wife. Similarly, Los Tres Tristes Tigres, a trio comedy group based on *YouTube*, wrote “El corrido del Coronavirus,” (“The Ballad of Coronavirus”) as a way to relieve the stress their audience may have about the news of COVID-19. These composers write these corridos as a way

to help ease reality. And as Jose Pablo Villalobos and Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta say, “The corrido is immediately characterized as something that is a part of real people and which appropriately speaks the pure truth” (131). Corridos allow the audience to become aware that they are not alone in the situation and opens up a way for them to learn more about the situation. Corridos bring individuals together to listen and get to know one another.

In chapter five I go over how to create a pedagogy that incorporates corridos and their importance as a source of literacy for college composition students. Corridos, for instance, allow students to explore and learn about their family background. Analyzing corridos also helps students learn new rhetorical concepts. English-only students learn to decipher and rhetorically analyze corridos after learning what the corrido is about. Students are accustomed to writing traditional essays, but by writing a rhetorical analysis of corridos, they have to step outside their comfort zone. Corridos as counterstories thus serve as a way to connect individuals with each other, as “Counterstories challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center, and provide a context to understand and transform established belief systems” (Martinez 136). By rhetorically analyzing corridos, students learn about each other’s backgrounds and what literacy skills corridos give their audience. As a result, by conducting a rhetorical analysis, students can become more open-minded of others around them, creating space for conversations between individuals about their family background, a topic often not discussed.

Within these chapters I include my family background to provide examples of how students can see themselves in relation to what corridos bring out. It is important for individuals to understand that we can learn from each other. Corridos are counterstories,

and by analyzing corridos, students can become aware of things they did not know before about their family, classmates, or friends. Corridos tell counterstories of individuals not otherwise given a voice, a voice that can then be heard and interpreted by others.

II. CORRIDOS AND IMMIGRATION

In Mexican cultures, there are many different types of corridos, like those written about trafficking drugs, immigration, government corruption, and romance. Each of these types includes lyrics or a certain type of stanza. The artist usually begins with a narrative, which in turn leads to a chorus of stanzas and then the despedida (ending) of the corrido. Each of these corridos can be seen as a type of counterstory. One popular type of corridos played on the radio today relates to immigration, as “Corridos about migration keep insisting that Mexicanos in the US are still struggling to be acknowledged and are seen as entitled to their space” (Chew Sánchez 10). Immigration-based corridos are seen as counterstories because they are liberating immigrants by giving them a voice through music. The voice is used to speak out against how others depict them. Instead of seeing immigrants as stealing jobs “La jaula de oro” and “Corrido de Juanito” give different portrayals of real life stories. These stories are countering what is being told by the media. A popular band that helped bring about the rise in popularity of immigration corridos in recent decades is Los Tigres del Norte (Tigers of the North).

Los Tigres del Norte is a band made up of five members: Jorge Hernández, Hernán Hernández, Eduardo Hernández, Luis Hernández, and Óscar Lara. An important aspect of the band is that the musicians are all related to one another. Family interactions are what their corridos are mostly about, as Los Tigres del Norte has written about their own family struggles. As Josh Kun and Jorge Hernández state about this group,

Los Tigres don’t just sing about their audience, though—they embody their triumphs and struggles, whether those of the undocumented laborer or the monolingual parent with bilingual suburban children, the prosperous money-

wiring immigrant or the vanquished farm worker who gives up on his American dream to get back to his Mexican family. (55)

Music is a way for them to have their voices heard by an audience that can relate the songs to their past and current situations as immigrants. Individuals living their current situation as immigrants can see that they are not alone and that others are going through the same experience. Music serves as a hopeful source of freedom for these individuals. Los Tigres del Norte corridos are aiming to show the public what immigrants have to face in the US to counter what the public hears about immigrants. It is not easy for immigrants to leave their family and everything they know behind. It is a struggle that these individuals are facing and living with every day.

Los Tigres del Norte got their name when immigrating to the US. The band initially got a permit to enter the US for 90 days to perform at a prison in Soledad, California. Jorge Hernández, the lead singer, describes how the band came up with their name while at the border: “We were waiting to cross, and we had convinced a couple in line with us to act as our parents. We told the customs agent we were a band, but we didn’t have a name. He said that in the U.S. they’d call a group of kids ‘little tigers.’ We thought, well, okay. So, we became The Tigers of the North” (qtd. in Kun 54). Instead of returning to their home in the Mexican state of Sinaloa, Los Tigres del Norte decided to stay and pursue music in the US, leaving behind their parents in Sinaloa. They then began producing songs that captured the attention of thousands. Now fifty years later, Los Tigres del Norte performed at Folsom Prison fifty years after Johnny Cash’s landmark performance there.

The inmate population at Folsom Prison since Cash's performance has gone from mostly White to mostly Black and Latino. Los Tigres del Norte have had a very successful career since their first hit single, "Contrabando y traición" ("Contraband and Betrayal"), in 1974. The corrido is about Camelia, a tejana, who is smuggling drugs from Tijuana, Mexico, to the US with Emilio Varela. As soon as the drug exchange is made for money, Emilio turns to Camelia and tells her he's going to go with his real lover. Camelia feels betrayed by Emilio and ends up shooting him seven times. The gun is left at the scene, and Camelia is not heard of ever again. The corrido became a sensational hit in both the US and Mexico in part because it sings of Camelia countering what is expected of her, as she shoots Emilio thereby reversing his betrayal.

Los Tigres del Norte now hold seven American and seven Latin Grammy Awards. They have sung their corridos at rallies and marches to show their support for their audiences. In 2010, the band joined the Arizona boycott against legislation called The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (introduced as Arizona Senate Bill 1070) which required all to carry a proper government identification. If individuals didn't carry official government identification, they would be taken into custody with the assumption that they were in the US illegally and undocumented. On October 8, 2013, Los Tigres del Norte joined a rally for immigration reform at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., where one of their band members stated that "We have, I think, 30 songs related to immigration, so it's easy for us to put together' a program for the rally on the Mall, Jorge said. 'We don't do imagination. We do the real stuff'" (Montgomery). Los Tigres del Norte have used their platform as music performers to pursue helping members of their audience by using their platform to raise awareness of

the current US immigration policy. The band once stood where many of their audience members stood, without legal residency. Their corridos helped them achieve success, as their songs have been and continue being in popular demand.

By making meaningful and impactful corridos, Los Tigres del Norte counter the false idea that the US values immigrants. The reason fans listen to their music is because they are able to relate to their corridos. Unlike other music genres, immigration corridos give the audience of immigrants a voice. Many immigrants cross the border for a better future but end up in a country that is against them. The audience made up of people with immigrant backgrounds finds comfort in listening to immigration corridos which tell the story of many immigrants like themselves. Testimonial stories, testimonios, fill Los Tigres del Norte's *YouTube* comment sections which are about how their corridos have inspired others. These testimonies allow fans to compare each other's stories and see how they relate to each other, so their corridos bring fans together to make new memories for and with their families.

Their testimonies serve as a way to understand what it is about the corridos that makes the audience enjoy them. The following is a testimony from Evelyn's son, a Los Tigres del Norte fan:

The corrido makes you think about what is happening in life. Every time you listen to a corrido, you will get a different meaning. They are very profound. It is like a very good book, a classic book. You get different things out of it. They teach you about life. When I listen to a corrido, the first time I do not understand it completely. I have noticed that corridos have a different meaning now that I have my kids than before, although they are the same stories. Corridos put me into

a state of tranquility and serenity. They make me feel happy, they remind me of Mexico. (qtd. in Chew Sánchez 72)

This testimony is one of a great many testimonials from Los Tigres del Norte fans. The comparison by the fan of the corrido to a classic book is important as I believe many others can relate to this comparison because of the US schooling system. Mostly, everyone is required to read a book in high school, and the students often do not realize the meaning of the book until they analyze it. High schools usually have students do these analyses in groups, breaking down what the author is saying. It takes more than simply flipping through the book; it takes time to analyze the details behind the text. This kind of analysis is basically done in the same way corridos are analyzed, as corridos will often require interpretation. If one only listens to a corrido one time, the message might not fully come through. By listening to a corrido more than once, listeners can then interpret and analyze the message an artist is trying to convey.

By analyzing corridos, students learn about migration-driven literacy which is made of literacy skills migrants have to learn in order to communicate with their families (Vieira 3). These communication skills are expressed through letters, phone calls, music, text, and voice messages. According to Kate Vieira, “migration-driven literacy learning, as a practice that operated within families, outside of formal institutions, and underneath state surveillance, formed an innovative site of potentially empowering literacy activity” (133). Migration-driven literacy skills are made up by a set of skills immigrants come to learn so as to communicate with their families. Many immigrants are unaware of the new set of skills they must possess to survive, but through writing, they are working on developing their literacy skills. Corridos can thus serve as a source of learning and

communication within these families. As counterstories, they help give a voice to the immigrants who journey to the US for a better future. Corridos are a way for these individuals' voices and stories to be heard by others. By listening to a corrido, individuals can become aware of situations that are left untold by other media.

Corridos thus represent a way of communicating and getting information from a song about what happened in a certain situation, particularly events happening in Mexico. Corridos about drug trafficking, for instance, tend to be written about people who have passed away, people who are important, or innocent individuals who lose their lives to drug cartels. For instance, David, who lives in northern Texas, gives his input on corridos: "Corridos are the best source to know what is really going on in the country, unlike the news that come out from the government or the media. The corrido says nothing but the truth. If you want to know what really happened in any situation, listen carefully to the corrido about it" (qtd. in Chew Sánchez 71). Corridos can thus be interpreted as a series of stories rhetorically building up a level of identification with the audience through the protagonist of the story. Corridos are often stories made up from a real individual's events that happen in reality. The artist takes the theme and gives it a deeper meaning as a counterstory by adding specific symbolism based on real events through a corrido.

One of the most popular corridos Los Tigres del Norte has produced that has a basis in reality is "La jaula de oro" ("The Golden Cage") which was released in 1984 (see appendix, pages 93-95). This corrido is still played on both US and Mexican radio stations. The corrido's powerful message is about a father who crossed the Mexican border illegally and is looking for a better life for himself and his family. He shares his

struggles of how living in the US has isolated him from society and his family and has also become like a golden cage. The corrido counters the idea that immigrating to the US is equal to obtaining the American Dream, which it is not. The father came to the US; however, his dream is a contradiction when he goes straight home from work and is afraid of being deported if he goes out. Los Tigres del Norte sing corridos like these because they are usually about something they have dealt with personally. In an interview, one of the band members, Jorge Hernández, discusses how the idea for this corrido, “La jaula de oro,” came about when having a conversation about one of his friend’s children:

It happened to my friend, though, Enrique Franco, the guy who wrote the song. I went to his house for some enchiladas and he introduced me to his kids and he said, “This is Jorge, say hello.” My usual custom when I meet someone new is to give a hug or hold out my hand for a handshake. But those kids just said, “Hi,” and then they left. I was shocked. That incident stayed in my mind. I knew his kids had only been in the United States for, like, six months. They were already acting different. They had changed a lot. Two weeks later I was with Enrique in Chicago and I reminded him of that day. I said, “Your kids had just arrived from Mexico and they were already trying to act more American. I wonder how many other people have had this experience?” He told me that he told his kids that he was going to take the family back to Mexico and his son said, in English, “I don’t want to go to Mexico.” We started putting the song together and we used Enrique’s son. You know the voice of the boy on the record? These

stories really happen. It's communication. People immediately know what we're talking about. (qtd. in Kun 59)

This corrido came together from a personal experience and is about the changes that can happen when one enters the US from Mexico and how traditions and customs can change while assimilating another culture. Mexicans, but also immigrants from other countries, can relate to these experiences. Many individuals come to the US in hopes of achieving the American Dream. However, what this corrido is saying is that immigrating and assimilating to another culture take a great deal of effort and, more specifically, can take away important aspects of one's previous life.

Most individuals who leave their family behind in another country work to send money back home. "The Golden Cage" signifies the invisible prison undocumented individuals from other countries live in when they come to the US without proper documentation and a sufficient cultural orientation. Although they are working every day of their lives for their family, they are nevertheless separated from them. Those lucky enough to have their family with them can lose their children to American culture through the process of assimilating American mainstream culture and assimilating away their Mexican culture. As a counterstory, this corrido showcases what happens with many families in real-life when moving to the US. By describing what happens when they immigrate to the US, they counter the story about positive outcomes when assimilating US mainstream culture.

Since the US school system teaches children the proper language that they should use, this corrido serves as a way for individuals to see themselves being portrayed and seen by their families once they enter the US. As Chew Sánchez states,

For Mexican American children, being a “non-ethnic” American is not an option, as it is for most European immigrants and their descendants. The pressure to assimilate, the conditional “acceptance” by mainstream society, the anti-immigrant climate of the United States, and the crystallization of anti-immigrant laws force Mexican American children to downplay or hide their cultural heritage as a way of surviving. (83)

Children are taught to seclude themselves from their culture while in public and embrace it only at home. This turning away from one’s home culture should not be happening, as students should be able to embrace who they are publicly, and that is exactly what some corridos are about. Corridos counter the idea that music is a bad influence for students. Students can use corridos like these to show others where they come from. This discussion of the perils of assimilation could help others learn about different cultures and can make it easier for these students to be happy to embrace their native culture. Pressure is nevertheless placed on the parents of the children to provide their own culture only at home. Often, parents listen to the radio or play corridos because they remind them of their previous lives and serve as a way to show where they have come from and to describe their current situations.

