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Mapping Opposition in the Sonora- Arizona Borderlands: A Critical Recovery of Federico Ronstadt's Memoir Borderman

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Abstract: *Federico Ronstadt's* Borderman*, a memoir written between 1944 and 1954, recounts the businessman's immigration to Tucson and his life in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Paradigms of opposition that inform the recovery of early Mexican American memoir and autobiography—centering the life writings of elite, dispossessed Mexican Americans and Hispanic immigrant literature written in Spanish—have discouraged study of Ronstadt's English-language, seemingly assimilationist memoir. In my critical recovery of* Borderman*, I argue that it should be read as part of the legacy of oppositional literature written by people of Mexican descent in the United States. I historicize Ronstadt's writing moment as the decade that culminated in Operation Wetback and introduce images from his archive to support a critical reading of* Borderman *as oppositional to the anti-Mexican border policies of its era. Building upon Genaro Padilla's, Tey Diana Rebolledo's, and Nicolás Kanellos's discussions of oppositional textual politics, and mobilizing Chicana literary spatial studies, I use the term "cartographic opposition" to evaluate* Borderman*'s discursive remapping of southern Arizona from associations with the Anglo Southwest to a transfrontera geopolitical and cultural expanse.*

In a ten-year effort, from approximately 1944 to shortly before his death in December 1954, Federico Ronstadt, grandfather of the singer Linda Ronstadt, penned his memoir. Son of a Spanish Mexican mother and a German father, Ronstadt narrated his boyhood in Sonora, Mexico, his 1882 immigration to Arizona, and his life in Tucson. He wrote on the back of letterhead stationery for his successful enterprise, the F. Ronstadt Hardware Co., a self-started business that weathered political revolution and economic depression and evolved with changing technologies. Writing in

English, in large cursive script, the aging Ronstadt detailed a mobile world in which people, commercial goods, and cultural components traversed the Sonora-Arizona borderlands in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth. His memoir offers an unparalleled picture of the sociopolitical, cultural, and historic conditions in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands at the fin de siècle.[1]

Yet even though *Borderman* has been published multiple times over the last twenty-five years, Chicana/o literary critics, specifically those involved in the study and critical recovery of earlier Mexican American writing, have slighted Ronstadt's memoir.[2] This is partly due to the genre-based privileging of historical romance novels in recovered Mexican American literature, such as María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don* (1885) and Jovita González and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero* (1996). However, even within the genre of life writing, it appears that *Borderman* is marginalized by a literary paradigm of oppositional textual politics that informs the recovery of Mexican American memoir, autobiography, and testimonio. For example, Genaro Padilla and Tey Diana Rebolledo, in their respective works *My History, Not Yours* (1993) and *Women Singing in the Snow* (1995), argue that a corpus of elite, early Mexican American autobiographers and memoirists, such as Mariano Vallejo of California and the Hispanas Cleofas Jaramillo and Fabiola Cabeza de Baca of New Mexico, "display a sentimental attachment for the past, generally a nostalgic edenic one" as a discursive resistance strategy to disenfranchisement under Anglo-American rule (Rebolledo 1995, 31).[3] Thus, according to Padilla and Rebolledo, Vallejo, Jaramillo, and Cabeza de Baca fit within a paradigm of opposition that nostalgically recalls a pre-1848, pre-Anglo past superior to their dispossessed present.

While Ronstadt can be classified as an elite, his critical remembrances of the Mexican government exclude him from the Padilla-Rebolledo paradigm. Rather than an avaricious US government dispossessing the landed gentry, Ronstadt recollects a land-grabbing Mexican government that caused his family to lose its property in Sonora as a result of lengthy litigation, mounting legal fees, and unfulfilled claims (2003, 83–84).

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Furthermore, for scholars focusing on native literary subjects, Ronstadt's Sonoran immigrant status plays a role in his memoir's negation.[4]

Ronstadt's memoir does not outwardly exhibit the oppositional impulses identified by Nicolás Kanellos in *Hispanic Immigrant Literature: El Sueño del Retorno* (2011). Kanellos's definition of Hispanic literature also stipulates an oppositional impulse in the form of an "unmeltable ethnicity" that "generally does not support the myths of the American Dream" (7). Furthermore, while Kanellos corrects the tendency of literary critics to ignore "practically the entire corpus of works written in Spanish by immigrants," his insistence that Hispanic immigrant literature is "literature created orally or in written form . . . predominantly using the language of the homeland" denies Ronstadt's English-language memoir entry into this body of work (13, 7).

Explicitly pro-American statements in Ronstadt's memoir, as when he recalls his crossing into the United States, reveal his endorsement of the American Dream:

> My father told me, "Now you are in the United States of America, without any question the greatest nation in the world. You will enjoy great liberty and protection under the American Government and you must always feel and show deep appreciation for that. When you become a man (I was fourteen years old at the time), you may want to establish yourself in the United States and see that your life and conduct is such as will entitle you to the privilege of American citizenship." I was impressed by my father's words. (2003, 57–58)

The late Chicano literary scholar Juan Bruce-Novoa, the only critic to evaluate *Borderman* previously, cites this passage to distinguish Ronstadt as "the epitome of the successful immigrant" in an article that topographically surveys four hundred years of Chicano testimonio writing about the US-Mexico border (1996, 40). Indeed, what this singular passage exhibits is Ronstadt's tone of patriotic reverence and an insinuated ideology of American exceptionalism. Ronstadt embraced the American Dream, just as it embraced him on account of his fair complexion, Anglo-approved Germanic surname, and success as an entrepreneurial capitalist. That Ronstadt was born into a landed family, was dispossessed, and then reclaimed his bourgeois status thanks to a solid work ethic in the United States befits the plot of *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography* (2012) more than that of Mariano Vallejo's "Recuerdos históricos y personales" (1875). Consequently, Ronstadt has fallen through the cracks of the recovered literature and its oppositional paradigms.

However, to ignore the memoir of a Sonoran Mexican immigrant turned US citizen, writing in English, who achieved the American Dream is to silence a unique cultural voice that upon closer inspection has more in common with oppositional politics than might be presumed.

In a photo retrieved from Ronstadt's archive, his brand of textual opposition reveals itself in the spatial poetics of his business office (fig. 1).[5] Offering a photographer a candid snapshot of routine business conducted in his office, a relaxed but pensive Ronstadt takes a few moments to pause the dictation he is giving to his secretary. Amid the notices, bills, and ledgers of the F. Ronstadt Co. are four significant objects visible to Ronstadt as he sits at his work desk. Nearest him and atop his desk is a propped white frame with photos of his German-born father, Fredrick A. Ronstadt, and his Mexican Sonoran-born mother, Margarita Redondo. Fastened to the wall are three maps. The map at left shows the topography of Tucson (as we can see with the aid of a digital zoom), while the larger map occupying the center of the wall details the Union Pacific railroad company's expansive track system and that of its acquisition, Southern Pacific. However, it is the smaller map of Mexico on the right, seemingly out of balance because of its odd lower placement, that occupies the most prized wall space. Closer to Ronstadt's

Figure 1. Federico Ronstadt and his secretary in his office at the F. Ronstadt Co. hardware store in Tucson, sometime between 1901 and 1913. Image courtesy of University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

direct line of sight when seated, the map of Mexico—which includes the unmarked US borderlands—acts as a second frame for Ronstadt's family photos, and from Ronstadt's perspective an act of superimposition occurs. A central and most significant plane, to use mathematical terms, emerges in Ronstadt's office space, which enables Ronstadt to visually orient his familial, cultural, and personal heritage to a preferred cartographic backdrop: Mexico and the Sonora-Arizona borderlands.

This fascinating spatial poetics turned spatial politics within Ronstadt's office illustrates the position that he, an accepted member of Anglo society, took in terms of his identity and culture and its geopolitical associations. At the time the photograph was taken, Anglo-Mexican relations in Arizona, already strained by decades of conflict ginned up by anti-Mexican groups like the American Protective Association, had deteriorated due to the Mexican Revolution.[6] This historical context makes Ronstadt's oppositional impulses more evident. When members of Tucson's Anglo business community and perhaps even a client or two visited Ronstadt's office and let their gaze wander to the images on his wall, they would have received a subtle political message. Union Pacific's imposing cartography and heavily demarcated national boundary lines served as an accommodating visual, while Ronstadt communicated a disengagement from Anglo-American and hence Southwestern cultural and geopolitical identity with his map of the Sonora-Arizona borderlands and its distinct spatial configuration.

