
Musical Poetics of Solidarity: Truth-Telling and Counter-Narratives in Colombia's War-Peace Transition

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Resumen

This paper examines the multifaceted roles of Colombian corridos prohibidos (forbidden ballads) in articulating memory, truth, and identity within the context of Colombia's prolonged armed conflict. Focusing on *La Reina del Cartel*, a corrido composed by Teresita Diaz and recorded in 2005, the analysis reveals how musical narratives become vehicles for personal testimony, counter-narrative, and gendered resistance. Drawing on several years of ethnographic fieldwork between 2001 and 2023, this study explores how listeners and composers negotiate between factual truth and poetic license to forge spaces of remembrance and healing. In contexts where official truth-telling initiatives are limited by inflexible frameworks and the stark demarcation between victim and perpetrator, corridos prohibidos offer an alternative memory culture-one that is intimate, ambiguous, and reflective of the lived experiences of those caught in Colombia's systemic violence. By comparing the narrative of *La Reina del Cartel* with other corridos, this paper argues that the recontextualization of familiar themes-violence, survival, and repression-within a genre dominated by hypermasculine imagery not only challenges dominant discourses but also generates a poetic space where gender solidarity and counter-hegemonic narratives flourish. Ultimately, the work contends that such expressive practices serve as "productive technologies" of mourning and social reparation, engaging both private memory and public dialogue in the process of transitional justice.

Contraseña: Corridos, corridos prohibidos, transitional justice, gender, memory, Colombia, counter, narrative

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