Jorge Hernández, a member of Los Tigres del Norte says corridos originate from life experiences. They try to reach out to all of their audiences, trying to get the message out. As he states,

I believe we are establishing a very direct communication with them [corridos], because we are telling their lives in our corridos. We are singing what migrants want to say aloud. We are communicating with them a great sense of love, of

union, of peace, of tranquility. I believe that is what makes this communication possible. What makes them feel the corridos. (qtd. in Chew Sánchez 81).

Corridos are a way of making individuals feel like they belong in the US where most neglect them. As counterstories, they are a way for others to hear their voices and to spread awareness of what is happening in society. Los Tigres del Norte thus use their platform for sharing the stories of immigrants and for letting their voices be heard.

My family of immigrants relates to corridos about immigrants because they have given them a way to look back in time. The stories told in immigrant corridos represent some of their own life experiences. While everyone has a different way for interpreting a corrido, a corrido like “La jaula de oro” for immigrants or their family back home can provide meaningful insights on what it means for them to live in the US. My mom and dad continue to listen to corridos every day, whether at home or at work. My dad is a very quiet individual and does not express himself well. However, when I asked him what he liked about “La jaula de oro,” he said he liked that what it conveyed was all true. My dad continues relating to the song today. My paternal grandpa, who was the one who first brought my dad to the US, wanted for his family to have a better future.

Yet, to achieve that my dad several times had to come to the US alone, and only later was he able to bring his own family across a few years later. At the time, my dad worked as a migrant worker in Florida picking oranges and was only allowed to be out during working hours, and then after that, he and the rest of his group went to their home to eat and then sleep. The rest of the week was the same. My dad’s immigration story counters what others say about immigrants stealing jobs. The US showcases an image of immigrants being selfish by coming to the US and leaving their family. Unlike what

others perceive, obtaining a stable job to provide for a family in Mexico is hard to come across. And what the media do not show are the harsh living conditions immigrants have to live when in Mexico. Additionally, applying for a visa is very expensive, and for individuals who are barely able to feed their family, applying for a visa is impossible. My dad chose to come to the US knowing that if he stayed in Mexico our family would not have been able to thrive. It took a long time and hard work, but my dad was able to facilitate my family acquiring the proper documentation to come and stay in the US.

This part of my family story counters stories that say that coming to the US is an easy process and that assimilating is easy for immigrants. My dad made his way to Victoria, Texas, where he began working as an oilfield worker. He was then able to obtain some schooling, where he learned to speak English. The individuals at the school helped him apply for his residency. It took a while for my dad to be able to provide the proper documentation for mom and brothers. My oldest brother was around seven when he first came to the US, and my other brothers were five and two years old when they came over. The oldest two had the most difficulty adapting to living in the US. After my mom was able to enroll my brothers in school, they quickly realized they did not fit in. Everyone knew how to speak English perfectly because at their level of education, so English came more naturally to them. However, my brothers only spoke Spanish, so they had a very rough adjustment to learning how to speak and write in English. Luckily, my brothers received good deal of help from their teachers in learning English. My brothers openly talked about their situations, and the teachers met with my mom weekly to report their improvement. Being surrounded by other English speakers allowed them to learn English quickly. My oldest brother was initially placed in an all-English class because he

would soon move to an all English-classes. In less than a year, my brothers were all speaking English. However, this relatively quick assimilation of English was not the case with my mom.

My mom understands English, but she cannot speak it in part because of her being embarrassed by her accent when she does speak it. My mom's position counters the constant negative feedback US citizens tell immigrants, to "speak English"; however, when immigrants learn English, they are made fun of for their accent. At least this was the case with my mom who refused to speak English. Ever since first coming to the US, she had to find someone to translate for her. Thankfully, she did, and one of her neighbors helped her out with scheduling of appointments and school visits as well as with doctor appointments. When my mom found out she was pregnant with me, she was scared; however, the same neighbor helped her out during this time. My mom continues being thankful to her. She says that she does not know what she would have done without the neighbor's help.

As my brothers became fluent in English, they started bringing homework assignments home in English, but my mom was no longer able to help them out. Their education was now separating my mom from my brothers. It was these moments that made her rethink her decision of bringing them to the US. While my brothers quickly adapted, my mom did not. However, my dad was quick to remind her that it was for the children that they were staying. Although it hurt my parents to see my brothers assimilate to American culture, their courage to stay in the US is heroic. My dad came to the US for a better financial life that their home country could not provide. My dad wanted us to have a better future, and that included learning English. My mom then began to develop

literacy skills through school events, and because of our neighbors, my mom was able to make friends and begin adapting to her new environment. She says that over the years she has begun liking the US; however, the main reason for liking the US is because all of her children are here. My mom nevertheless spends a great deal of time coming from and going back to Mexico throughout each year, as going back to see that her home is still there gives her some peace. Clearly, the many difficulties arising between immigrant parents and their children represent stress points over the assimilation process that they must all overcome as they adjust to their new lives in the US.

“La jaula de oro” by Los Tigres del Norte emphasizes the strains assimilation causes between the Mexican father and his family’s feelings about living in the US. The first stanza (see appendix, page 93) focuses on how the father and his family have been living in the US illegally for ten years, and during that time, they have not gone back to Mexico to visit their other family members. In contrast, in my family, my dad lived in the US illegally but continued to go back and forth to Mexico to visit his family. However, before my mother came to the US, with him only being able to go back once or twice a year was difficult for both my parents. This stanza counters that the notion that Mexico has a stable economy. The economic situation in Mexico caused my dad to come work in the US so my mom and dad at the time had to go their separate ways in hopes of giving their children a better future. My dad risked his life many times just to visit my mom and brothers back in Mexico, but he obviously wanted to see his family. Nowadays, an increase in the border patrol presence along the border makes it very difficult for anyone to enter the US.

Crossing the US border clearly transforms individuals because, as José David

Saldívar states, “The U.S.-Mexico border changes pesos into dollars, humans into undocumented workers, *cholos/as* (Chicano youth culture) into punks, people between cultures into people without culture” (8). Crossing a border causes people to be treated differently when entering a new country. Instead of people being treated with respect and dignity, crossing of the border affects how people will be looked at when living in the US. If they speak Spanish in public, the likelihood of being treated differently is high and is confirmed when English-only speakers tell Spanish-speakers to speak English.

In these kinds of prejudiced situations, Spanish-speakers suppress their emotions and ask someone to speak for them. My brothers decided to continue speaking English in public and served as my parents’ translators. My mom always had to have someone with her while attending school meetings so they could translate my brothers’ progress. Luckily, she often had a neighbor willing to go with her, but whenever the neighbor was working my mom had no one. My mom then had to depend on listening to what the teachers said and tried to understand them. My mom also brought a recorder to record the meetings so later the neighbor or my brothers could translate the meeting to her. The recorder was partially her voice because without it my mom would not know my brothers’ progress in school. The recorder was a tool my mom had to rely on to be able to communicate with the teachers and provided a way for her to understand meetings with the teachers through translation, but often with the help of a neighbor or my brothers.

The second and third stanzas of “La jaula de oro” by Los Tigres del Norte (see appendix, pages 93-94) respectively focus on how the father brought his wife and children to live in the US and on how there’s now a language difference between the father and his children. However, because of assimilation, the children have forgotten

about Mexico, a home their father can never forget, as the children have already adapted to living in the US and no longer miss Mexico as much as he does. The third stanza focuses on how the father asks one of his sons in Spanish if he would like to return to Mexico, but the son responds in English, saying that he does not. There is now a language barrier between the son and the father, and as Saldívar states, “While the monolingual father despairs, the son’s response in English materially hybridizes the *corrido*’s cultural critique of anti-immigrant feelings and literalizes the negative way of life in Silicon Valley” (7). So as the son quickly adapts to living in the US, he can tell the differences of living in both countries. With the father describing his son’s reaction to going back to Mexico, he counters how others view assimilating to the US as an easy process. In the fourth stanza (see appendix, page 94), we see how the father’s decision to bring his family causes his son not to want to visit his father’s home. This kind of response is something that immigrant parents have to face as their children assimilate to the American culture.

These stanzas reflect my family’s situation because if someone had asked my brothers about going back to Mexico after having lived here for some time, they would have quickly replied no. The US for them is a more comfortable place to live in, a place where they do not have to worry about any safety protocol regarding potable water. Also, they have obtained an education here which enables them to work and provide for their own families. They also don’t want to go back to live in an adobe house on a rancho, when they can live a more comfortable life here in the US. Immigrant children adapting to American culture causes struggles with their parents. This situation counters the idea that assimilating to the US is easy for immigrant parents. Immigrant parents thus have to

deal with their children not wanting to visit their homeland. So immigrant parents then have to find another way to communicate with their loved ones back home.

The fifth stanza of “La jaula de oro” (see appendix, page 94) discusses how the children no longer speak with their father. The children have learned a new language and have forgotten Spanish. They think like Americans, even though they do not look like Americans. The new language represents a barrier between the son and the father after the children have become Americanized. By describing how the new language barrier causes strains among family members, this corrido counters the positive remarks made by others concerning the positive value of being bilingual. Being bilingual is only seen as positive if the individual speaking the second language is White. Otherwise, the individual is stared at and criticized for deciding to speak their native language.

This fifth stanza hits home specifically because my dad remembers this change in language use happening between him and my brothers. My brothers quickly learned to speak English and talked to my dad in English. He had to remind them to speak Spanish because that was the language my mom spoke. My brothers quickly learned to let go of the Spanish they knew and began speaking Spanglish when talking to my mom. This kind of code-meshing had an impact on my mom because she was seeing how fast her children were changing. They went from speaking only Spanish, to forgetting how to speak it. My brothers deciding to speak English and forgetting Spanish once again counters the positive impact knowing a second language has on immigrant parents. But through the voice recorder my mom had, she was able to grasp certain words that allowed her to understand my brothers, but my mom became dependent on the recorder in order to be able to communicate with others around her.

After the assimilation process began with my brothers, my family was not Spanish-speaking only, but was speaking English as well, a linguistic aspect about my family which allowed us to have a smoother process of assimilation. The family depicted in “La jaula de oro,” unlike the code-meshing members found in my family, clearly created a language barrier (see appendix, pages 94-95). And as Saldívar states about the father in this corrido, “Looking at his family’s incorporation into U.S. society, the Mexican father feels tensions everywhere in California, imprisoning him in both his private and his public spheres” (6). Just when my parents thought it best for my brothers to come to the US and get an education, they began noticing drastic changes in their behavior. My brothers wanted to dress differently like their peers and wanted to speak English instead of Spanish. Otherwise, my brothers would get strange looks wherever they went, and they did not like that. Out of everyone in my family, though, it was my mom who had the toughest transition into the US. My brothers quickly made friends and, in the process, lost their Spanish accent. My youngest brother at the time learned to speak both Spanish and English more easily, largely because my older brothers and our neighbors mainly spoke English to him. My mom had to come to terms with the fact that her children would eventually forget some if not most of their Spanish by assimilating to the English-dominant US. However, my mom continued playing her Spanish music for us to hear, an act which helped reinforce the family’s bilingualism.

Although my brothers started speaking mostly English, they still listened to the music playing on my family’s radio. Back in 1995, the Spanish language radio stations mostly played Tejano; however, my parents also had cassettes of Mexican music that they would listen to. These cassettes contained the music my brothers and I continue

singing along to today. From Los Tigres del Norte to Grupo Bronco, their music has always been a huge part of our lives. Growing up, my brothers did become more Americanized, but they still embraced their Mexican culture by listening to Mexican music, specifically corridos.

My two oldest brothers especially remember crossing the river and also living in Mexico, so they are able to relate to the messages found in many corridos about immigration just like my parents do. Although as adults they do not speak Spanish fluently in their home, they do listen to Spanish-language Mexican music. My brothers prefer corridos because they tell real life stories about real people. Because corridos usually written about real-life events that have happened to the artist or someone related to them corridos are often counterstories and form a call-to-action that allows for everyone to be able to listen to the message the artist is trying to convey. In other instances, corridos serve as memories of past events that are hard to speak about because of the hard memories they reference through their messages. This rhetorical aspect of some corridos containing pathos is strongly impactful with my parents and my oldest brothers, as they listen to certain corridos and stay serious for a while. Certain corridos remind them of certain difficult and traumatic parts of their life that they prefer to hide or which they do not want to relive, but this aspect of the music was nevertheless what I often grew up listening to.

Growing up for me was filled with a mixture of languages and also of listening to music, most often coming from the radio. My mom would turn on the radio every morning and leave it playing throughout the day. Because I did not speak until I was seven, when I did speak, it was because of music and speech therapy. Having the radio on

as well as flipping through books helped keep my attention on language. My not speaking caused my mom many struggles. In school I would not talk, and the non-Spanish-speaking teachers would blame her for it. They blamed her for teaching me Spanish instead of English, but how could she teach me English if she did not know it, much less speak it? My decision to keep my emotions to myself counters the notion that US public schools want what is best for all their students. Instead of being supportive of my mother, the principal and teachers decided to be against her. The teachers blamed the mixture of languages on my mom, and that affected her severely. Even at that age, I was able to pick up on her emotions, so as a consequence, I would try and toughen up when she asked me how school was. My replies were always about how great school was until she noticed that it was not going that way. The effect of teachers mistreating me because of my inability to speak caused my home behavior to change. But music was always a comfort for me, as I first would pay attention to the instrumental parts of music instead of the lyrics. Later, as I grew older, I started paying attention to the lyrics in the corridos I listened to, which of course reinforced my retention of Spanish.