Concerning the interconnectedness of societal spatial politics and narrative discourse, Mary Pat Brady reminds us in *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* that "Chicana literature has consistently offered alternative methods of conceptualizing space . . . by refusing a too-rigid binary between the material and the discursive" (2002, 6). While I do not claim that Ronstadt, as an elite transfrontera capitalist who led a liminal existence between Anglo and Mexican American communities, attends to space in the same decolonial and contestatory ways in which Chicana literature seeks to critique and subvert patriarchal, classist, sexist, and homophobic spatial formations, it is nonetheless evident that *Borderman* also refuses binary divisions separating the social politics of physical space from discursive narrations. Ronstadt merges spatial politics of social reality, as seen in the oppositional image recovered from his material archive, with discursive recollections in his memoir. Just as the spatial-cartographic politics captured in Ronstadt's business office reflect both accommodation and dissent, I suggest that memoir passages depicting overt nationalistic zeal, such as the one narrating his border crossing into the United States,

must be considered alongside Ronstadt's dissenting, or perhaps "warring," spatial narrative registers. For example, given Ronstadt's aptitude for oppositional uses of cartography, it is fitting that he charts in his memoir a militarized description of his family as "an army of blood relatives (*parientes*)" who resided on both sides of the Sonora-Arizona border (2003, 55). Ronstadt wrote *Borderman* during the "decade of the wetback" (1944–54), an era marked by intensified immigration policies and culminating with the Eisenhower administration's ethnocentric, militarized organization of national space under Operation Wetback in 1954.[7] According to historian Juan Ramon García, just prior to Operation Wetback's enactment the US press sensationalized the activities of Border Patrol forces to create the "impression that a veritable army was being assembled" (1980, 177). Although a full-fledged army of Border Patrol agents was an exaggeration, the transformation of civilian social spaces in Arizona, California, and Texas was tantamount to a militarized ethnic cleansing, with over 38,000 "aliens" transported to Nogales, Arizona, one of several deportation hubs, and then sent by train into Mexico's interior (193). When seen in the historical context of Operation Wetback and past ethnic conflict between Anglos and Mexicans, the spatial significance of Ronstadt's militarized mapping of his *parientes* becomes apparent. Ronstadt's transfrontera "army of blood relatives" is a spatially discursive challenge to the Border Patrol's "veritable army" that threatened to eradicate the culture, livelihood, and existence of peoples of Mexican descent in Arizona. Ronstadt confronts "armies" ordered by the US government to police the US-Mexico border with his own transfrontera familial and cultural forces, which he actively maps throughout *Borderman*.

This essay follows over forty years of spatial investigations in Chicana/o literary studies and extends Chicana spatial theorizations to critically recover Ronstadt's *Borderman* as an important work of early Mexican American literature. When read for its spatial discursive significance, this memoir can be seen as a text at war that aims to suture the geopolitical division of Arizona's land, culture, and people of Mexican descent that was caused by the Gadsden Purchase in 1854 and exacerbated by xenophobic national policy one hundred years later, in 1954.[8] As Brady astutely notes upon advancing Doreen Massey's evaluations of space as an articulation of social relations, "the understanding of spatial processes . . . might be very much enlarged by attention to narrative, narrative techniques, and the role of narrative in the production of space, as well as to the various grammars that structure spatial articulations" (2002, 7).[9] Heeding Brady's

assertion that "narrative techniques" and "various grammars" can heighten our understanding of spatial production by Mexican American cultural producers, I investigate the role of cartography—the process of drawing charts or maps—as a specific type of narrative technique in *Borderman*. I contend that Ronstadt deploys cartography to discursively map sites and chart movements among spaces and places in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands for the purpose of articulating transfrontera social relations and subjectivities that restore a Mexican Arizona under erasure and that are opposed to the dominant sociopolitical and geopolitical schema of his era. This essay uses the term *cartographic opposition*—which I define as the discursive attention to charting or mapping movements by individuals and communities of various social sectors that oppose hegemonic maps and geopolitical constructions—to reference the primary technique Ronstadt mobilizes in *Borderman* to narrate the material conditions of spatial relations in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands. It is a grammar of cartographic opposition that defines Borderman's discursive remapping of southern Arizona from national and regional associations with the Anglo Southwest to a transfrontera geopolitical and cultural expanse. Ronstadt's discursive cartographic opposition challenges Anglo-American-policed national boundaries and offers a transfrontera "alternative map" to US Southwestern cartographies.[10] Accordingly, this essay illuminates how *Borderman* remaps southern Arizona from the Anglo Southwest and restores fluid social heritages of the Sonora-Arizona borderlands along familial, economic, and cultural lines.

Defying National Territorialization: Remapping Transfrontera Familial Heritage

On December 1, 1916, Ronstadt became a member of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society.[11] The society, organized in 1884 in response to a call from Arizona's first delegate to Congress, Charles D. Poston, aimed to "collect and preserve information connected with the early settlement and subsequent history of the Territory" (Sloan 1959, 66). While the pioneer society's archival holdings by mid-twentieth century contained "over 5000 different collections of manuscripts," some of which included materials from Spanish conquistadors and Jesuit missionaries, the bulk of its archives preserved materials of white American settlers and military men (69–70). This gendered and racial slant can be attributed in part to the society's 1884 constitution, which restricted membership to "men who had arrived

in Arizona before 1870, or to their male descendants" (67). While Ronstadt qualified on account of his German father, who had done mining-engineer work in Arizona in the 1850s, his maternal Spanish Mexican heritage was not as significant to the society's historical fashioning, which was based on "territorial" parameters that prioritized frontier settlement by white pioneers pushing westward. Although the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society by mid-twentieth century had acknowledged the presence of Spanish clergymen predating Anglo settlement, its archives during the first half of the century largely failed to validate the prior existence of Spanish-Mexican family settlements.

Ronstadt did not openly challenge the historical society's territorial Anglocentrism in his thirty-eight years as a member, but he used his memoir to set the record straight by validating his longstanding, transfrontera maternal familial heritage. At the start of his memoir, Ronstadt emphasizes the importance of his family: "Before I say anything about myself, I wish to note down a few things about my father and my mother" (2003, 3). He then proceeds in restorative prose to map his maternal family's settlement in what was to become, with the Gadsden Purchase in 1854, the Sonora-Arizona borderlands:

> My mother's name was Margarita Redondo. Her great grandfather, Don Francisco Redondo, came from Spain and settled the Hacienda del Ocuca about 30 miles southeast of Altar. We have a record of his work while he developed his homestead and raised a large family. They had to produce all the principal needs of life like all the old pioneers. . . .
>
> My mother's father, Don José María Redondo, was a successful gentleman farmer, stockman, and merchant. He happened to be Prefecto of the District of Altar when the filibustering expedition of [Henry Alexander] Crabb invaded Caborca [in 1857]. He had a reputation for extreme kindness & patience. . . .
>
> My grandfather Redondo died in 1879 at the very advanced age of 92. His brothers and cousins were many. Some located in Yuma, Ariz. The Martins and Rebeils of Tucson are descendants of these Redondos on their mother's side. (6)

In these paragraphs, Ronstadt establishes a maternal Spanish Mexican familial presence traversing the Sonora-Arizona borderlands, a past stricken from record by the archival practices of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. His preoccupation with charting his family's longevity in the region and their global and regional movements emerges when he explains that his mother's "great grandfather, Don Francisco Redondo, came from Spain and settled the Hacienda del Ocuca about 30 miles southeast of Altar." Based

on the genealogical and cartographic scope of his memoir, it appears that his maternal descendants, originating with his mother's great-grandfather in the eighteenth century, spread throughout the borderlands region, from the Altar district in northern Sonora northward into Yuma and Tucson. Conjoining genealogy and geography are narrative and spatial strategies of resistance that have been noted before in productions by people of Mexican descent. Rebolledo, for instance, has noticed that Nuevomexicana writers name heritage by specifying family names and landmarks "as if to show . . . a 'cultural pedigree' that claims a traditional space" (1995, 31).