And ever since my family members got their legal residency, they have been going to Mexico at least twice a year. When I was growing up, we would go to Mexico over the two-month summer break and the two-week winter break. The summer break was used in part to make my mom feel better about her homesickness. Our other reason for going to Mexico twice a year was so my brothers and I could practice our Spanish since we were mainly speaking English in school. As we grew older, my oldest brothers stopped going to Mexico, and I became the only one that continues going with my mom, in part because I am the only female and feel closest to her compared to my brothers. I

know she still misses living in Mexico. Even though my brothers and I are older now, we still remember those songs that we would listen to on those fifteen-hour drives to Mexico. We still listen to music sung in Spanish because in a way it comforts us and sustains that Mexican part of our identity. My parents came to the US primarily to give their family a better future, and they have, but immigrating to the US from Mexico came at a price to our sustaining aspects of our Mexican identity.

Throughout the years the immigration situation in the US has remained nearly the same, if not worse, for immigrants. Today families are being separated instead of being deported together as a family back to Mexico. The current process of becoming a US resident has made it harder for individuals to cross the border legally. This difficulty with becoming US citizens counters what many US citizens believe when they tell immigrants to apply and become a US citizen. The process of becoming a US citizen is expensive and takes a long time. Since the release of “La jaula de oro” in 1987, many more immigration corridos have been written. They in part showcase the importance of music to immigrants seeking a better future in the US for their families. One recent popular corrido is “Corrido de Juanito” by Calibre 50. This corrido, like “La jaula de oro,” is based on the true story of Edén Muñoz, the lead singer’s cousin’s journey crossing the US border without papers and living in the US. By depicting the struggles “Juanito” faces, “Corrido de Juanito” counters the idea that immigrants adapt easily to the US and take over jobs. The jobs Juanito works are those most US citizens do not want to work at.

Calibre 50 is a regional Mexican band from Mazatlán, Sinaloa, and is made up of four members: Edén Muñoz (vocals, accordion), Armando Ramos (guitar, vocals), Alejandro Gaxiola (tuba) and Erick García (drums). One of Calibre 50’s biggest

influences are Los Tigres del Norte, so they, like Los Tigres, want to use their platform to showcase this influence with their audience. Calibre 50's name is representative of both borders, as "Their [Calibre 50's] provocative name ("armor-piercing bullet") was chosen as a symbol for their music, whose strength they hoped would carry them across the border from Mexico north to the US and south across Latin America. It did" (Jurek). Calibre 50 has risen in popularity because the band is able to relate the themes of their music back to their audience. By using their music for as a call-to-action for immigrants, Calibre 50 counters how easily immigrants have it here in the US. They use their platform to share stories of what is currently happening to many Mexican immigrants. Their "Corrido de Juanito" was nominated for the 2018 Latin Grammy Award for song of the year. Some of Calibre 50's corridos, like "Se nos volvió a pelar mi apá" ("Our Father Has Once Again Fled"), have been banned from radio play because of the controversial issues found within it. This particular corrido by Calibre 50, for instance, celebrates the prison escape of Joaquín Guzmán "El Chapo," a famous Mexican drug lord and leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, before being caught and extradited to the US.

Since corridos are often made to reflect the truth behind an individual's life story, Edén, the lead singer, says that "'we are all a bunch of Juanitos' who are on this [US] side of the border and many more [are] living on the other side missing their loved ones'" ("Calibre 50" 01:00-15). This corrido reflects many of the issues undocumented individuals are currently facing. Similar to Los Tigres del Norte, Calibre 50 is made up of individuals who know immigrants personally and who use their platform to showcase issues to other individuals to show that they are not alone. This corrido counters the easy reality that is often showcased about immigrants' lives. The US is not so accepting of

others seen on TV; instead, the US is against immigrants until it benefits them. It takes a tremendous effort for immigrants to leave their family behind in order to be able to provide for them back home. Individuals do not come to the US for fun and entertainment; they are here to work the long hours so as to provide for their family back home. Being in the US without documents builds stress for these individuals. Yes, individuals can go to stores and visit different places, but they are at risk of being caught and deported. Every day represents a fighting battle, and the process for obtaining legal residency is expensive and time-consuming.

Everyone in my family is now in the US legally; however, it was not always that way. I still have relatives who are in the process of obtaining their residency. Many media outlets make it seem like individuals have easy options when entering the US legally; however, they do not mention the cost, time, and grief involved. This reality counters what many believe about obtaining US residency and that it is an easy and fast process because it is not. In the end, if something goes wrong, individuals who have been waiting can have their application for gaining residency rejected. Thus, individuals like the central character in the “Corrido de Juanito” (see appendix, page 96-100) will decide that what is best for them is to leave their family behind and come to the US illegally. This particular corrido has touched many individuals I know personally. They have discussed with me the many hardships they have gone through and the amount of risks they take, such as working for companies that pay them less, working long hours, and having limited family time and family separation.

The “Corrido de Juanito” resonates a great deal with my family and their immigration experience. The first stanza (see appendix, page 96) begins by describing

how for Juanito it has been fourteen years since he last went to his hometown in Mexico. During this time, Juanito has been living in the US without his parents and his family. My dad first immigrated to the US around 1980, and since then he had been going back and forth to Mexico. My grandfather, his dad, was the one who brought him to the US many times. However, my grandfather never stayed long as he would return to Mexico to tend to his crops. My dad lived in the US with a distant cousin. Both worked long hours every day. My dad would leave my mom behind and, for many years, my brothers too. The story depicted in “Corrido de Juanito” and my family’s personal experience with immigration counter the mistaken notion that immigrating to the US is not hard on immigrants. The economic problems in Mexico caused my dad to emigrate and seek a future for his family in the US. It was hard on my parents to be away from each other, but it nevertheless enabled them to be able to provide for our family.

The second stanza of “Corrido de Juanito” (see appendix, page 96) describes how things change over time. It has been so long that Juanito has not gone back to Mexico that he prays to God that those who knew him have not forgotten him. This stanza resonates with many individuals because it conveys complications that happen even to those entering the US legally. For instance, an individual comes to the US to seek a better future for their family, but the cost of doing so is leaving their loved ones behind. It is hard to stay in contact with those the individual does not talk to everyday. This aspect of the separation was the case with my mom and my dad. This stanza counters the notion that immigrant family members have an easy life in Mexico. The US likes to paint an image of immigrants sending money back home and becoming wealthy; however, that is not the case. My dad’s decision to come to the US impacted my mom and siblings

directly. My dad would go back to Mexico, but he was looked at differently by those left behind on the rancho. Also, those living at the rancho asked to borrow money from my mom, and my mom would often lend them money, but sometimes she would have to say no. It was then that those at the rancho would say mean things about her, saying that because my dad was working in the US, she was an “alzada,” a stuck-up, for not lending them money. In Mexico my family was perceived differently for their change in status and in the US because they were immigrants. As immigrants, their life was not easy, yet they did not let that get in the way of desiring a better life for their children which is what motivated my parents to come to the US so as to give their children a better future.

In the third stanza of “Corrido de Juanito,” (see appendix, page 96), Juanito talks about his parents and how he continues to live in the US and then gets notified that his mother is dead. Juanito is trying to convince his dad to come to the US and live with him. However, his dad refuses, saying that he is old, so Juanito breaks down, saying that he cannot go to Mexico for his dad. This kind of situation happens to many immigrants living in the US. Their parents are still in Mexico, and when they die, returning for the funeral is a tough choice to make because the individual does not know if he/she will make it back to the US. My dad was fortunate enough to have been a resident at the time his dad died, but I have known individuals who have decided to go say their last respects. For most it has been very long time since they last saw their parents, so being able to say goodbye is their way of paying their respects and of being at peace. Others decide that what is best is to stay in the US to care for their own families. In “Corrido de Juanito,” this stanza conveys the hardship of not being able to have his father with him after his mother’s death and shows that this sad situation only exacerbates the complexity of being

an immigrant in the US without the needed proper documentation. This reality counters the idea that immigrants always bring their families with them and do not struggle. Even when immigrants do manage to bring their families to the US, leaving their parents and siblings causes a negative emotional impact on them. Immigrants often do not know when they will be able to return back home. The day they leave their home tends to be the last time they will be able to see their family. Coming to work in the US also signifies that they will be able to send some money to help them.

The fourth stanza of “Corrido de Juanito” (see appendix, page 96) discusses the hard work Juanito does in the US. Juanito states that he works and works and that it has been many years since he last saw the sun. In the fifth stanza, (see appendix, page 97), Juanito discusses how his children are older now and that he does not understand them because they do not speak Spanish. The children are going through an American educational system that introduces English as the dominant language. The children also do not use Spanish at school, only at home. However, as this corrido conveys, if the children’s parents are always working, then they have no one to talk Spanish with. The children also prefer English over Spanish because that is what they are now used to, thus creating a situation that adds to the difficulty of an immigrant family living in the US, thereby disrupting and countering the stereotype that life in the US is easy for immigrants.

In the sixth stanza, (see appendix, page 97), Juanito explains the fear of deportation many individuals have. Juanito states that anyone who has not seen an ICE deportation vehicle or witnessed a deportation does not know what fear is. There is a big difference in knowing that one can go out to the store and come back home safely. For

immigrants, this is not the case, as immigrants constantly have to be on the lookout for themselves. They do not have the same opportunities Americans have. These individuals must teach their children how to act if they ever do get caught by the border patrol. In some instances, they teach their children how survive if they ever get caught by the border patrol. In some instances, they teach their children to lie or to go the other way and call a relative to pick them up. They fear their children will be placed in detention centers and not find their way back to their families, as children placed in detention centers often have a difficult time returning to their parents. So what this corrido is conveying is that it is not as easy to get them back to their parents as it is to be taken away.

The seventh stanza (see appendix, page 97) is the beginning of the chorus. Juanito tells the audience that many constantly see him driving on the freeway. He stays on the freeway because he continues to work every day. Instead of being at home with their families or relaxing, immigrants have to work almost every single day to make a living here in the US. Juanito wears his cowboy hat and work boots while driving to work and does not wear dress clothes to go out to the stores. Instead, he wears what he wears to work to make a living. By describing the effort Juanito has to go through to live and work, this stanza counters the stereotype that immigrants are lazy and make no effort to survive in the US. The pay immigrants receive is less than what residents and citizens receive, and immigrants have to work extra hours to make more money.

The eight stanza (see appendix, page 97) has Juanito saying how he works multiple of jobs, ranging from being a gardener or a cook, as he will do anything to work. This stanza shows how Mexicans immigrants are willing to do any type of work to get

paid, which counters a controversial stereotype in the US. Immigrants will take up any job to be able to provide for their family. This move to take up virtually any job often causes immigrants to be taken advantage of by their employers. If immigrants for any reason have to leave early or are tired, they are threatened with losing their job. The ninth stanza (see appendix, page 97) has Juanito expressing that although some might look down at him, he does not care. He lifts up his head and drinks a can of beer. Juanito is proud of himself for the achievements he has made. Juanito has done honest work to get paid hard-earned money. The tenth stanza, (see appendix, page 98), the last of the chorus, follows by saying that Juanito is still a friend and a Mexican, a Mexican to the bone. Juanito tells his audience that although he is working in the US, he is still a proud Mexican. The ninth and tenth stanza thus counter the stereotype that immigrants do not accomplish anything. Although immigrants do not receive the recognition they deserve, coming to the US, leaving loved ones behind, and working to provide for their family are nevertheless all major accomplishments.

The eleventh stanza (see appendix, page 98) has Juanito reminding listeners that life is not easy in the US. Juanito reminds his audience that what they say about coming to the US is not as easy as others make it seem. The twelfth stanza (see appendix, page 98) tells of the difficulty of having to live with the reminders of the millions of crosses he saw crossing the desert. Juanito was fortunate enough to make it back to the US, unlike those whose bodies are left behind buried in the desert. Living with a constant reminder of witnessing death is not something immigrants are proud of. The thirteenth stanza (see appendix, page 98) tells of his present life and of the sad nights he spends thinking of those who stayed behind. Juanito discusses how quickly time is passing by and that he

has yet to see his father. Economic forces in Mexico caused Juanito to leave his family behind to be able to provide for them.

This corrido conveys the story of the life of many immigrants living in the US without family members. They leave their loved ones behind in order to work and be able to provide for their family back home. The thirteenth stanza has Juanito thanking God for what He has given him. He is in the US alone, but he is fortunate to have a place to stay and a job. Most Mexicans tend to be Catholic, and Juanito continues praying to God and thanks Him. The fourteenth stanza (see appendix, page 98) is the despedida (goodbye) of the song and has Juanito sending a friendly hello to all of his cousins, uncles, and brothers. The last stanza (see appendix, page 100) has Juanito promising to go back to visit his family soon and then being able give them all a hug. This is the promise most make when coming to the US, of being able to return to Mexico with money or making enough money to bring their loved ones back to the US to live with them.

The “Corrido de Juanito” continues being a reflection on how the US immigration situation continues being the same. Not much has changed over the years and has instead gotten worse. Children are now being separated from their parents when they face deportation. They have to face the court alone. It is not fair that we are still living in this current situation. The “Corrido de Juanito” symbolizes the situation immigrants have to face when coming to the US and reflects my family’s situation. This corrido counters the idea that immigrants can easily come to the US legally. Not all immigrants have the opportunity to enter the US legally. Most cross the border and face the same repercussions Juanito did. They have to live with the daily reminder of those nights they crossed the desert and/or river. The memories continue, and they are not all good ones.

Yes, their journey got them to the US, but like Juanito, they face many critical changes in their lives like living without their family, adjusting to working full time, and also working overtime.