However, unlike Nuevomexicana writers who associate heritage with landscape within national boundaries, Ronstadt deploys this resistance strategy by mapping binational place-names. He geographically triangulates the Redondos of Altar, Sonora, and Yuma, Arizona, with the Rebeils and Martins of Tucson to show a maternal cultural pedigree that claims the Sonora-Arizona borderlands for his Spanish Mexican heritage. Furthermore, although Ronstadt does not use the term outright, his cartographic parameters evoke the region once known as the Pimería Alta. This was a seamless expanse of land, established in the seventeenth century at the onset of Spanish rule in the region, that encompassed areas that are now northern Sonora and southern Arizona.[12] Although a largely forgotten settler-colonial cartographic construction, the Pimería Alta as a residual social space has defied modern geopolitical boundaries with the continuous northern and southern movement of people, commerce, and culture across the Sonora-Arizona borderlands. By situating his maternal heritage and in essence himself within the bounds of the Pimería Alta, Ronstadt remaps southern Arizona from a region associated with the Western frontier to a cultural and historical landscape associated with the Sonoran borderlands—one that his "army of *parientes*" and their descendants occupied long before the arrival of white pioneers in the nineteenth century and the border-patrolling "armies" of Operation Wetback in the mid-twentieth century.

Moreover, Ronstadt validates the Spanish Mexican family "record" and the family's documented settlement of the Sonora-Arizona borderlands. While he says elsewhere in his memoir that "many tales" about famous pioneers "may be found in the archives of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society," he states that his family has kept a "record" of his great-great-grandfather's "work while he developed his homestead and raised a large family" (2003, 76, 6). In an era of Spanish Mexican archival exclusion, Ronstadt affirms the existence of truer archival spaces, such as the one he safeguards in his home, which documents his family's stake in the

Sonora-Arizona borderlands. These Spanish Mexican domestic archives authenticate Spanish Mexican homesteaders as the first colonial settlers of what was to become southern Arizona, who trekked northward from Sonora, not westward, predating the arrival of Anglo pioneers.

Ronstadt's passage also complicates the notion that pioneers were the definitive Anglo presence in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands even as it redefines the positive connotation of the term *pioneer*. Ronstadt notes that his grandfather, Don José Maria Redondo, was the "Prefecto of the District of Altar when the filibustering expedition of [Henry Alexander] Crabb invaded Caborca [in 1857]" (2003, 6). Ronstadt's historical evocation of Crabb, who led a private army into Sonora in hopes of annexing more of the Mexican state, functions in two significant ways.[13] First, the description of Crabb as a post–Gadsden Purchase filibuster pushing his way southward to "invade Caborca" contests the dominant and preferred image of progressive, westward pioneer advancement perpetuated by the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. Second, Crabb embodies the overall "invading" presence of white Americans in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands, a disruptive force that Ronstadt contrasts with the role of his grandfather, the *prefecto* of Altar, who signifies established government and societal order in an already claimed space that nullifies the very meaning of the term *pioneers*.

In addition, Ronstadt charts his father, Colonel Frederick Augustus Ronstadt, as a global and binational border crosser operating within the cartographic residue of the Pimería Alta—a discursive maneuver that rescues him from state and national associations:

> My father, [Col.] Frederick Augustus Ronstadt, was born in Hanover, Germany, and educated at the university of the same city. . . . He came from Germany with a group of engineers to Buenos Aires, from there by muleback across the Andes to Chile and by water to San Francisco; from San Francisco overland to San Diego and Arizona & Sonora in the early fifties.
>
> In Sonora my father found ready occupation, not only in mining work but in managing the large haciendas for some of the leading men of that state at that time. . . . He served as an officer in the Mexican army during the French invasion when Maximilian tried to establish his empire. . .
>
> When General Pesqueira, then Governor of Sonora, General García Morales and their staffs had to change the state capital from Ures to Tubac on account of the Maximilian supporters [1865–1866], my father came with them. . . . It was here [in Tubac] that Governor Pesqueira commissioned my father to negotiate a loan from the people of Tucson. . . . My father obtained some $24,000 from Sam Hughes, Tully & Ochoa, Hiram Stevens and other Tucson citizens. (2003, 3–4)

Arizona state historians recognize Colonel Ronstadt as one of the earliest pioneers who helped develop southern Arizona's copper industry in the 1850s (Sheridan 1995, 162). However, Federico Ronstadt demonstrates that his father did not follow the westward patterns of movement expected of pioneers. In terms of his father's immigration, occupation, and regional allegiance, Ronstadt repositions his father within the bounds of the Sonora-Arizona borderlands. He had employed this tactic in earlier exchanges with longtime Arizona senator Carl Hayden. An avid state history buff, Hayden spent his time outside legislative politics amassing biographical data on the lives of Arizona's early pioneers. On March 21, 1940, Hayden sent Ronstadt a letter inquiring about Colonel Ronstadt's life in hopes of obtaining "some of the missing facts."[14] Hayden understood Arizona state history to be more fanciful than factual, telling Ronstadt, "much has been written about the pioneers of [Arizona] which is not much more than fiction." However, while Hayden knew of and inquired about Colonel Ronstadt's years as a Mexican army officer, he could not break from the fiction that all early Arizonan settlers followed patterns of westward continental movement. In the first three questions he posed to Ronstadt about the colonel, Hayden seems to assume that Ronstadt's father made a transatlantic voyage from Germany to the United States and then moved westward in a trajectory consistent with the doctrine of Manifest Destiny:

1. When and why did [Colonel Ronstadt] leave Germany and where did he land in the United States?
2. When and how did he first enter Mexico?
3. How did he first get to California, by land or sea?

In a follow-up letter to Ronstadt, Hayden expressed his gratitude for "all the trouble" Ronstadt took to supply him with "such interesting information" about the life of his father.[15] The "interesting information" for which Hayden thanked Ronstadt consisted of six documents related to the colonel's military service in Mexico, all of which Ronstadt enumerated and sent to the senator's office in Washington, DC.[16] These documents describe his father's military activities in Sonora and Arizona, and in this way they restore Colonel Ronstadt's Mexican identity. Yet Ronstadt refrained from narrating his father's hemispheric travels that led him to the Sonora-Arizona borderlands, which would have answered the senator's first three questions.

Ronstadt, however, provides answers to these questions in *Borderman*. The lines about his father in Ronstadt's memoir can be read as correctives

to Hayden's cartographic assumptions and to the Arizonan pioneer histories that claim his father. Ronstadt relates that his father avoided the Eastern Seaboard of the United States in favor of a pan-hemispheric Latin American trek that began when he traveled from Germany to Buenos Aires. From there he crossed the Andes into Chile by mule, traveled by water to San Francisco, and ultimately ended his global trek with an overland journey from San Francisco to "Arizona & Sonora." Mindful to marry the geographies of "Arizona & Sonora," Ronstadt positions his father and southern Arizona macro-spatially within the Latin American hemisphere and regionally within the economic rhythms of the Pimería Alta. Then, like a historical revisionist, Ronstadt documents the sociopolitical connections maintained by Sonora and southern Arizona during the French-Mexican War. He historically maps how the Sonoran state capital temporarily moved, to evade French forces, from Ures to Tubac, a city over 200 miles north and well inside what was then Arizona territory. He also records the extent to which Tucson citizens were involved in Sonoran affairs. It is not donations to Yankee or Confederate efforts in the chronologically overlapping US Civil War that emerge in the Ronstadt documents, but the investment and support that Tucson citizens such as "Sam Hughes, Tully & Ochoa, Hiram Stevens and other[s]" staked in their transfrontera relations with Governor Pesqueira and the Mexican Republic against the imperialists.[17] And in the midst of this historic episode is Ronstadt's father, a *transfronterizo* by his son's account. Ronstadt charts his father as a two-way border crosser who comes to Arizona with General Pesqueira's troops and obtains a $24,000 loan for use in the Sonoran war effort against Maximilian. Such historical documentation counters the chronicles of Anglo pioneers that keep his father and southern Arizona within the mapped bounds of Southwestern history. A son of the Pimería Alta on both maternal and paternal sides, Ronstadt maps in his memoir a hemispheric transfrontera historical space as he counts his father among his "army of blood relatives" who settled, traversed, and warred in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands.