In the following chapter I will be analyzing narcocorridos, a modern subgenre of corridos. Similarly to immigration corridos, narcocorridos explain why drugtraffickers decide to pursue the trafficking of drugs. In most instances, individuals pursue drug trafficking because they do not have the means to go to the US. The trafficking of drugs gives them a way to provide for their family and still be there for them. The two corridos I will be analyzing are “El karma” by Ariel Camacho y Los Plebes del Rancho (The guys from the ranch) (see appendix, pages 101-103) and “En la sierra y en la ciudad ‘La China,’” (see appendix, pages 104-107) by Javier Rosas.

III. NARCOCORRIDOS

Narcocorridos are a contemporary subgenre of the traditional corrido. The narcocorrido is a “ballad that describes, apotheosizes, comments, or laments the deeds of those involved in the drug cultivation and trade” (Simonett 3). Narcocorridos are written to praise those in the drug trafficking business, and such praises often involve mentioning the narco’s (narc’s) philosophy, lifestyle, and stance towards law enforcement.

Narcocorridistas write corridos either for or against the narcotrafficker, depending on who their intended audience is. A narcocorrido is sometimes created when a drug lord requests a narcocorrido written about him/her, or artists can write one to show support for the drug lord. Jose Pablo Villalobos and Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta compare the traditional ballad and the narcocorrido, stating that “the narcocorrido parallels the traditional ballad in its depiction of those who—in order to survive in less than hospitable social environment—are often forced beyond the judicial norms established by unfair and authoritarian governments” (135). Narcocorridos counter the stereotype for why most drug traffickers choose trafficking as their job. The media portray narcotraffickers as choosing their own lifestyle. However, narcotraffickers can also take up drug trafficking because, while growing up, their family lacked enough money and education to get by. Becoming a narcotrafficker allows him/her to easily make money, thereby being able to provide for their family. Narcotraffickers can decide what is best for themselves and their family, but their decision might not be the best one, even if it allows them to provide for their community.

The narcocorrido subgenre also allows singers to bring to the public an awareness of political government corruption in Mexico to the public. It takes a great deal of

courage for narcocorridistas to write and sing their narcocorridos in public, specifically in the hometown of the narcotrafficker who's also often the intended audience. By defying the government and speaking against it, most narcocorridistas counter the stereotype that narcocorridos have a bad influence. The intended audience can be an entire cartel, a gang, or a political figure. Moreover, in most instances, the singer and/or writer of the narcocorrido will face death threats. These death threats come from members of the community or from the intended audience the corrido was written for.

Narcocorridistas are pre-destined to face death when entering the enemy's territory to sing for the community. Security for the artists' events does not guarantee their safety, for security is often bought-out by the artist's enemy. This lack of security for the artist allows the enemy to enter the facility and attack the artist. In most cases, narcocorridistas are killed when leaving the venue or after being chased after their shows. However, a narcocorridista's bravery when entering the enemy territory allows for their audience to witness how the artist is killed.

Narcocorridos are an example of counterstories because they are written as a call to action to the government, thus representing alternative perspectives on how the well-being of the community should be protected. Most narcocorridos, though, are often banned from airplay, and some even argue that this ban is enacted behind closed doors by the government to protect themselves. While the public is listening to bad things being said about those in power on the radio, banning narcocorridos often works against those banning them. Those in power will often decide to ban narcocorridos before everyone listens to them, thereby inadvertently creating an unexpected awareness in the form of counter-rallies and protests.

There are those who are skeptical of the message of some narcocorridos because some of them are corridos por encargo, corridos composed at the request of the narcotrafficker. So the narcocorridista has to decide whether the benefits of writing a narcocorrido for a drug lord outweighs losing fans and gaining enemy attention. Narcocorridistas who do decide to write a narcocorrido for the drug lord receive payment in cash and gifts (Villalobos 136). Fans consequently become skeptical of whether narcocorridistas are staying true to their fans by singing about narcotraffickers. Some fans do enjoy the narcocorridos calling attention to the political corruption surrounding narcotraffickers; however, others do not like the attention their community receives.

If the narcocorrido goes bad by creating enemies, then communities' risk being attacked by an enemy or rival cartel. Innocent lives are taken away from those simply living their daily lives in such communities. The community therefore becomes unsafe for individuals living there because the enemy can attack them. Individuals supporting narcocorridos written for drug lords are also in danger. Narcocorridos in addition can also be used as a form of political expression from the narcocorridistas themselves. And when a narcocorridista decides to write a song mentioning current news to the public, coded language is often used in the narcocorrido itself. Coded language allows narcocorridistas to communicate with their intended audience which is able to break down the message and figure out what the narcocorridista has to say. The coded language can use figurative terms such as animals, cartoon figures, and food items, which resemble the person being talked about in the corrido.

Individuals praising narcocorridos are sometimes those living within poverty-stricken communities that receive help from narcotraffickers. Once a narcotraffickers

becomes wealthy enough, they are able to provide for their community, as “The allegiance that once was given to the state is now given to the traffickers” (Villalobos 138). By providing for their community, narcotraffickers defy the stereotype of being selfish and not providing for others. Instead of helping their own people, politicians who run the states often decide to provide for themselves. These communities see how narcotraffickers help them more than the actual government that is supposed to be for the people. Narcocorridos therefore represent a call to action to those in power to help their communities. So instead of seeking help from the government, individuals from these communities seek help from narcotraffickers who are able to help them out in difficult times, unlike the state which ignores them. Because the government makes it impossible for communities to receive the care they need, narcotraffickers who have lived in these situations decide to give back and do the work the government ignores.

One example of a narcocorrido is “El karma” by Ariel Camacho y Los Plebes del Rancho (Ariel Camacho and the Guys from the Ranch) (see appendix, pages 101-103). Within “El karma,” Camacho describes why an individual pursues becoming a narcotrafficker and the consequences the individual has to face. As stated previously, some narcotraffickers choose to traffic drugs because of the easy money. This reason for why an individual becomes a drug lord is what the song is about. In the first stanza, (see appendix, page 101), Camacho describes how the protagonist was born in “hot water.” The hot water represents that the individual’s life was in danger since the beginning of his life. The protagonist decides to move to Culiacán where there are more options for acquiring money by joining the Sinaloa Cartel. The individual begins to receive a lot of money and keeps on going like nothing unusual has happened. The second stanza (see

appendix, page 101) finds the individual becoming aware of the amount of money drug trafficking yields. The protagonist then goes and traffics drugs in Los Angeles, where he discovers others willing to do the same job. These stanzas counter the idea that Mexicans have an easy way out of poverty. The protagonist in the corrido decides to traffic drugs because it gives him easy money. However, he soon realizes that he has to go to the US to traffic drugs as well. Trafficking allows these individuals the ability to obtain money quickly in a country where obtaining a job is difficult for immigrants.

In the third stanza (see appendix, page 101) the protagonist faces the kidnapping of his daughters. A rival cartel has taken them hostage; however, the protagonist is not scared and goes looking for them but is powerful enough to make enemies, which is common when narcotraffickers make a lot of money. Money symbolizes power within the community. In the fourth stanza (see appendix, page 102) the individual is willing to go after the kidnappers and wants to kill them. The protagonist knows that those who took his daughters respected him because of his work and that he is willing to kill to get his daughters back.

One of the embodied values of narcotraffickers is that their families are their priority. If something bad happens to their family, then they are going to attack whoever threatens them. Family is respected within the business; however, if there is some type of deal breaker, then the family is sacrificed. The narcotrafficker has to deal with the consequences of not following through on the deal or doing something behind the back of the drug lord. “El karma” counters the stereotype that drug lords do not care for their families when engaging in narcotrafficking. In reality, most or many of the narcotraffickers care a great deal for their families who represent the reason they choose

to sell drugs because selling drugs allows them to provide for their families. The protagonist in the corrido, a drug trafficker, has risen in popularity, causing other drug traffickers to become jealous of his position. They then proceed to kidnap his daughters to take over his position.

In the fifth stanza (see appendix, page 102) the intrigue builds when the protagonist discovers where his daughters are being held, but when he knocks down the door, he realizes that they are already gone. Drug lords tend to have the police available when they need them and are able to make them look for their family members if they are kidnapped. Additionally, drug lords have their own men who can go and search for them. In the sixth stanza (see appendix, page 102) he makes his Browning, a gun, go off, but it is not as reliable as the R-15, an assault rifle, that he is up against, so the protagonist's life is taken by the powerful R-15. Guns are something narcotraffickers have in great quantities. In the seventh stanza (see appendix, page 102) the protagonist reminds the audience that karma comes and goes. Although he is killed, the R-15 rests as well, and no one can escape the grim reaper. At the end of the day, everyone faces death, no matter what. If the drug trafficker survives, their family members are the ones who deal with the consequences. If the drug lord is respected by his men, then his men will go after those who killed him. So a narcocorrido of this type conveys the message that drug trafficking is a business that should be taken seriously because of its power.

Drug trafficking allows individuals to be able to feed their families and provide for them. In most instances, individuals have to leave their hometown to seek money. It is not that the individuals who are drug-traffickers want to be traffickers; rather it is often a job they can easily obtain. Trafficking drugs also allows individuals to provide for their

communities, as “Trafficking is repeatedly deemed beneficial, particularly with regard to its economic and material outgrowths: employment, construction of schools and churches, improvement of roads, hospitals, etc.” (Villalobos and Ramírez-Pimienta 138). Narcotraffickers that come from poverty and smaller communities will often give their money back to their community, as the community is what holds these individuals together. The trafficking of drugs allows them to make an incredible amount of money, and the best part is that they can give some of it back. The community is given funds, as Villalobos and Ramírez-Pimienta say, to build schools and improve buildings in the community. Narcotraffickers are therefore building a better community for the children born in it. They demonstrate wanting a better future for the children living in these communities by making an education attainable for them.

Women are less likely to participate as drug traffickers because most men see women as having to stay at home and caring for their families. In many instances, women are only known as being the wife or lover of the male drug trafficker. However, there are women traffickers such as Melissa Margarita Calderón Ojeda, known as “La China” (The Chinese woman), who counter the stereotype that only males are drug traffickers. La China is known to have been a subunit leader of the Dámaso cartel which is part of the Sinaloa cartel. The Dámaso cartel is known to have been involved in the first prison escape of El Chapo. La China first became involved with drug trafficking through her first boyfriend Erick Dávalos Von Borstel. However, Von Borstel was killed by “El Grande,” and later El Grande was also the one who took over her leadership role in the Dámaso cartel (Staufenberg). Afterwards, with her new boyfriend Héctor Pedro Camarena Gómez, known as “El Chino,” they formed an alliance against El Grande.

Since then, El Grande and El Chino have been arrested and imprisoned for their many crimes. El Chino, to reduce his sentence gave away information revealing La China's crimes, as she had been involved in the assassination of over 150 individuals in the past ten years and is currently in prison for her crimes (Staufenberg).

Javier Rosas, a corridista, composed a corrido about La China released on October 14, 2014 and before the arrest of La China on September 22, 2015. The corrido, titled "En la sierra y en la ciudad 'La China,'" is clearly directed towards La China (see appendix, pages 104-107). Since the release of the corrido, many corridistas have covered the corrido and released their own versions. It is rare when corridos are written about women. Usually, corridos that involve women deal with the sexualization of women or their wifely duties. The corrido not only counters that the idea that drug trafficking is only for males, but that women are able to liberate themselves from a society that views them as only capable of being a mother and wife. Since drug trafficking is dominated by males, it is considered unlikely that a woman would become a drug trafficker. However, La China worked her way up in the drug cartel system, reaching a high point when many individuals became aware of her and what she was doing.

The corrido "En la sierra y en la ciudad 'La China,'" showcases La China as someone no one should mess with. The corrido portrays her as someone who has worked hard to get to where she is. The first stanza (see appendix, page 104) opens up with La China arriving at an important reunion in a Cheyenne pick-up truck. The windows of the Cheyenne are dark, and no one can see inside. This stanza showcases the mystery surrounding La China, driving a Cheyenne which is something seen as unlikely for a woman to drive. The second stanza (see appendix, page 104) details how the Cheyenne's

door has opened, and one can observe a distinguished lady in heels getting out of the vehicle without a hurry. Again, La China is seen as a unique figure as there are few publicly known women in drug trafficking. Additionally, La China dresses in a very feminine manner, wearing dresses instead of trying to hide from the public by wearing manly clothes. La China's unique way of dressing and of arriving at places caught the attention of those securing the safety of the meetings that were occurring.

In the third stanza, (see appendix, page 104), the corridista, talks directly to the listener, telling them that this corrido is different from others because it is written for all women and is about a particular brave lady. The corridista also tells the audience that this corrido is written for women instead of men. "La China" is a particularly brave lady because she stands out in the drug trafficking scene. This corrido counters the stereotype that women have it made in Mexico by serving only as a mother and wife. In most instances some brave women will decide that marriage is not for them and will seek other choices. In this instance, La China represents a woman who decides to pursue drug trafficking as a way to obtain money. Even though La China is a woman, that does not mean that her life has been different from the rest. La China like many other Mexicans, struggled to make a living with a normal day job. Drug trafficking allows her to provide for her family. The fourth stanza (see appendix, page 105) says that wherever La China goes, whether in the mountains or in the city, she is respected. The writer asks the listener who said women couldn't be drug traffickers. The corridista also tells listeners what happens when individuals encounter her. No matter where La China goes, her name is respected because of what she is capable of doing. No one, as the corrido advances, should therefore doubt the capability of women.

The fifth stanza (see appendix, page 105) reveals that La China has accomplished all her work by herself and that she was not seen as competition to other drug traffickers. However, the lack of help from others because she was a woman leads her to become more ambitious, surpassing the amount of murders and drug trafficking others had committed. Although she is a murderer and drug trafficker, she also helped her own community. This stanza counters the ability of a female to succeed in a male-dominated field. Although trafficking drugs is a bad choice, it was her way out of the economic situation she was in. Since the government is not there to help the community, drug traffickers rise to the occasion and broker a peace deal with the community. If for any reason the police decide to investigate the drug lord, the community will say they know nothing, out of respect. These communities receive goods, and drug traffickers claim territory. As she became more widely known in the drug trafficking scene, she became associated with other drug traffickers. One of her acquaintances is the leader of Navojoa, a city in Sinaloa. The next line in the stanza is a shout-out to La China from Javier, the corridista who acknowledges that he is for La China. The shoutout serves as a way to let La China know that listeners see that what she is doing for the community. The sixth stanza (see appendix, page 105) discusses how powerful La China and those around her are. The corrido tells listeners that she has brothers and friends who all have some sort of power. La China showcases style and is seen as a star who will continue to rise in the drug trafficking scene.

The seventh stanza (see appendix, page 105) in the corrido has an encoded verse. Drug traffickers use code names, and here the message is thanking Salazar for once saving La China. The message is followed with three numbers, 01, 05, and 04 which can

mean different types of things, such as a date or coordinate points. The stanza ends with the corrido saying that there in Temoris, a town in Chihuahua, she will navigate without rest, by being able to do whatever she pleases. The eighth stanza (see appendix, page 105) describes how, for many, money is life; however, La China moves it to suit herself, like by betting big figures on horseracing. Being able to have a significant amount of money allows drug traffickers to do whatever they please. The large amount of money allows the drug trafficker to be paid or gotten rid of. At this point the listener can see that La China has become a very powerful woman in the drug trafficking scene. She's respected and feared by many individuals. The ninth stanza (see appendix, page 106) tells listeners that she has fun with her friend Cristina. In the end, it does not matter if she wins or loses, as the celebration for her goes on and on. Javier, the corridista, is on her side. The corrido ends by repeating the first and second stanza (see appendix, pages 106-107). The corrido serves as an instance of a counterstory as La China becomes a top female in the male-dominated trafficking scene who had to work even harder to obtain the positions she had in the trafficking scene. Whereas males in most cases are automatically respected because of their gender, La China had to earn the respect of her workers.

Following the release of this corrido, the corridista Javier Rosas was a victim of attempted murder for the second time. The first time happened December 2014 when an individual entered the venue, Dubai Club located in Durango, Durango, Mexico, and shot ten times (Fenomeno Studios). Luckily, Rosas was safely escorted away, and the audience was sent home. The most recent attempt on his life occurred on March of 2015 as he was leaving a hotel to go to another concert. In an interview with Pepe Garza, Rosas recollects that he noticed that their car was being followed and saw the first bullet

hit and break the rear window (Fenomeno Studios). The driver and one of the passengers died on the scene. Rosas was shot at 20 times and was transported to a hospital. The police identified the killer as a murderer sent by an enemy cartel of La China's because of the corrido Rosas wrote praising La China (Fenomeno Studios). Rosas' willingness to write and sing the corrido demonstrates that he knew he would be attacked. Rosas wrote the corrido to praise La China and to show what she has done for the people, thereby countering what other drug traffickers and government say that they do. Instead of helping the community, corrupt people working in the government keep the money for themselves.

Narcocorridos can be interpreted in many ways. There are different types of narcocorridos such as those that tell the contextual story behind drug traffickers and those written about a specific drug trafficker. La China falls under the category of a corrido written for a specific drug trafficker. By showcasing the economic struggle La China faced, the corrido counters the idea that drug trafficking is a choice all traffickers make willingly. These corridos bring an awareness of what is happening in states where people do not want to go near to where cartels operate, fearing death. Narcocorridos are also used to show others what is going on in the drug trafficking scene.

These corridos will help people become aware of their own situation and what a corrupt government will do in response. In most cases, a corrupt government begins an investigation, but a couple of days later, the investigation is left unfinished. Corridos like these make individuals question those in authority and create a reason for individuals to seek change in those who makes up their government. Corridos like these also effect social change by inspiring many to conduct protests against those in government working

against them. As more individuals get involved and see what is happening, change can possibly begin to occur. If no one does anything, then there is no change, and individuals will continue living in fear and causing others to lose their lives. Corridos therefore try to get these types of messages to the public.

In the following chapter I will be going over event outcome corridos, which are corridos written over recent news. Event outcome corridos are a resource that many individuals use to gather information. Many listeners of corridos believe in everything told in a corrido. Thus, event outcome corridos serve as a way for individuals to cope about deaths or certain events happening around them. I will be analyzing two corridos, “La última llamada” (“The Last Call”), (see appendix, pages 108-109) by Yariel Roaro and “El corrido del Coronavirus” (“The Ballad of the Coronavirus”, (see appendix, pages 110-112) by Los Tres Tristes Tigres.

IV. EVENT OUTCOME CORRIDOS

Corridos are made for every type of life event and can include any contemporary issue the world is facing to ease the nerves of individuals. These events are made up of deaths of celebrities, world epidemics, diseases, unjustified deaths, and any other event. Like typical corridos, these event corridos are written to deliver news to the public. Most corridos counter the stereotype that corridos are a bad influence. In many instances listening to corridos is a way to grieve for someone. Corridos tell of the lives of many individuals and what they went through to get to where they are. The impact corridos have on individuals can be many, whether that be the distribution of political news or of death. Corridos that are written for individuals are heavily listened to because the corrido is intended for the audience of the individual whose life event is depicted. Even though many individuals do not have personal contact with famous individuals or certain events, individuals admire what they have done. On January 26, 2020, the death of Kobe Bryant, an American professional basketball player, affected multiple communities.

Kobe Bryant was well known in Latino communities since the beginning of his Lakers career in 1996. During this time the Lakers were the only NBA team to have Spanish broadcasted games. Thus began the increase of a Latino audience attending games. Later in 2001, Kobe would go on to marry Vanessa, a Latina. Kobe embraced their relationship in the public, as “together, the two embodied the thoroughly modern Southern California couple: multicultural, multilingual, aware of what they represented, and unashamed to express it” (Arellano). Vanessa would attend Kobe’s games, and they were a symbol for interracial marriages. The couple supported multiple events against the deportation of immigrants. In 2010 when the Arizona Senate Bill 1070 was introduced,

Vanessa wore a T-shirt to a Phoenix Suns vs Lakers game that said, “Do I Look Illegal?” (Arellano). The shirt was an effort to call attention that anyone that was not White was considered illegal. SB 1070 required every individual to carry an identification that proved they were in the US legally. This bill caused many individuals to become scared and not want to leave their homes. The fact that Vanessa and Kobe both displayed that effort against that law proved the support they had for the Latino community.

Kobe’s effort to continue as a role model increased daily as he learned to speak Spanish and would take time to speak to everyone. When he married Vanessa, he would visit her favorite restaurant, El Camino Real, located in Fullerton, California. Throughout the years Kobe continued to visit and buy food from El Camino Real. So as to not call attention, Kobe would enter through the back door. Kobe formed connections with the employees there and asked to be treated as a normal customer. During one of his last interviews Kobe specifically thanked his Latino fans, “‘When I arrived [in Los Angeles] those fans were the fans that embraced me with the most passion,’ he said. ‘They mean everything to me’” (qtd in Arellano). Kobe was a humble individual who tried his best to help others. His effort to learn Spanish and other languages showed how much he cared about connecting with his Latinx fans. Kobe became a role model to many individuals across the world, and his death left a legacy.

When the announcement of his death spread throughout headlines, many fans went to show their condolences at the Staples Center. It was there where many fans grieved by bringing flowers, candles, jerseys, and art. The Latinx community showed their presence by having mariachi’s and bandas (bands) and singing songs, some of them being corridos. The songs sung by mariachi included songs usually sung at Latinx

funerals, such as “Amor eterno,” which translates to “Eternal Love” (ABC7). The bandas sang and played corridos about Kobe leaving a legacy or reaching heaven, such as “Un puño de tierra” which translates to “A Fist of Dirt” (Activoz Productions). The days after Kobe’s death, some fans began to write corridos for Kobe. A corrido is written for someone the individual cares about; in this case it was Kobe. There are many corridos written for Kobe; for instance, “El corrido de Kobe Bryant,” written by Charles Goose was a popular one. However, Goose only wrote the lyrics, as the instrumental was from Chalino Sánchez, a popular corridista. Yariel Roaro wrote and produced a corrido for Kobe, “La última llamada” (“The Last Call”), (see appendix, pages 108-109). Roaro’s corrido received a great deal of positive feedback from the Latinx community. Contrary to the other corridos being written for Kobe, Roaro’s corrido is from the point of view of Kobe to Vanessa. The point of view of Kobe gives the corrido a more heartbreaking feel because it is about saying goodbye to his family.

The corrido begins with a message from a previous interview Kobe had. In the interview Kobe describes how much his daughters and wife mean to him. The purpose of this message is to show the audience that this is “Kobe” singing. The first stanza (see appendix, page 108) begins with the corridista singing from Kobe’s point of view, saying that he would like to return in time and be able to kiss his wife Vanessa and return home.

Vanessa is not the only individual benefiting from this corrido, but also others who have lost a loved one. At some point most individuals lose someone they love and wish they could return. This is what the first stanza is saying, how one never knows when it will be the last time one sees someone one loves. This corrido was written as message for an outcome of love not to carry hatred or envy like the media like to portray. This

corrido thus carries the message of love and unity. When my family lost my uncle from my dad's side, for instance, it was very heartbreaking because we never got to say goodbye. We went from seeing him once a month to not seeing him anymore. His death was considered an impactful death; however, how long that is we do not really know. My uncle did not get to say goodbye to his wife or children, as they did not know that morning would be the last time they would see him. Many individuals, like my family, can identify with this corrido because it allows the voice of the dead to come to life.

The second stanza (see appendix, page 108) has the corridista realizing that returning home is not an option. The corridista realizes that he is gone and that there is no return from his trip. The only option left for him is to say goodbye to his loved ones. The thought of death faces many individuals and is something that everyone is destined to face. The stanza is the realization of the corridista knowing that he will not be able to see his family anymore. Not all corridos have a message of bad influence; however, individuals will keep stereotyping the situations of Mexican immigrants in the US unless they begin analyzing them. For many, corridos serve as a grieving mechanism that allows them to understand their emotions. Presenting this mechanism is what this corrido does, as it is telling the story of an individual coming to a realization of the end of their relationship with their family. The individual comes to a rapid realization that they will not be able to see their loved ones again, just like the death of my uncle caught us all by surprise. He used to be a heavy smoker and would swear he was not going to die from that, but it ended being true. Death can come to someone when they least expect it. Being unaware of the time of death is what makes death scary. If an individual could be prepared, then facing death might be easy.

Having one death in a family is hard enough, but having two or more at the same time can be even worse. The third stanza (see appendix, page 108) shows this tragic situation by having the corridista apologizing for taking his daughter with him. The corridista explains that he could not leave her because she was his best friend. The loss of two family members is tough on family members, although sadly, there is still hatred and racism, even though experiencing and facing death is something we all have in common. We do not know when our time will come, and corridos like these help us see what others experience. This corrido brings an awareness that death can take multiple individuals at the same time, not just one at a time. In this case, Kobe died alongside his daughter Gigi with whom he shared the love of basketball. Many families are united, and each member has their own way of caring for one another. My uncle left behind his wife and children; luckily, they were in their middle teen years and got to spend time with him. However, his death impacted them tremendously, and his absence has been present every day since his death.

When someone dies, they tend to leave family behind. In the fourth stanza, the corridista tells his wife to take care of his other three dolls—his children. He asks his wife to tell them how much he loved them and that they were his life. The corridista tells his wife to take care of his other three daughters, daughters who serve as a symbol of their love. The corridista tells his wife to remind them of how much he cared for them. We all have stories that have something like death in common. Most audiences are able to relate to this part of the corrido because it sends the message of caring for their own families after death. My dad, for instance, is constantly checking on my aunt and younger cousins to see how they are doing. It makes an individual wonder what would happen if

they themselves died.

Facing death and saying goodbye to their loved ones are a hard part of experiencing death. In the fifth and sixth stanzas, (see appendix, pages 108-109) the corridista says his last goodbyes. In the fifth stanza the corridista apologizes for leaving his wife by herself. He tells her that he has to hang up because his time has come. The sixth stanza has the corridista asking his wife to say goodbye to his parents and brothers [team players]. He tells her to tell them that he went to heaven and that he will continue to take care of them from there. All corridos end with a goodbye message from the corridista; however, this one is about a literal goodbye. It hits differently because there is no “see you later”. Corridos send a message with the intent of it being heard by an audience. The intent is for the audience to become aware of what is going on in the community through the corrido. Unlike many corridos, this corrido’s intent was to communicate how easily an individual can lose someone and of the heartbreak that comes with it. Others besides Kobe’s family can relate to what the corrido is saying. For instance, my uncle left behind many individuals who cared for him. His death impacted many individuals outside of our family. Many continue to remember him through music like this corrido. This corrido is specifically a farewell from Kobe, but it can be considered to be coming from any other individual in a similar situation.

There are many different types of corridos, and “La última llamada,” is an example of a death corrido. This type of corrido is written after someone who has passed away. The intent is to relive the individual’s life through the corrido and in most instances showcasing their life story. The corrido shows the individual’s family as well as the condolences for the family from the community. Some songwriters have had past

experiences where they relate to a current situation and compose a corrido about it.

Corridos written about individual deaths are not the only ones written about, as there are also corridos about events happening in the world. One of these instances is the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Corridos are written and sung to help ease the anxiety and/or pain of a community. If a corrido is written, then it reflects a way to communicate to others that they are not alone.