Charting Legal and Illegal Transborder Commerce and Commemorating the Mexican Smuggler

Asserting his transfrontera familial history was but one tactic Ronstadt deployed to remap his heritage away from the national and toward the transnational. His memoir also restores borderland economies and commercial movements between Sonora and southern Arizona by detailing

transborder infrastructure, commerce, and contraband activity. Writing in an era when the Southern Pacific railroad was king and the primary movement the US government wished to recognize involved expulsion of Mexicans southward, Ronstadt documents in his memoir the construction of the transnational Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF) and the Arizona-Sonora borderlands space it traversed.[18]

He recalls that the "Santa Fe Rail Road" (as he calls the AT&SF) "was being built from Guaymas to Benson" during his adolescence (55). Always attentive to mapping space and place in each account, Ronstadt names townships either near or directly along the AT&SF's trackage. They evoke the broader realm of his transfrontera cultural pedigree, which was born of US expansionism in the nineteenth century. Ronstadt's account of the "Santa Fe Rail Road" in Sonora reads:

> The Santa Fe Rail Road camp . . . was located then near La Noria south of Santa Ana. This Railroad was being built from Guaymas to Benson [ca. 1881]. My father's driver, Juan de Dios, drove the team, and I was invited to go along. We arrived at the camp after dark. I was surprised to find the rails made as they were. I had imagined railroad rails to be channeled. . . . When I got over my surprise I walked close enough to notice the wheels had no channels or rims. It was a great puzzle for me. The train kept moving until it backed away toward Guaymas. . . . We went right back to Magdalena and my father had to explain to me what it was that kept the train wheels on the track. (2003, 55–56)

Rebolledo argues that writers who have "a consciousness of being colonized and the struggle to retain their ethnic heritage" will list cultural signs, usually in the form of landmarks (hills, roads, valleys) and names, to affirm their cultural identity (1995, 31). Similarly, Ronstadt locates the AT&SF within a transnational space, making the railway emblematic of the region's latitudinal heritage. He grafts the townships of Guaymas, La Noria, Santa Ana, Magdalena, and Benson onto the AT&SF line and produces a transfrontera cartography absent from US railway maps, such as the imposing Union Pacific–Southern Pacific map that hung on his office wall. Additionally, considering the historical context in which he wrote, Ronstadt's remembrance of the AT&SF's two-way track system is particularly significant. It would not have escaped his attention that during Operation Wetback the former AT&SF railway was politicized as a one-way ticket out of the state for predominantly Mexican "illegals." Countering the expelling role assigned to the railroad in the early 1950s, Ronstadt's remembrance that "this Railroad was being built from Guaymas to Benson"

assigns a northward mobility to the railroad. He showcases the movement of people and economy toward Arizona. It is a spatial and mobile recollection that literally brings up to speed the bounds of his family's agro-pastoral past and historicizes the fluid northward movement across the Sonora-Arizona borderlands at the inception of the modern transportation era.

Ronstadt's adult memories further his restoration of transfrontera railroads. He historicizes his business, the F. Ronstadt Co., as one engaged in national and transnational ventures courtesy of US-Mexican railways and clients in Sonora and Chihuahua. After achieving success in his first ten years of operation (1890–1900), supplying wagons mostly to customers in California and Arizona, Ronstadt climbed back up the social ladder. Once again a member of the bourgeoisie, he established business ties with friends, family, and Anglo-American investors, and he saw exponential growth in his business as a result. In a passage included only in the electronic text of *Borderman*, which is faithful to the original memoir, Ronstadt (1997) writes:

> By 1906, we had built up a good trade for custom made wagons and other lines in Southern Arizona and in the state of Sonora, Mexico. We had established an agency in Cananea [Sonora] and also had subagents in Nogales, Hermosillo, and Guaymas. Pepe [Ronstadt's brother] would travel over this territory and made a good many friends and good customers. Our agent in Cananea, Alfredo Pesqueira, a son of my godfather, General Ignacio Pesqueira, also purchased 100 shares of our Treasury stock. . . . About 1906, Mr. William C. Greene, the man who had developed Cananea to one of the largest copper producing mines in the US, started to build a railroad from Chihuahua toward Cananea. . . . He had in mind a separate transportation connection from the eastern cities to Cananea through El Paso, Texas. We realized that a direct line from El Paso through Chihuahua and Sonora to Cananea would place Tucson at a disadvantage as a supply point. . . . We decided that El Paso was the best location and we started a branch there . . . to retain trade.

Ronstadt speaks as a transfrontera capitalist engaged in binational business in the US-Mexico borderlands, and if we take his words at face value, he evinces his own complicity with transnational capitalist exploitation and violence. Borderlands historian and Chicana scholar Nicole Guidotti-Hernández reminds us, in her investigation of Yaqui Indian wars in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands, that businesses like William C. Greene's US-owned, Mexican-based Cananea Consolidated Copper Company informed Sonoran state and Mexican federal authorities of Yaqui Indian sightings and at times demanded military reinforcements to protect the mines (2011, 211). Ronstadt reports that his international business at

the time was spurred by the railroad-building actions of magnate Greene. Perhaps just shy of being a Yankee dictator, Greene established a "fiefdom" at his Cananea copper kingdom, and several years prior to 1906 he gave Ronstadt's business one of its first substantial orders.[19] That Ronstadt calls Greene "Mr." and denotes him as "the man who had developed Cananea to one of the largest copper producing mines in the US" indicates both Ronstadt's respect for Greene and his acknowledgement of Greene's exploitive use of Cananea's mineral wealth.

Nevertheless, it is important to continually complicate Ronstadt's discursive cartographic production according to the politics of his life and times. Ronstadt's business advertisements in the *Arizona Daily Star*, a Tucson-based, English-language newspaper, boast in the early 1900s of the F. Ronstadt Co.'s longevity as a Southwestern business, revealing that he defined the company's location according to his Anglo-American customers' nationalistic understanding of the region as the "Southwest." Articles written about the F. Ronstadt Co. in the Spanish-language newspaper *El Tucsonense*, however, hailed Ronstadt and his business as "una de las mas Fuertes en el Sur de Arizona . . . y en territorio de afuera inclusivo el Estado de Sonora donde sus clientes son numerosos" (1935). Moreover, while Ronstadt's advertising put forth a Southwestern business identity to the English-speaking Anglo public, the quote above, from the electronic version of the memoir, tells a different story. Ronstadt states for the record, in English, that he and the F. Ronstadt Co. supplied a "territory" that transcended city, state, and national lines.[20] In essence, he reorients his business legacy away from the Southwest. In its place, Ronstadt defines a transfrontera legacy illustrating that his American dream was predicated on achieving a Mexican American dream as a transborder businessman.

Furthermore, while it would have been personally and professionally damaging for Ronstadt, a respectable merchant, to condone illegal commerce publicly, he uses the privacy of his memoir to historicize and legitimate smuggling economies in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands.[21] Two years after the US Congress ratified the Gadsden Purchase in 1854, newly minted Mexican Americans on the northern side of the boundary line and their fellow Sonorans to the south of it lost the freedom to conduct unrestricted commercial trade, since, according to historian Miguel Tinker Salas, "both Mexican and US governments attempted to control burgeoning commerce and mining along the border" (1997, 85). However, Tinker Salas's historical study provides nineteenth-century accounts illustrating how Arizonans and Sonorans circumvented the first customhouses,

expressing defiance toward the regulation of trade between Arizona and Sonora. Consistent with this history, Ronstadt highlights the expertise, courage, and wit of those in the smuggling trade during the late nineteenth century from a Tucsonense Sonorense economic and cultural perspective. In doing so, he adds to his militarized regiment of transfrontera *parientes* expert smugglers and their cohorts of Mexican descent, whom he praises and legitimates:

> The smugglers were considered legitimate traders. Most of them were men of great courage and the guards were not always anxious to encounter them. They had fine horses, good arms and many friends among the ranchers. One of the outstanding smugglers was Damacio García. Several of his sons and descendants are living on the old ranch near Sasabe and in Arivaca. (2003, 97)

Ronstadt describes a communal network supporting contraband among smugglers and ranchers in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands. His remembrance of an indivisible Tucsonense Sonorense community exhibits an ideological commitment to regional prosperity over the interests of national treasuries. Ronstadt's proclamation that "smugglers were considered legitimate traders" sums up his views, shared by others in the transborder community, on federal commercial regulation. By legitimizing the smuggling economy, the statement implies that the governmental restrictions imposed by both Mexico and the United States were illegitimate. Ronstadt's recollection and, by his tone, his honoring of smugglers clearly indicate his support of a transfrontera citizenry of Spanish Mexican descendants that operated according to its own definition of economic spatial legality. Ronstadt is just as concerned with justifying the Mexican American smugglers' heroic existence as he is with validating the border economy in which they played vital roles. His explicit descriptions of Damacio García as an "outstanding" smuggler with sons and descendants residing on a "ranch near Sansabe and in Arivaca," two locales on the Arizona side, situates the Mexican American smuggler within a living transnational heritage.