When news began that individuals in the US tested positive for COVID-19, it began a series of crises. Some individuals were taking the coronavirus as a joke, while others began stressing out at the thought of getting sick. At the beginning of March when officials said that some states were requiring people to quarantine, individuals had to stay at home, which caused anxiety for most. Those individuals that panicked were beginning to hoard essential items such as non-perishable food items, disinfectant, toilet paper, and water. This hoarding caused grocery stores to have empty shelves and led to limits being placed on particular items. By describing what happened after the media released the information on COVID-19, the corrido counters the effect media caused, with an increase in panic for many individuals. Many did not understand that as long as they continued to shop normally, there would be no food shortage. However, most did not listen, and it caused delay in stocking food at grocery stores. As most individuals were required to stay at home or work from home, anxiety increased. Individuals from the Latinx community began writing corridos about COVID-19 to bring laughter to others.

Los Tres Tristes Tigres is a trio comedy show on *YouTube*. They create stand-up routines, interactions with the public, and songs of humor, both original and parodies. The trio is made up of Jesús Gallardo (accordion and maracas), Erick Ibarra (bass), and

Pedro Palacios (guitar and voice), the founder, show writer, and composer of the trio. Los Tres Tristes Tigres have made a couple of parodies along with original songs regarding COVID-19. Their video of their original “El corrido del Coronavirus” (“The Ballad of the Coronavirus”) went viral and has almost 5 million views. The corrido covers current events regarding COVID-19 and speaks directly to the audience. It adds a sense of humor to the pandemic and metaphorically speaks to the hoarders. The corrido brings a sense of joy and an awareness about COVID-19 to the audience. Instead of sending a positive message, the media were advancing negative things which caused many individuals to begin hoarding items and causing a lack of supplies in stores.

The beginning of a corrido announces the audience or topic of the corrido. In “El corrido del Coronavirus,” the stanza starts (see appendix, page 110) with announcing how much the “fucking” Coronavirus has driven everyone crazy. This beginning is a way to let everyone know that they are not alone in panicking. The use of a curse word in the beginning announces that this corrido is supposed to represent the hatred the corridista has for the virus itself. The stanza allows the audience to feel the connection with the corridista.

The Coronavirus has impacted the way individuals go about their lives. The second stanza (see appendix, page 110) describes how individuals are panicking and that nobody is paying attention to what is happening. As Tom Hanks, a famous actor, had already been diagnosed with COVID-19, the audience can assume that they are already “screwed”. By describing how the media are portraying COVID-19, the corrido counters the stereotype that the media were telling individuals to remain calm and obey the restrictions.

Since COVID-19 caused the closure of many businesses and schools, the third stanza (see appendix, page 110) tells how things, such as classes, concerts, and Disneyland have been canceled or closed. The corridista tells how all of the closures are scaring him. The use of the word fear allows others to be able to relate to him. In most cases COVID-19 has been the first pandemic individuals have been a part of and which creates a sense of fear. This stanza allows individuals to see that they are not alone in this situation. Additionally, the closure of stores and the cancellation of events allows individuals know to take the pandemic seriously, which counters the effort being placed by the government or media. Instead, artists or celebrities have to advance a call-to-action to let the public know that COVID-19 is to be taken seriously and is not as a joke. The government failed to educate the public on how to handle COVID-19 and instead caused a rise in panic.

Some individuals are taking COVID-19 seriously, but others are not. The fourth stanza (see appendix, page 110) tells the audience how some continue to hug each other when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has instructed them not to. Some individuals believe nothing will happen and that the virus is a false narrative. The corridista brings information to those individuals by telling them how there are COVID-19 cases around the world and that the first case was in China. This information brings real-time facts about what is going on and brings an awareness to those who doubt it but who believe in what corridos have to say. Since corridos are known to introduce an awareness of current events, those who doubted COVID-19 may now realize that it should be taken seriously. By bringing in factual information, the corrido counters that the public was already aware of the right information regarding COVID-19.

It was not until the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic that individuals began to take it seriously. The fifth stanza (see appendix, page 111) is about COVID-19 being labeled as a pandemic and of individuals not understanding what a pandemic is. The corridista himself had to *Google* what a pandemic was because it sounded scary. By having to *Google* the word pandemic, the corrido counters that the media have indeed made an effort to explain the situation to the public. This stanza showcases how many individuals were unfamiliar with what a pandemic is. Individuals had to reach out to *Google* for more information regarding the pandemic. The government should have made more readily available factual information about the virus to the public.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided sanitization protocols for individuals. The sixth stanza (see appendix, page 111) calls attention to those who are not washing their hands to wash them. The corridista is telling individuals to take precautions because health is not a joke. If individuals do not take care of each other, then they will all be impacted by COVID-19. In the corridista's terms, they will be "fucked" because they will end up sick instead of staying well by taking the precautions necessary to stay healthy. This message is important because surprisingly many individuals were not washing their hands. By describing how individuals were not taking the prescribed health protocols, the corrido counters that the public be made aware of the high impact COVID-19 had on individuals. There were multiple handwashing tutorials on social media as well as how germs spread in individuals' hands. Individuals even found themselves arguing about the proper way to wash their hands.

COVID-19 affects individuals differently, ranging by age. The seventh stanza (see

appendix, page 111) says how COVID-19 is more dangerous to those who are old.

However, individuals should still be taking precautions by taking care of themselves and staying well protected. The stanza ends with a joke saying that some individuals are not old; they just look really “screwed up”. Be careful who an individual identifies as old because the individual could in fact be young. The corrido is educating the audience about how to care for the elderly as COVID-19 affects them the most.

The last stanza (see appendix, page 112) has the corridista reminding the audience to stay well informed and to remain calm. He continues with a joke saying that he does not understand the fuss over hoarding toilet paper. However, he says hoarding makes sense since when someone sneezes, everyone wants to “shit” themselves. The “El corrido del Coronavirus” was written to help ease the anxiety individuals had about COVID-19 and also to inform them of factual information regarding the pandemic. The corrido is about three minutes long, and within that time frame the audience was made aware of actions that they can take to prevent COVID-19. Those who were scared of COVID-19 can learn some ways of easing their anxiety.

For many individuals corridos are a way they express themselves. Corridos help stories be told and heard by different audiences. Corridos enable for individuals to connect with family and friends back home. The use of corridos allows for students to listen to stories otherwise left untold. The use of analyzing corridos can be impactful in the classroom. There are a lot of information students can learn from analyzing corridos, such as learning about their cultural background or the background of their peers. Analyzing corridos important because it allows students to become aware that their voice matters. In the following chapter I will be going over the pedagogy of corridos.

V. THE WRITING PEDAGOGY OF TEACHING CORRIDOS

Corridos can be used as a form of literacy for students who have had little experience reading in high school. Those students who come from underfunded school districts tend to be the ones with little experience with writing, as “students often find themselves entering college courses with an absence of prior knowledge, that is, a dearth of information or experience that would be helpful as they begin writing in college” (Yancey et al. 104). College composition students are often unaware that they can write about their own experiences in these situations. Although they might not have read the same books their wealthier peers did, their experience is still beneficial. The way they live impacts how they are going to see each other in the future. Entering a university for first generation students can be difficult. These students already feel a sense of non-belonging by being in an institution that is unfamiliar to them. Imagine entering a class where your peers are knowledgeable about the topic of discussion. Students need to realize how powerful their voice really is and how beneficial it can be for those who come after them. Analyzing corridos can help composition students realize that they are all similar in many ways. Corridos can help bring students together to begin having conversations. Corridos as counterstories allow for students to bring in their personal experience to counter the stereotypes of first-generation college students. For most first-generation students, it is hard to go through the application and transfer process by oneself. Not many have access to support to apply to universities and scholarships to attend a university, if they even know about them.

As a transfer student myself, I feel the imposter syndrome every time I walk into a classroom. This feeling occurs because I was told when I was younger that I would not

make it to the university level, but look at me now. There are individuals out there that want their students to succeed and are willing to help. One of the ways instructors can help is by adjusting their syllabus to meet their students' needs. Mostly everyone listens to music, as music is a source of comfort for many. One can walk around the university campus and see the number of students with headphones on. Some might be blocking out the passersby, but the rest are listening to music. Imagine bringing music into the first-year composition classroom and the impact it can have on students. Music is something students have been listening to for a long time. Being able to gather the research that goes behind music can enable students to get to know one another. Corridos are just the beginning. Corridos as ballads tell the story of an individual's life. They allow the audience to explore different situations happening around them. Additionally, corridos can create a space for individuals to engage in topics not usually discussed in academia. Corridos are one source of information students have access to. By analyzing corridos, students will be engaging the same analysis being processed when rhetorically analyzing other musical genres.

First-year writing students have previously been taught different ways of looking at writing. Their standard essay is a five-paragraph paper, with an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. The cause of this form of writing essays is the standardized testing that happens in US schools. The students are not allowed to write over something they enjoy. Instead, these students are pressured into writing a paper in a standard five-paragraph format. This approach causes students to come to hate writing or simply to think that writing is easy because an essay is only five paragraphs. As students walk into their college composition classrooms, they quickly realize that writing essays is not as

easy as it once seemed. The feedback provided on their essays causes a drastic change on how students begin to perceive college writing. Students are beginning to crossover from high school to college level writing, and as Yancey et. al. state, their transition is mixed:

Whether students are border “guarding” or “crossing,” they draw on similar high school experiences. What this seems to mean for virtually all FYC students is that as students enter college writing classes, there’s not only prior knowledge providing context, but also an absence of prior knowledge, and in two important areas: (1) key writing concepts and (2) non-fiction texts that serve as models.

(108)

Some students are walking into the composition classroom with little to no prior knowledge about the non-fiction text they are going to be discussing in class. High school level reading tends to focus on imaginative literature, whereas in the college composition class, students begin to look at non-fiction scholarly work. First-year writing is about getting students to understand that no matter what their level of essay writing is, they can improve upon it. It is about getting students to enjoy writing essays and not fearing it. One of the ways to seek this improvement is by allowing them to write about topics they are interested in, such as music. There are all types of music, and allowing students to explore one specific genre can open up further discussions. Students can therefor take the opportunity of taking what they have learned outside the classroom and writing about it.

There has been research conducted on how students interpret general writing as a form of expression instead seeing it as source of scholarly work. Yancey et al. in their book, *Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*, collected data from teenagers regarding how they view writing, and they find that “given that many

of these genres—emails and texts, for example—are composed to specific audiences and in that sense seem to be highly rhetorical, it was likewise surprising that every one of the students, when asked to define writing, used a single word: *expression*” (111). Students do not see the impact words can have besides just being expressive. Their writing can be used to serve a purpose, such as researching and writing a paper about something they care about. This piece of writing can be read by others and further the research in that specific area in their field of interest. Their writing can begin with questions to be asked. However, students thinking of writing as only a source of expression disables them from seeing it as holding scholarly value. Using corridos in the college composition classroom as a teaching topic can allow students to begin seeing how the use of writing can be interpreted differently. Students can begin seeing that writing is more than just about expressing themselves and can instead see it as a form of dialogue and as a production of knowledge. If students begin seeing that writing does not necessarily mean a standardized paper, but can instead see it as an analysis of a corrido, it can help ease their fear of writing. Conducting an analysis of a corrido will allow some students to bring their personal background into the classroom. Within the analysis students will write about their experience and how it defies certain stereotypes made about them.

However, there might be those composition students who are not interested in the topic of corridos within a writing class. Corridos allow for deeper exploration and analysis of what the composer is trying to convey. The music industry has many different ways of awarding artists with the best-selling album or songs. A song does not just hit the top Billboard 100 because it is good. The song has to have some sort of message within it that allows its audience to listen to it over and over again. The message sent through the

song is the important piece of writing within it. The song becomes popular because of individuals listening to it. It is difficult to obtain a top 100 song for many artists, but it is one of their goals. There are also the millions of fans that provide messages through tweets or comments on social media that allow the artist to see the impact the song had. The song is more than just the instrumental but also has lyrics being sung. The instruments and the lyrics come together to give a message. Similarly, students who transition from high school to college struggle to apply the new terms being taught to them.

Students who have taken AP or Honors courses believe they have everything figured out because high school taught them how to do a certain type of writing. However, Yancey et al. interviewed different types of first-year students about how they take in new information. One of these students, Eugene, thought he had most of the knowledge necessary to succeed in a college writing classroom:

Eugene exhibited a three-part pattern that he continued throughout the TFT [Teaching for Transfer] course and into the next term: (1) he confused and conflated the literary terms of high school and the literacy and rhetorical terms and practices of college; (2) he continued to believe that “there wasn’t a lot more to learn;” and (3) he relied on his prior knowledge of writing, one located chiefly in the role of the unconscious in writing process. (113)

Eugene was taking in new information and comparing it to that learned in high school. However, most of the information learned in high school does not necessarily apply to the college writing setting. Certain terms are taught differently and with a deeper understanding. Students like Eugene need to become aware of the classroom setting and

see that they are in a setting where their writing is seen as scholarly. Students are taking this time to develop their writing skills by taking what was learned in high school and applying it to college level writing. Corridos can help in this transitioning process.

Corridos can be used as a way for students to learn to use new key terms or concepts used in composition. The student can take the corrido and break it down into sections to better understand the message, as “students would understand writing differently and better were a course organized through key terms or concepts rather than through a set of assignments or processes” (Yancey et al. 43). By taking a corrido as a subject of writing, students are both learning about another individual’s culture and how the writer is breaking down the song. Students can begin by exploring what the rhetorical situation of the corrido is, why the writer decided to include certain words or leave others out, and what caused the writer to write the corrido and who the audience is. These types of questions allow the student to use their critical thinking skills to interpret the message.

Doug Brent discusses how students obtain their rhetorical education through their school and personal life, stating that “a rhetorical education is the sum of institutionalized practices in the postsecondary education system that help a student develop rhetorical knowledge and skill, whether or not those practices are located in specific ‘writing’ courses” (qtd. in Yancey et al. 559). Brent describes the personal and non-personal aspects students are bringing into the classroom. Writing allows students to explore different situations and enables them to learn new ways of thinking. As students’ critical thinking skills begin to develop, they are quickly able to see what is happening between the texts and/or their current situations. Students can begin to see how writing affects their daily lives.

Writing is everywhere one goes, and just the way one interprets it causes us to critique it. Writing is a developmental skill one keeps improving on over time, as no one is a perfect writer. Most students are unaware that their writing does not need to be perfect. Their writing just has to have a type of meaning for them. This way, the student is able to develop specific research in the area. Music provides a type of rhetorical education as the radio is always playing somewhere. Music surrounds us and affects us in some way, and by exploring corridos, one can learn new ways of thinking. Corridos are often counterstories about an individual's life, and this part affects how the message of the corrido is interpreted by the audience.

Unfortunately, students still experience racism in academia. There are certain English instructors that will remain against their students' voice and experience being an educational source for first-year composition students. Through Critical Race Theory, counterstory is a source that works to liberate those students of oppression. There are instructors that believe a student's story needs the use of theory to be proven factual. However, a student's personal background is what defines the student's identity and their wanting to be successful. There are many efforts first generation college students are going through to get to where they are. Not everyone is fortunate to have everything handed to them.

Analyzing corridos will help first generation college writing students in understanding that their voice in academia matters. Students should not allow themselves to hold back on entering the conversation. Analyzing corridos allows students to become aware of problems happening around them. Through corridos students become aware that they can use their own voice to help others like them. In other instances, non-first-

generation students become aware of issues they did not know prior to analyzing corridos. These students can take what they learn in the analysis and use their voice and resources to help those whose voices have been silenced.

There are many reasons why individuals can learn literacy through corridos. In “Art of the Contact Zone,” Mary Louise Pratt discusses how individuals learn literacy through what they see in their everyday lives. An example Pratt gives is that of a child interested in baseball. The child wanting to learn everything about baseball will begin to want to read and research the sport. Likewise, corridos can be used in the same way. If individuals are interested in corridos, they will listen to them and learn through corridos. Corridos give individuals a voice through which they hear their stories being told. Pratt uses the term “safe houses” as a place where a student is comfortably able to share out loud their thoughts to others from different communities. She states, “We used the term [safe houses] to refer to social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression” (40). Corridos can be used as a source to bring trust to the classroom, a trust perceived through the way students react to the stories their classmates share. Corridos are very powerful in the messages they convey. Through the use of analysis, students become aware of the importance corridos have to individuals, a source individuals use to gather news and information that they know. In other instances, corridos serve as a way to communicate with family members across the border. If the individual is unable to communicate with their family, then the family has a source they can listen to, a source that gives them the motivation to learn that their loved one is safe.

In the composition classroom setting the students would listen to a corrido blindly along with translation of the lyrics. This means that the student will listen to the corrido and try to grasp as much information. This introduction to the corrido will help students understand their current standpoint on corridos. In the second class the instructor will conduct an analysis of the prior corrido in class. The analysis will enable students to see what exactly is happening within corridos and why they are important. As an assignment students will be asked to write a rhetorical analysis on a corrido of their choice. Students will have the option to select a corrido from any genre. This option will enable them to find a genre they are interested in the most. Students not accustomed listening to corridos will be provided a list of corridos along with interviews of the corridista. These resources will enable the students to get a preview of the corrido before they dive into the analysis. Through the process of analyzing a corrido students will learn the importance and impact corrido's have in communities. As a second assignment students will be asked to write their own corrido about any topic. This will enable students to feel a deeper connection similar to how corridista's feel when writing corridos. This process will make students think about how they will get their message across. As a follow-up assignment the students will be asked to provide a short analysis of their experience writing their corrido. The purpose of this assignment is to see their growth in analyzing corridos since the start.

Students will learn and experience first-hand how to analyze and interpret a corrido. Corridos are used to showcase problems occurring in the US and Mexico. With the experience of conducting an analysis, students will be able to adapt the same analytical design to other music genres. As Pratt discusses in her article if the student becomes invested in a certain topic, in this case music, the student will continue to learn

more about it (33). Students will then be able to continue conducting analyses in other music genres. Although maybe not as in-depth as the ones done in class, the student will be able to use their prior knowledge to decipher a song's message or to digest what other artists are referencing in their music or why they have decided to stick with one constant theme. As seen with corridos, subgenres deal with different ways society views individuals. For instance, narcocorridos are seen as a bad influence for individuals. However, most narcocorridos are created to speak out against the government.

The traditional essay is then replaced by students writing an analysis of a corrido. Students then try their best to decipher what the corrido is about. Through the process students learn what the corridista had to go through to come up with the corrido. In many instances, if the corrido is about defying a certain individual or group, the corridista's life is endangered. However, the corrido might reveal facts students were unaware of and can use their voice to do something about it. It is the time and process used to analyze and interpret the corrido that are important. Students have to concentrate on the details being provided. Students can come to discover something that no one else in their class knew.

First-generation Mexican-descended college students will likely relate the most to immigration corridos. They give these first-generation students a place where they can view themselves. It is important for these students to realize that their background is important and that their voice matters. There is literacy in music that helps individuals become aware of what is going on in the world. Music is a place where many receive important information that helps them learn important literacy skills. Music is a source many individuals have access to in Mexico and in the US. Corridos thus serve as daily reminders of what their work and determination have helped them achieve, as there are

many individuals that have left their home in order for their children to succeed. If one of their children happens to enter the university as a first-generation college student, they will be able to realize the importance corridos have. In instances like these, students will be able to bring in their experience and counter the stereotypes being said about them. For many individuals, attending a university is a big deal because it demonstrates the hard-won effort they have gone through just to get there. Corridos can serve as a vehicle that will open up their analytical literacy skills, skills which will help them succeed in the university but also well beyond it.

VI. CONCLUSION

Corridos are intended to be used to help individuals become aware of what is happening in their communities. They open a great deal of space for questions and bring awareness to individuals of the world around them. Compared to other forms of discourse, corridos are an easier genre for individuals to receive information. The messages are easier to listen and understand. The different types of corridos allow corridos to be used in different ways and are directed to certain communities. Corridistas write corridos with the intention of being heard by certain communities or individuals. Corridos can be used to bring communities together or to call attention to many important issues surrounding them.

Corridos bring awareness of literacy to their audience, as the audience is able to decipher and comprehend what the corrido is about. With the use of corridos, individuals can come together and allow for conversations to be created. The fear some individuals in certain communities have can be written in a corrido. Corridistas write their corridos to help out their communities and speak out about what is happening around them. Those corridos which make it to the airwaves are then heard by the audience. Depending on the feedback of the audience, the corrido can become prohibited from airing. The prohibition means the corrido was heard by the intended individual and audience, thus creating and bringing attention to a current issue. Prohibited corridos can be from many subgenres of corridos, such as immigration corridos, narcocorridos, and event outcome corridos. Teachers of college composition can use these subgenres in their classes, and students can analyze them to develop their important literacy skills.

Immigration corridos build a sense of belonging for the intended audience. In

many instances, those who have immigrated to US leave family members behind. These specific circumstances allow individuals like them to be able to relate to the immigration corrido. The corrido can be the voice of immigrants directed to their family back home. Many immigrants prefer not to talk about their journey to the US. Corridos can be interpreted by the individuals and family members to see how they are feeling. This identification lets the family have some sort of peace by relating to the individuals depicted in corridos. In other instances, individuals who have not experienced immigrating to the US or leaving family behind can hear real-life stories about the lives of immigrants. They can listen to and analyze the songs through English translations and get to know other individuals' experiences. Most immigration corridos counter stereotypes given to immigrants, such as immigrants taking over jobs or crossing the border illegally. However, plenty of analysis goes into the process of whether an individual should cross the border. The individuals who decide to cross the border make the decision because working in the US will provide a better future for their families. By analyzing immigration corridos, students can see how immigrants learn literacy through corridos. Immigrants have to learn a lot of literacy skills when coming to the US, such as a new language and how to communicate with others.

Narcocorridos, a modern subgenre of corridos, tend to tell the story of why narcotraffickers become narcotraffickers. These individuals live in impoverished conditions and have little to no way of obtaining an education, much less of receiving a proper education. Living in these conditions causes individuals to seek an easy way out, such as by becoming a drug trafficker. However, becoming a drug trafficker comes with pros and cons. Narcotraffickers are able to give back to their communities by giving

away money to communities and by funding schools. Narcotraffickers still are not legally allowed to sell drugs, so they are constantly hunted by the government. In many instances, narcotraffickers choose to buy government silence, but not all government workers take the offer. Conducting an analysis of these corridos can help bring attention to the reason why these narcotraffickers become narcotraffickers. Many do not have any other career choice and selling drugs is an easy way out of poverty. Individuals can learn the benefits that come being a narcotrafficker; and even though their career path is not legal, it suffices them that their family and community are well taken care of. Even if caught by the government a narcotrafficker already has connections to many individuals that will help out their family. Giving back to others is a way those individuals thank the narcotrafficker. Through an analysis of narcocorridos, students can learn about the impact narcotrafficker's have in communities. In most instances, narcotraffickers are the ones providing aid instead of the government.

Narcotraffickers also have enemies who are also drug traffickers. Tensions nevertheless arise between narcotraffickers because each one of them wants to rise to the top. Depending on the amount of support a narcotrafficker receives, that support is what makes them rise. If the narcotrafficker becomes well known, then he/she becomes another narcotrafficker's enemy. Narcotraffickers have corridos written about them and cause them to get noticed by an audience. Narcocorridos can also serve as a way of sending an encoded message to a narcotrafficker's enemy. All it takes is for the corrido to be heard by a few members of the community for them to inform the community of the problem that is happening. This knowledge can cause others to seek help from other communities or simply prepare themselves for what is about to happen. If the corrido was

directed towards the community, individuals there can decide to move to another place temporarily. Those deciding to stay then have to figure out how to protect themselves. Narcotraffickers will take matters into their own hands to go about solving the problem depicted in the corrido.

In other cases, corridos also serve as a way to cope about a loss or to relieve anxiety. Event outcome corridos are corridos are written about a recent death or an issue happening in the world. These types of corridos serve to help keep the memory of the deceased alive. Corridos tend to be written after a celebrity's death and help with the grief of those affected, as death is something that all individuals eventually deal with. Many individuals are able to relate to these types of corridos. The grieving process does not really end for many, but affected individuals learn to live their lives.

If the issue is about a world pandemic, then parody corridos are written to relieve anxiety for the audience, as corridos can calm the audience and make them think the problem will end. These types of corridos are written to deliver news otherwise left untold or delivered in confusing ways. The corrido is able to tell individuals what really is happening and what precautions they should take. Analyzing these corridos can thus serve as a way to see what messages are held within them that in turn allow the audience to relate to them. There can be many encoded messages in the corrido that the listener might not know. Conducting an analysis can help reveal the true meaning of why the corrido is so powerful. The interpretation of the corrido can allow the student to become aware of how the corridista felt about the loss of the person depicted. Doing an in-depth analysis will allow students to come to realize how powerful a corrido can be.

Using corridos in college composition classes can help create a sense of belonging

for students who feel out of place in college. There are many different situations college students are experiencing, whether that be issues in their daily life or a loss. Corridos can also be used as a way to listen to another person's perspective on their issue and can be a source of communication for students to realize they are not alone. On the other hand, seeing different interpretations students make of a corrido showcases their own perspectives. Students can then see how their lives are similar or different.

Analyzing corridos gives the students an opportunity to write something different rather than a traditional essay by giving students the ability to focus on the issue arising in the corrido and being able to make connections. Students who have not heard corridos before are given the chance to enter another culture and see what others experienced. Analyzing corridos give others a way to see outside their own world and see the reality that others live in. For current many college students, analyzing corridos can be eye-opening as they learn about things others have to go through.

For those finding it hard to talk about their lives, analyzing a corrido about an event can also be beneficial. Event outcome corridos are written to help ease the anxiety that may come by individuals. These types of corridos are written about events happening around the world. Students can learn how to use their voice to speak about certain issues arising. Students can also learn to see how the corridista goes about delivering the news to their audience. Comparing the way the media portray the events versus the corrido, students can then see how other individuals learn about news through corridos. The many diverse issues being held within corridos are very powerful.

Corridos allow others to see their lives reflected in a piece of writing that is otherwise left unknown. They bring together individuals because their life stories are

being heard. Corridos allow family members to be brought together to analyze corridos and see the relation of the two. Analyzing corridos allows others to comprehend the messages within them, and allowing individuals to go through and analyze the corrido allows for a further investigation of why the corrido is important.

Within my thesis I decided to share parts of my personal story because it allows others to see the importance corridos have for individuals, especially if they have firsthand experience with immigration. In my case, immigration corridos hold deep value as I am able to relate to them the most because of my family background with immigration. Immigration corridos portray my family's story and provide my family with a feeling of importance. Every time an immigration corrido is played, my family always pays attention to it or sings along with the corrido. Corridos allowed my family to learn, and they allowed my parents to be able to cope with the transition of bringing their family to a new country. Corridos have been there for my family since before I was born, and they now allow me to give my family a voice. Introducing corridos into a college composition class will help develop students' literacy skills.