Ronstadt's smuggling narrations stand in contrast to the popular literature of Ronstadt's day. Walter Noble Burns's *Tombstone: An Iliad of the Southwest* (1929) establishes southern Arizona within a popular national mythology that celebrates the O.K. Corral, Wyatt Earp, and Doc Holliday. Like its literary forebears, this work exercises what I call a "rhetoric of riddance" against people of Mexican descent.[22] Many have addressed the veracity of Burns's lionization of the Earp clan and demonization of the

Clayton-McLowery clan, but far less has been said about Burns's representation of Mexican smugglers and the spatial bounds he allows and disallows them to traverse. When the Claytons are not feuding with the Earps, they demonstrate their predatory prowess and their penchant for killing Mexican smugglers. Drawing a racially calcified international boundary, Burns describes Mexicans as the "dusky little people below the line" (1929, 122). He highlights Don Miguel Garcia (note the identical surname to Damacio García) and his exploits as the leader of a profitable smuggling expedition that is en route from Sonora to Tucson when Garcia and his men cross paths with the Claytons stateside (1929, 100). For Burns, Mexican smugglers are naïve and no match for the quick-drawing Claytons, who have notched nineteen dead Mexican smugglers and stolen $75,000 in Mexican silver as the result of one-sided ethnic carnage (106). Burns continues a rhetoric of riddance against Mexicans, assigning the role of vigilante border patrol to the Clayton clan. They successfully halt Don Miguel Garcia and his Mexican smugglers—contraband characters who do not belong on US soil. The Claytons kill off the smuggling ring and rid the Arizona landscape of the Mexican smugglers' existence.

Ronstadt's memoir contests Burns's representation of failed Mexican American smugglers by hailing the smugglers' skill, expertise, and above all their established livelihood in southern Arizona. Ronstadt's tribute to Damacio García, in particular, reads like a heroic decree, embodying features of the smuggling corrido, which mainly characterizes smugglers as courageous and expresses communal respect for their trade. Yet, defying even the smuggling corrido tradition, in which the smuggler usually dies a martyr, Ronstadt populates the Sonora-Arizona borderlands with García's descendants. This narrative is borne out by the 1920 US Federal Census, which documents a Damacio García living with his wife and sons on a ranch in Arivaca, Arizona.[23]

Reclaiming Transfrontera Tucsonense Identity, Music, and Culture

Mapping transfrontera lives like Damacio García's is a particular narrative technique Ronstadt uses to challenge geopolitical and cultural borderlines that attempted to circumscribe the existence and identities of people of Mexican descent in the US Southwest. This narrative technique includes spatially articulating his own transfrontera identity and the region's transfrontera heritage, especially as they centered on his most cherished pastime:

music. Ronstadt had an aptitude for playing several musical instruments and transcribing music by ear. As a teenager in Tucson, he offered piano and flute lessons. By the 1890s, when Ronstadt was in his early twenties, he split time between his first wagon business and a music club he organized with his brother Dick. After several months of teaching novice members the rudiments of music and instrumentation, the group played regularly at Tucson's plaza. Ronstadt and his brother raised money for band uniforms and settled on an official group name: Club Filarmónico Tucsonense. Music was integral to Ronstadt's personhood, which is why he uses his memoir to implicitly argue against the spatial and cultural restrictions that had led to a cultural nightmare that affected his musical identity and troubled him throughout his life. In 1896, a musical misunderstanding resulted in Ronstadt being portrayed as a German "blacksmith musician" in the national media. The incident as Ronstadt details it in *Borderman* involved John Philip Sousa and accusations of plagiarism:

> [One] time a music teacher, Juan Balderas who played in our band [Club Filarmónico Tucsonense], came in to show me a copy of piano music which one of his pupils had given to him. It looked yellowish and aged. The name on the cover was "*Sirvase Ud. Pasar*" [Please Come In] published by Wagner & Levin of Mexico City. The Music was a march written in 2/4 time, exactly the counterpart of [the] *Washington Post March* written by John Philip Sousa, the well known band master of Washington. The *Washington Post March* had made a tremendous hit and Sousa was making a fortune out of it. Balderas thought that the same march, only in 2/4 in place of 6/8 time, had been published in Mexico years before under the name of *Sirvase Ud. Pasar* and the name of the composer had not been printed in the copy.
>
> While we were looking over the sheet, a young reporter of the *Arizona Star* came by and stopped as he used to do many times when passing by the shop. He was a friend of mine and joined in the comments regarding the music. I could not believe that John Philip Sousa could have used some one else's music to publish it as his own, but the thing was puzzling. I suggested to Balderas to write Wagner and Levin and forgot all about it.
>
> A few days later I received a copy of the "*Musical Courier*" published in New York with a paragraph copied from a Tucson newspaper relating that I had seen this *Sirvase Ud. Pasar* music sheet . . . almost identical [to the Sousa] march. The *Star* reporter had written a short ten or fifteen line news item about it and the New York magazine had copied it. It caused a bombshell in musical circles until Wagner and Levin of Mexico City gave the lame explanation that they had used the popular march as a souvenir to their patrons on the opening of their new store building. They

> had published this march for piano and whoever wrote the manuscript for them had forgotten the name of the march as well as the name of the composer.
>
> The next thing was a short stereotyped article relating the incident and ending by saying that all the excitement had occurred simply because Mein Herr Ronstadt, a country band leader in Arizona, could not read Spanish. (2003, 129–30)

This incident happened in 1896, but an account of it resurfaced in the *Arizona Republic* on February 2, 1942, in a column titled "Arizona: People, Places and Odd Things." Ronstadt's nephew, Rudolf Zepeda, thinking his uncle "might be interested in reading it," mailed him a clipping the day the article was printed.[24] Portions of the article read as follows:

> The grave charge of plagiarism once hung over the head of John Philip Sousa, noted bandmaster, because of a piece of music which found its way into Southern Arizona from Mexico. He cleared himself of the charge; but for many years, because of it, Tucson evoked bitter memories for him.
>
> This is what happened: In 1892, Sousa wrote the "Washington Post March," one of the most popular pieces of band music ever produced. Four years later Fred Ronstadt, one of Tucson's prominent citizens, leader of one of two bands playing in Tucson at that time, and operator of a blacksmith shop, took to the editorial rooms of the *Arizona Daily Star* a sheet of music. It had an illuminated cover, and inscription on it in Spanish indicated it was a souvenir given away by a large music house in Mexico, D.F., on the occasion of its occupation of new and palatial quarters. The sheet of music bore no date. Mr. Ronstadt told the newspaper that he had received the music from a woman who was a resident of Mexico, D.F., and was present at the opening of the music house, in 1890. . . .
>
> Mr. Ronstadt's interest in the sheet of music was that it appeared to be, almost note for note, Sousa's "Washington Post March." If this music had been distributed in Mexico, D.F., in 1890, a strong finger of suspicion was pointed toward Mr. Sousa, the "March King." . . .
>
> The *Star* published the story, which was copied widely and was reprinted in the *Musical Courier*, [a] New York publication, with no comment except a suggestion that here was something worthy of Mr. Sousa's attention and that a space would be given him for an answer if he cared to make one.
>
> Mr. Sousa answered with a vigorous attack on the "blacksmith musician" of Tucson, and in the same issue the *Courier* expressed the hope that the mystery would be cleared up soon.
>
> About two months later Mr. Sousa was cleared. A member of the Mexico, D.F., firm publishing the sheet identified its date as 1893, not 1890, and said readily that it was the "Washington Post March,"