APPENDIX SECTION

“La jaula de oro” – Los Tigres
del Norte

“The Golden Cage” – The Tigers from
the North

Aquí estoy establecido

I am established here

En los Estados Unidos

In the United States

Diez años pasaron ya

Ten years have passed

En que cruce de mojado

Since I crossed as a “wetback”

Papeles no he arreglado

With no proper documents

Sigo siendo un ilegal

I am still an illegal

Tengo mi esposa y mis hijos

I have my wife and children

Que me los traje muy chicos

Whom I brought too young

Y se han olvidado ya

And they have already forgotten

De mi México querido

Of my beloved Mexico

Del que yo nunca me olvido

Which I can never forget

Y no puedo regresar

And cannot return to

De que me sirve el dinero
Si estoy como prisionero
Dentro de esta gran nación
Cuando me acuerdo hasta lloro
Y aunque la jaula sea de oro

What is money good for?
If I live like a prisoner
In this great nation
When I remember I even cry
Although this cage is made of gold
It still remains a prison

“Escúchame hijo
¿Te gustaría que regresáramos a
vivir México?

Listen son
Would you like to go back and live in
Mexico?

“Whatcha talkin’ about dad?
I don’t wanna go back to
Mexico, no way dad”

“What are you talking about dad?
I don’t want to go back to Mexico
No way dad”

Mis hijos no hablan conmigo
Otro idioma han aprendido y
olvidado el español
Piensan como Americanos
niegan que son Mexicanos
Aunque tengan mi color

My kids do not speak to me
Another language they have learned and
they have forgotten Spanish
They think like Americans
they deny that they are Mexicans
Though they have my skin color

De mi trabajo a mi casa	From work to my house
Yo no sé lo que me pasa	I do not know what is going on with me
Que aunque soy hombre de hogar	Although I am the head of the household
Casi no salgo a la calle	I almost never go out
Pues tengo miedo que me hallen	Because I am afraid they will find me
Y me puedan deportar	And be able to deport me
De que me sirve el dinero	What is money good for?
Si estoy como prisionero	If I live like a prisoner
Dentro de esta gran nación	Inside this great nation
Cuando me acuerdo hasta lloro	When I remember I even cry
Y aunque la jaula sea de oro	Although this cage is made of gold
No deja de ser prisión	It still remains a prison

“Corrido de Juanito” – Calibre
50

“Juanito’s Corrido” – Caliber 50

Casi 14 años
Sin ir a mi tierra
A donde nací

It has been almost 14 years
Since I was in my homeland
Where I was born

Ya todo ha cambiado
Le ruego a mi Dios
No se olviden de mí

Now everything’s different
And I pray to God
They never forget me

Se murió mi madre
Y dice mi padre
Que ya está muy viejo
Y no quiere venir
Y yo sin poder ir
Y yo sin poder ir

My mother died
and my father says
that he is really old now
and he doesn’t want to come
and I can’t go there
and I can’t go there

Trabaje y trabaje
Tengo muchos días
Que no miro el sol

Working and working
I have many days
Since I last saw the sun

Mis hijos son grandes

Y no les entiendo

No hablan Español

My sons are grown-ups now

I can't understand them

They don't speak Spanish

No han sentido miedo

Aquel que no ha visto

Una camioneta

De migración

O una deportación

O una deportación

You haven't felt fear

If you have never seen

A van

from immigration

Or a deportation

Or a deportation

De botitas y sombrero

Me miran seguido

Por el freeway

Wearing my little boots and my hat

They see me often

By the freeway

Jardinero o cocinero

Igual me la rifo

Dirán anyways

Gardener or cook

I do it all the same

They'll say "anyways"

Y aunque me miren pa' bajo

La cara levanto

Empinándome un bote

And even if they look down at me

I keep my head up

While I drink from a [beer] can

Como quiera soy amigo

Y también Mexicano

Mexicano hasta el tope

Either way I'm a good friend

and a Mexican

Mexican to the bone

[Y con mucho cariño departe de

Calibre 50 corrido pa' toda la

raza]

[And with much care from Caliber 50

ballad for the entire race]

La vida no es fácil

Y menos acá

Lo que dicen no es cierto

Life is not easy

Much less here

What they say it's not true

Nomás de acordarme

Las miles de cruces

Que vi en el desierto

Just by remembering

The million of crosses

I saw in the desert

Las noches son tristes

Pensando y pensando

En los que se quedaron

Se me pasa el tiempo

Y en ver a mi viejo

Y en ver a mi viejo

The nights are sad

Thinking and thinking

About the ones who stayed behind

The time passes me by

And in seeing my old man

And in seeing my old man

Más que agradecido
Estoy con mi Dios
Por lo que me ha dado

More than grateful
I am with my God
For everything he has given me

Les mando un saludo
A todos mis primos
Mis tíos y hermanos

I send a hello
To all my cousins
My uncles and my brothers

Con los ojos tristes
Y paso cansado
Promete Juanito
Que va a visitarlos
Y poder abrazarlos
Y poder abrazarlos

With sad eyes
And tired steps
Juanito promises
He will go visit them
And be able to hug them
And be able to hug them

De botitas y sombrero
Me miran seguido
Por el freeway

Wearing my little boots and my hat
They see me often
By the freeway

Jardinero o cocinero
Igual me la rifo
Dirán anyways

Gardener or cook
I do it all the same
They'll say "anyways"

Y aunque me miren pa' bajo

La cara levanto

Empinándome un bote

And even if they look down at me

I keep my head up

while I drink from a [beer] can

Como quiera soy amigo

Y también Mexicano

Mexicano hasta el tope

Either way I'm a good friend

and a Mexican

Mexican to the bone

“El karma” – Ariel Camacho y
Los Plebes del Rancho

“The Karma” – Ariel Camacho and the
Guys from the Ranch

Nací en el agua caliente
Después vine a Culiacán
Ahí me metí en el ambiente
Buscando billete para progresar

I was born in hot water
Then I came to Culiacán
There I got into the business
Looking for money to progress

Se me empezó a ver dinero
Los Ángeles trafiqué
Pero nunca falta un perro
Que mirando el hueso no quiera
morder

I began to see money
I trafficked in Los Angeles
But there’s always a dog
That sees the bone and wants a bite

Querían un secuestro exprés
Con mis hijas de rehén
A mi familia el precio
No vendrá un pendejo a quererlo
poner

They wanted an express kidnapping
With my daughters as hostages
A price on my family
No dumbass will come to place

Deseaba estar yo también
Pa' podérmelos comer
Veo que me tenían respeto
Sabían que con pleitos no iban a
poder

I wanted to be there too
So I could eat them
I saw that they respected me
They knew by fighting they had no
chance

No tarde pa' dar con ellos
Y esa deuda fui a cobrar
Dije de una vez al cuello
Por bravo ese perro lo voy
amarrar

I didn't take long to get to them
And that debt I went to collect
I said at once by the neck
For being fierce that dog I will tie up

Llegue tumbando la puerta
El agua clara no está
Ya me tenían la respuesta
El cuatro en la mesa me vine a
topar

I came knocking down the door
The water is not clear
They already had my response
The four on the table I came against

Mi browning hice accionar
Pero no me dio pa' más
Me contesto un R-15
Esos proyectiles fueron mi final

I made my browning actuate
But it didn't give me for more
An R-15 answered me
Those projectiles were my end

El karma viene y se va

También se escucha por ahí

Que ese R-15 descansa

Nadie de la parca se puede

escapar

The karma comes and goes

Also it is heard around there

That the R-15 rests

No one from parcae can escape

“En la sierra y la ciudad (La China)”
– Javier Rosas

“In the Mountains and the City (The
China)” – Javier Rosas

A una reunión importante
Va llegando una Cheyenne
Los cristales muy oscuros
No se alcanza a ver quien viene

At an important reunion
Arriving is a Cheyenne
The windows are dark
Can't see who's coming

Se abrió aquella puerta
Sin ninguna prisa
Se observo aquella mujer tan
distinguida
La vi bajar de aquella troca en
zapatillas

The door opened
Without a hurry
One observed the distinguished woman
I saw her get off from the truck in heels

Señoras y señores
Ahora el canto es diferente
Ahora va pa las mujeres
Pa una dama muy valiente

Ladies and gentlemen
Now the song is different
Now it is for the women
For a very brave lady

Donde llega se respeta lo que diga	Where she arrives her word is respected
En la sierra y la ciudad yo soy la	In the mountains and the city I am the
China	China
Quien dijo que las mujeres no podían	Who said that women couldn't do it
A habido buenas y malas	There have been good and bad
Y a pesar de todo estamos	And despite everything we are here
Y ahora con una Buchanan	And now with a Buchanan
Yo la eh visto recordando	I have seen her remembering
Lo que tiene ella sola se lo ah ganado	What she has alone she has earned
Es mujer de las que pocas se han	A woman of whom few are achieved
logrado	The leader of Navojoa has her back
Del señor de Navojoa trae respaldo	
(Y ahí te va China y puro Javier Rosas	(This is for you China nothing but Javier
compadre)	Rosas compadre)
Tiene hermanos y amistades	She has brothers and friends
Del poder que dan apoyo	Of power who give support
Tiene estilo tiene estrella	She has style she has a star
Va pa arriba y va con todo	She is going up with everything

Gracias Salazar por haberme salvado	Thanks Salazar for saving me
01, 05 y 04	01, 05 and 04
Allá en Temoris navego sin descanso	There in Temoris I navigate without rest
Pa muchos el verde es vida	For many green is life
Y yo lo muevo a mi medida	And I move it to suit me
Y en carreras de caballos	And in horse racing
He apostado grandes cifras	I have bet big figures
Se divierte con Cristina que es su	She has fun with her friend Cristina
amiga	Win or lose the celebration goes on and
Gane o pierda que el festejo siga	on
y siga	Javier Rosas and his band liven it up
Javier Rosas y una banda lo	
amenizan	
A una reunión importante	At an important reunion
Va llegando una Cheyenne	Arriving is a Cheyenne
Los cristales muy oscuros	The windows are dark
No se alcanza a ver quien viene	Can't see who's coming

Se abrió aquella puerta

The door opened

Sin ninguna prisa

Without a hurry

Se observo aquella mujer tan
distinguida

One observed the distinguished woman

I saw her get off from the truck in heels

La vi bajar de aquella troca en
zapatillas

La última llamada – Yariel Roaro

The Last Call – Yariel Roaro

Ellos significan todo para mi
tener una esposa Latina es muy
significante

They mean everything to me and having
a wife that is Latina is significant

Quisiera regresar el tiempo
Para poderte besar una vez mas
Y decirte al rato regreso

I would like to return time
To be able to kiss you one more time
And tell you I will return later

Pero se que eso es imposible
Pues de este viaje no hay regreso
Solo queda despedirme

But I know that is impossible
Because there is no return from this trip
The only thing left is to say goodbye

Perdóname por llevarme a
nuestra hija
Pero no pude dejarla
Ella fue mi mejor amiga

Forgive me for taking our daughter
But I could not leave her
She was my best friend

Cuida bien de mis otras
muñequitas
Diles cuanto las ame
Diles que fueron mi vida

Take good care of my other dolls
Tell them how much I loved them
Tell them they were my life

Perdóname por dejarte sola

Y ya tengo que colgar

Ya se me llegó la hora

Forgive me for leaving you alone

And I have to hang up

My time has come

Despídeme de mis padres

Y también de mis hermanos

Diles que ya me fui al cielo

Para desde allá cuidarlos

Say goodbye from me to my parents

And to my brothers

Tell them I already went to heaven

To take care of them from up there

“El corrido del Coronavirus” –
Los Tres Tristes Tigres

El pinche Coronavirus
A todos sacó de quicio

La gente anda paniqueada
Ya nadie hace caso miso
Como ya le dio a Tom Hanks
Pos creen que ya valió Wilson

Ya no hay clases en escuelas
Cancelaron los conciertos
Ya cerraron Disneylandia
Esto me está dando miedo

Y hay quien dice que se abracen
Que no pasa nada no hay pedo
Hay casos en todo el mundo
Pero China fue el primero

“Coronavirus Ballad” – The Three Sad
Tigers

The fucking Coronavirus
It drove everyone crazy

People are panicking
Nobody pays attention
As Tom Hanks already got it
They think they are screwed

There are no classes in schools
Concerts are canceled
They closed Disneyland
This is scaring me

Some say to continue hugging
That nothing will happen it is all false
There are cases around the world
But China was the first

La OMS la declaró pandemia

Y les soy sincero

Yo lo tengo que Googlear

Porque suena bien culero

The WHO declared it a pandemic

And I will be sincere

I have to google it

Because it sounds scary

Lávense bien las manos

Enserio ya ni la friegan

Hay que tomar precauciones

Con la salud no se juega

Porque si no nos cuidamos

Puede que si valga madres

Wash your hands well

Seriously you all are messed up

We need to take precautions

Health is no joke

Because if we do not take care

Then we are all fucked

Dicen que es más peligroso

En los que ya están viejitos

Pero hay que cuidarnos todos

Hay que estar bien protegidos

Porque unos no están tan viejos

Pero se ven muy jodidos

They say it is more dangerous

In those who are old

But we all have to take care of ourselves

We have to be well protected

Some are not that old

But they look really screwed up

Hay que estar bien informados

Y hay que conservar la calma

No sé pa que tanto rollo

Pero pues tal vez lo hagan

Porque cuando alguien tose

Ahorita todos se cagan

We have to be well informed

And remain calm

I do not know why so many rolls

But the probably do need them

Because when someone coughs

Right now everyone shits themselves

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