> only slightly changed by his house for purpose[s] of the souvenir. (Brinegar 1942)

The different accounts demand a literary comparison. In each account, we must focus on cultural and cartographic-spatial representation. That the *Arizona Republic* consigns this story to a column titled "People, Places and Odd Things" illustrates an Anglo-Arizona social structure literally at "odds" with the transnational cultural mapping that traces Sousa's "March" from Washington, DC, to Mexico DF and into Ronstadt's hands in Tucson. Furthermore, if we assign credibility to Ronstadt's memoir, both the *Star*'s original printing and the *Republic*'s retelling are complicit in removing Professor Juan Balderas, a person of Mexican descent living in Tucson, and reassigning his pivotal role in the event to a Mexican woman, a resident of Mexico City. The eradication of Balderas from Tucson's vicinity by the Anglo-run press can be viewed as a destructive move, a journalistic rhetoric of riddance, against Tucson's Mexican American community, since it erases Tucsonense cultural presence from the story, from southern Arizona, and from the national consciousness. Lastly, Ronstadt's account and the *Republic*'s both showcase the power of continued cultural myth making and identity construction according to a Southwestern frontier mythos upheld by the Anglo imaginary. The local story that accuses "blacksmith" bandleader Ronstadt of pointing "a strong finger of suspicion . . . toward Mr. Sousa" migrates eastward. It causes a national sensation upon reaching New York, where shortly after, according to Ronstadt, a "stereotyped article" emerged blaming the event on a sensationalized version of him. The national media stereotypes Ronstadt's identity based solely on his surname. The statement "Mein Herr Ronstadt, a country band leader in Arizona, could not read Spanish" overrepresents his German heritage and, like the erasure of Professor Juan Balderas, strips Ronstadt of his Tucsonense cultural identity and omits a Tucsonense presence from the township of Tucson.

Faced with this negation of his Tucsonense existence, Ronstadt uses his memoir to formulate a rebuttal, granting himself a discursive space extended only to Sousa at the time of the original event. Significantly, Ronstadt's final concern is not with the plagiaristic charge, but with the "stereotyped" misrepresentation of his cultural identity, making it clear he sought retribution (2003, 130). Therefore, one will see that Ronstadt invests *Borderman* with a cultural charge that charts his transfrontera Tucsonense identity and reinstates Mexican Tucson in the form of Tucsonense cultural spaces, which maintain strong ties to Sonoran Mexican traditions.

Mexican cultural reclamation set within his early years in Tucson is evident in *Borderman*, as Ronstadt forgoes recollections of his first Fourth of July in favor of documenting his first Mexican Independence Day celebration in Tucson. The militarized spatial discourse in the following passage is irrefutable:

> My first 16th of September (Mexican Independence Day) 1882 in Tucson was celebrated with a great public feast. They had a number of floats in the parade, and a troupe of boys had been uniformed and drilled to act as a guard of honor to the queen and her court. I was a private in that troupe. The parade marched to Levin's Park where the annual fiesta of St. Agustín was in full sway. . . . The guard of honor was formed in a square along the back of both sides of the stage. The queen of the celebration and her maids of honor occupied the center and the members of the *Junta Patriótica* (the executive committee) and the speakers sat on the sides. (2003, 92)

Ronstadt's remembrance of this performative act demonstrates how the Tucsonense public simultaneously upheld their Sonoran Mexican national ties as they destabilized Anglo spatializations of Tucson. The ratifying stroke of President Franklin Pierce's pen may have severed Tucson from Sonora in 1854, a mere twenty-eight years prior, but Tucsonenses and Sonoran immigrants replenishing Mexican culture in the city nourished Tucson's southward nationalistic gaze. On this day in 1882, the performance by the "uniformed and drilled" boys' troupe of which Ronstadt is part, even if only a ceremonious "act," opposes historical remembrances of Tucson's takeover by US troops. Whereas Mexican troops vacated Tucson to make way for occupying US forces, Ronstadt's "troupe" of boys takes on the role of a "troop" marching through Tucson's streets to stage a Mexican national reclamation of the Tucson city-space that remaps Tucson as part of Mexico, if only for the day.[25] Moreover, Ronstadt continues this militarized reoccupation of Tucson with his description of events at Levin's Park, the site at the parade's end. Mexican celebratory forces occupy Levin's Park, a public space used for US celebrations, where just two years earlier, in 1880, a welcoming banquet was held in honor of the Southern Pacific railway's arrival. Ronstadt's memoir claims Levin's Park as a Mexican Tucsonense cultural space where he, a "private," along with the acting "guard of honor," the queen, her maids, the Junta Patriótica, and the speakers publicly "occupied" the stage and its surroundings with a performance of patriotic significance to the Mexican public.

However, not all Tucsonense city-spaces are occupied without contestation in Ronstadt's memoir. Resentment and national rivalry, expressed through Mexican and American allegiances, play key roles in the cultural space Ronstadt recalls during his time as a teenage laborer in his uncle's carriage shop. Ronstadt and his carriage shop mates, Santos Aros, Carlos Gastelum, Manuel Zúñiga, and Irishman Frank O'Neil, were a crew of blue-collar young men who enjoyed each other's company while vying for national superiority, as Ronstadt recalls:

> Frank O'Neil, the horse-shoer, furnished the reason for sports. He loved to start contests of all kinds with us, wrestling, jumping, lifting weights, and sparring without boxing gloves, and using the fingers only for face slapping. . . . As a rule, he would lose most of the contests. He made a bet with us that the "*Star Spangled Banner*" was more melodic music than the Mexican National Hymn. I was to whistle the Mexican Hymn and he was to whistle the "Star Spangled Banner." The rest of the shop boys were to be the judges. I whistled my hymn and, before starting the Star Spangled Banner, Frank decided that he could not whistle as well as I and asked me to whistle his piece. I started it terribly out of tune to burlesque the music. Frank was so enraged when he realized my trick that he could not talk. . . . We all had a good laugh and paid no attention to his raging. (2003, 98–99)

Ronstadt's recollections transform his uncle's carriage shop from a mere site of local commerce to a culturally competitive site that stands in sharp contrast to other more accommodating American patriotisms in his memoir. The quintet of youths stake national allegiances along Mexican and American lines, using national anthems to declare superiority and by association national loyalty. O'Neil bases his fraternization on competitive "contests" through which he aims to replicate Anglo superiority over Mexican people and culture. Although O'Neil and his shop mates share a similar economic status, hegemonic racial, cultural, and national forces in Tucson have pulled the Irish O'Neil toward a white identity and compelled his desire to make dominant the Red, White, and Blue. However, for Ronstadt, the cartographic politics of this memory recapture his borderlands identity and uphold his Sonoran Mexican heritage as supreme. Within his uncle's carriage shop, Ronstadt puts on a binational exhibition, as he knows both national melodies well enough to perform them. But in a show of national favor, Ronstadt makes clear that his patriotism resides with Mexico, as he purposefully botches the "Star Spangled Banner" in their whistling match, relegating the "raging" Irishman, O'Neil, to the butt of his joke. By the end of his recollection, Ronstadt turns his uncle's shop into a transfrontera social and cultural site

where he, a biethnic boy with the Germanic surname Ronstadt, can declare his allegiance to a transfrontera Tucson and the Red, White, and Green.

Lastly, *Borderman* illustrates that Ronstadt was determined to get the final say by using his personal recollections to correct the rigid ethnic and geographic stereotypes fixing his band, his adopted city, and himself as provincial bumpkins. Far from being a mere "country band" conducted by a "blacksmith bandleader," Club Filarmónico Tucsonense was, Ronstadt asserts in his memoir, an "important institution in Tucson" (127). His description of the club as an institution speaks to the cultural weight he believed the band embodied as a representation of Tucson and Tucsonense identity. Club Filarmónico Tucsonense thus is one of Ronstadt's most potent weapons for mapping Tucsonenses and their cultural and racial hybridity back into the Arizona landscape.

Mary Pat Brady's and Rafael Pérez-Torres's notions of mestizaje help us appreciate the identity-reclaiming politics evident both in Ronstadt's comments on Club Filarmónico Tucsonense published in *Borderman* and in the image of the band (fig. 2). Brady, quoting Karen Mary Davalos (2001), states that "the 'epistemes of mestizaje and diaspora' demand

Figure 2. Club Filarmónico Tucsonense, ca. 1890s. Ronstadt sits at center with his clarinet. Rufino Velez, Ronstadt's business partner, sits to Ronstadt's left holding a trombone. Richard (Dick) Ronstadt, Ronstadt's younger brother, stands in back row center, directly behind Ronstadt. Image courtesy of University of Arizona Library Special Collections.

an accounting of space in order to shift the terms by which subjectivity, opportunities, creativity can be produced" (2006, 11). Furthermore, Pérez-Torres explains how "at the level of culture . . . mestizaje becomes a means to articulate subjectivity otherwise, to consider ways of expressing a reworking of the self in a minor key that negotiates dominant majoritarian paradigms of subjectivity" (2006, 52). These notions combined insist that mestizaje is a racial, subjective, and spatial force (especially considering the wide-ranging diaspora of mestiza/o people) for negotiating, creating, and iterating perceptions of self and of cultural communities. The photo of Club Filarmónico Tucsonense, which shows Federico Ronstadt closely surrounded by the club's predominantly brown, mestizo-featured members along with several fair-skinned, European-featured musicians, commands such an accounting. While some individual members, like Ronstadt, may have less racial mestizaje than others, the intimate proximity of bodies and the depiction of several members touching fellow bandmates' shoulders with their brown or fair-skinned hands communicates a collective mestizo subjectivity. Thus the photo's spatial relations, expressed in a mapping of bandmates' bodies, chart a mixed-raced Club Filarmónico Tucsonense that functioned as a mestizo brotherhood of musicians located in the diasporic region of the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. As such, Club Filarmónico Tucsonense challenges stereotypical categorizations that overemphasize Ronstadt's Germanic ethnic identity. It also contests the majoritarian understanding that only white European bodies on the East Coast, like those of John Philip Sousa's Washington, DC band, can wear a uniform and perform as a "national" marching band.

Furthermore, Ronstadt engages in a discourse of cultural mestizaje reliant on cartographic place-names that map the band's binational travels:

> We would play for church socials, National Holidays, Christmas, and New Year's festivities, dances for our friends, and serenades gratis.
>
> We would exact pay from political meetings and parades that would go into the band treasury. When we had accumulated several hundred dollars, we made a tour to Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, and Redondo (Calif.) . . .
>
> One time we went to Nogales to celebrate a National holiday and remained there three days. We used to play for the dress parades of the Arizona National Guard and, before the Spanish-American War, our entire band joined the National Guard. (2003, 126–27)[26]

This passage illustrates how transfrontera fluidity within the US-Mexico borderlands came to define Tucsonense custom and practice. The Club

Filarmónico Tucsonense performed as a binational marching band within American and Mexican social spaces for a variety of cultural and military-inspired occasions. Ronstadt's transspatial discourse also reflects a cultural defense mechanism recognized by Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez. People of Mexican descent embroiled in a struggle against oppression will "express many aspects of their condition and the multiple dimensions of existence and culture" (Vélez-Ibáñez 1996, 213). Burns's illustration of Mexicans as the "dusky little people below the line" dissolves when compared to the multiple cartographic and cultural dimensions of existence that Ronstadt retrospectively assigned to Club Filarmónico Tucsonense as the band crisscrossed national borderlines.

Building on the band's transfrontera performances, Ronstadt's detailed expression of its genre-crossing musical repertoire also emphasized Tucsonense cultural hybridity, which was influenced by other multinational cultural tides that washed across the Sonora-Arizona borderlands. He recalls that Club Filarmónico Tucsonense played "danzas, mazurkas, polkas, songs and serenades" (126). The danza, a creolization of Afro-European sounds originating in Puerto Rico, the mazurka, a type of folk dance from Poland, and the polka, initially popularized in Central Europe, together provided a multinational musical base for the club's boundary-busting selections. A glimpse into the band's music archive shows that they performed international songs that had migrated into the Arizona borderlands nearly a century before Federico Ronstadt's famous granddaughter Linda popularized her genre-crossing style.[27] Archival sheet music for the Club Filarmónico and an inventory of some of the elder Ronstadt's original compositions—"Manuelita," a polka, "Luchas del Alma," a mazurka, and "El Fronterizo," a schottische—indicate the transfrontera culture of the "Southwest," a term that was surely a misnomer for Federico Ronstadt. The multidimensional expressions of Club Filarmónico Tucsonense show the band's chameleonlike performance politics, which were a necessity for a historical transfrontera landscape in which continuous connections with Sonora and the global heritages that migrated into the US-Mexico borderlands required the "Oxford Minuet" to split time with the "Mexican National Hymn" and the "Japanese Polka."

Conclusion

Walter Benjamin reminds us that "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (1968, 255).

Benjamin continues, "Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins" (255, emphasis in original). For Federico Ronstadt, who wrote *Borderman* during the "decade of the wetback," this meant seizing hold of a Mexican and Tucsonense past under threat from hegemonic US governmental and societal forces.[28] Moreover, it seems Ronstadt understood that even in death he would "not be safe from the enemy." Upon his passing on December 13, 1954, the *Arizona Daily Star* ran a front-page obituary defining Ronstadt as a "pioneer Tucson businessman," omitting any mention of his Sonoran Mexican immigrant heritage and his transfrontera Tucsonense identity (December 14, 1954) (fig. 3). In contrast to the *Star*'s write-up, Spanish-language newspaper *El Tucsonense* ran a front-page obituary that discursively mapped Ronstadt's identity not as a monocultural, mononational pioneer, but as a fronterizo, or borderman (December 14, 1954). *El Tucsonense*'s obituary hails Ronstadt as "Uno de los Mas Queridos y Distinguidos Vecinos, Nativo de Sonora, Mexico" (One of the Most Beloved and Distinguished Residents, Native of Sonora, Mexico) and proceeds to describe him as an intelligent, civic-minded, hardworking businessman who resided in Tucson for sixty-six years (fig.4).

Both *El Tucsonense*'s obituary and *Borderman* deploy a cartographic discourse that remaps Ronstadt's identity as a binational, border-crossing Mexican American, or more precisely a Sonorense Tucsonense, in a rebuke to hegemonic forces engaged in the eradication of Ronstadt's Mexican identity. Ronstadt, leaving nothing to chance, died knowing his fronterizo identity, lived experience, and cultural heritage were safely documented in his memoir. Gloria Anzaldúa asserts that identity is a "kind of stacking or layering of selves, horizontal and vertical layers, [a] geography of selves" (2000, 238). It is clear that Ronstadt uses *Borderman* to spatially challenge southern Arizona "in a moment," or in his case a decade, of "danger." He relocates his identity from that of a frontier pioneer to a fronterizo and remaps Arizona from a frontier to a frontera with a discursive cartographic opposition that reinforces transfrontera "vertical layers" with his "army of parientes," borderlands economy, and culture. Accordingly, *Borderman* should be read alongside earlier works of Mexican American literature engaged in oppositional discursive practices and studied for its complex spatial and cultural maneuvers. Such a reading will bolster the interrogation of national boundaries by transfrontera and hemispheric voices of Mexican descent, dialoguing in oppositional and complicit ways with maps created and predominantly enforced by Anglo-American hegemony.


The Arizona Daily Star

FINAL EDITION

Tucson Pioneer Ronstadt Dies

Tucson Pioneer Ronstadt Dies

Figure 3. Fred Ronstadt obituary on the front page of the Arizona Daily Star, *Tuesday, December 14, 1954. Newspaper clipping courtesy of University of Arizona Library Special Collections.*


EL TUCSONENSE

Murio Don Federico Ronstadt

Figure 4. Don Federico Ronstadt front-page obituary in El Tucsonense, *Tuesday, December 14, 1954. Newspaper clipping courtesy of University of Arizona Library Special Collections.*

Notes

1. Ronstadt's manuscript is located in the Ronstadt Family Collection, 1802–1993, MS 407, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, Tucson. This is the principal archive I consulted. I also conducted research at a secondary site, the Arizona Historical Society–Tucson, where I viewed Ronstadt's correspondence with Arizona Senator Carl Hayden located in the Ronstadt Family Collection, 1777–1993, MS 0695, Arizona Historical Society–Tucson.

2. To summarize *Borderman*'s publication history: Nearly forty years after Ronstadt's passing, his son Edward undertook the transcription and editing of his father's memoir with the help of Southwestern scholar Bernard "Bunny" Fontana. In 1993, University of New Mexico Press published *Borderman*. In 1997, an electronic version transcribed from the original text in Ronstadt's family archives was made available, and in 2003 the book was republished by University of Arizona Press. I quote throughout this essay from the 2003 published edition of *Borderman*, with the exception of one instance where I cite from the 1997 electronic version of Ronstadt's memoir, which is available on the University of Arizona website (http://www.library.arizona.edu/exhibits/ronstadt/bordermn/bmpt1.html).

3. Likewise, Padilla asserts, "However idealized the pre-American cultural community may appear in these [post-1848 personal] narratives, the autobiographical reconstitution of life before the occupation was less a self-deluding compensation, or naive wish-fulfillment fantasy, than what I consider a strategic narrative activity . . . for restoring order, sanity, social purpose in the face of political, social, and economic dispossession" (1993, 11).

4. I follow Nicolás Kanellos's definition of "native" in *Hispanic Immigrant Literature: El Sueño del Retorno* when I refer to "native literary subjects." Kanellos uses a lowercase "n" to differentiate "native-born" Latino writers, whom he defines as "having been born or raised in the United States" (2011, 10).

5. Although the photo is not dated, the Union Pacific–Southern Pacific map on the wall allows an approximate date range for the image. Union Pacific purchased 38 percent of Southern Pacific stock in 1901, giving it control of the railroad; this lasted until 1913, when the US Supreme Court ordered Union Pacific to sell its Southern Pacific stock and relinquish control. See "Chronological History" on the Union Pacific website, http://www.up.com/aboutup/history/chronology/index.htm.

6. For a discussion of the American Protective Association in Tucson, see Sheridan (1986, 117–19).

7. Hadley (1956) refers to the ten-year period leading up to Operation Wetback as "the wetback decade." Citing statistics from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Hadley asserts that prior to 1944, roughly ten to twelve thousand "illegal entrants" were arrested by the Border Patrol each year, increasing to 33,681 arrests in 1944 and to 1,035,282 in 1954.

8. Spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1991) offered the foundational notion that space is fundamentally produced by society. A number of Chicana/o literary scholars have either engaged directly with Lefebvre

or have independently advanced similar notions on how space is a societal and/or cultural production by the Mexican American body politic. These works include, among others, Américo Paredes, *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (2001), in which Paredes articulated his notion of Greater Mexico as a cultural and transnational spatial formation; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987); Juan Bruce-Novoa, *RetroSpace: Collected Essays on Chicano Literature* (1990); Tey Diana Rebolledo, *Women Singing in the Snow* (1995); José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (1997) and *Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico* (2012); Raul Homero Villa, *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture* (2000); Monika Kaup, *Rewriting North American Borders in Chicano and Chicana Narrative* (2001); Rafael Pérez-Torres, "Refiguring Aztlán" (2001); and Mary Pat Brady, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* (2002); and Marissa K. López, *Chicano Nations: The Hemispheric Origins of Mexican American Literature* (2011).

9. See Massey's *Space, Place and Gender* (1994). Sonia Saldívar-Hull explains in "Women Hollering Transfronteriza Feminisms" (1999) that Chicana literature in the 1980s "offered an alternative mapping of feminist literary cartographies" via a "transfrontera feminism" that challenged "dominant patriarchal discourse" (251).

10. I do not claim that *Borderman* prefigures the gendered transfrontera politics of twentieth-century Chicana literature, but there is an "alternative mapping" of territory and the nation-state.

11. Ronstadt's Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society membership certificate is archived in box 7, folder 41, Ronstadt Family Collection, 1802–1993, MS 407, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, Tucson.

12. See Officer, Fontana, and Schuetz-Miller's *The Pimería Alta* (1996) for a history and culture of the region.

13. For more on American filibusterer Henry Crabb, see Sheridan (1986, 275 n. 28).

14. Sen. Carl Hayden to Fred Ronstadt, March 21, 1940, box 2, folder 6, Ronstadt Family Collection, MS 0695, Arizona Historical Society–Tucson.

15. Sen. Carl Hayden to Fred Ronstadt, April 13, 1940, box 2, folder 6, Ronstadt Family Collection, MS 0695, Arizona Historical Society–Tucson.

16. Fred Ronstadt to Honorable Carl Hayden, March 30, 1940, box 2, folder 6, Ronstadt Family Collection, MS 0695, Arizona Historical Society–Tucson.

17. Rodolfo Acuña writes an excellent history of Ignacio Pesqueira's political rise and influence in *Sonoran Strongman: Ignacio Pesqueira and His Times* (1974).

18. John R. Signor and John A. Kirchner (1987) offer a history of transnational railroads between the United States and Mexico.

19. See Ramón Ruiz's *The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists* (1988) for a more detailed discussion of William C. Greene.

20. Ronstadt's transnational business revelations in *Borderman* undo local and nation-based paradigms situating his generation of Tucsonense businessmen. For example, Thomas Sheridan erroneously claims that "businessmen like . . . Federico Ronstadt . . . were essentially city dwellers." He contrasts them to their

Mexican predecessors, whom he describes as "frontier elite" who "utilized Tucson as a base of operations [but cast] their nets across southern Arizona into New Mexico, Chihuahua, and Sonora" (1986, 52).

21. Ronstadt had to defend his adult son from a smuggling allegation that would have disgraced the family's business integrity. In a letter to the Arizona Agriculturist Board, dated April 16, 1925, Ronstadt explains that his son Fred Jr., who was college-age and working at the store, innocently sold Sonoran clients a small pocket pistol and some boxes of cartridges. The indictment was eventually dropped thanks to Ronstadt's good reputation and his denunciation of smuggling as illegal. See Federico Ronstadt to Arizona Agriculturalist, April 16, 1942, Ronstadt Family Collection, MS 0695, Arizona Historical Society–Tucson.

22. By "rhetoric of riddance" I mean the extermination of Mexicans as narrated in popular literature by white American authors who seek to rid a given geography of a Mexican presence. One of the earliest literary representations of a Mexican-free Arizona is by Owen Wister, whose collection *Red Men and White*, first published in 1896, includes the tale "Specimen Jones." The story centers on Jones and a young tenderfoot from the East Coast and places Mexicans on the social periphery as indolent drunks. Later in the story, when Apache warfare breaks out, Jones comes across a burning freight wagon and "five dismembered human stumps" (58) in the road. The narrator remarks, "This was what had happened to the Miguels and Serapios and the concertina" (58), as Wister reduces a tri-cultural Arizona of Mexicans, Natives, and Anglos to a biracial conflict that lives up to the name of his collection, *Red Men and White*.

23. US Federal Census 1920, Arivaca, Pima, Arizona, Roll: T635_50, 6B, District 79.

24. Rudolf G. Zepeda to Federico Ronstadt, February 2, 1942, box 8, folder 23, Ronstadt Family Collection, 1802–1993, MS 407, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, Tucson.

25. Sheridan (1986, 30) addresses Tucson's takeover by US troops.

26. A map included in *Borderman*'s front matter shows Nogales as one binational town straddling both sides of the Arizona-Sonora frontier, and this conception is reflected in the memoir. At times Ronstadt refers specifically to the Sonoran side, while at other times he may be referring to the Arizona side, but as a "borderman," Ronstadt rarely distinguishes. When he writes, "We went to Nogales to celebrate a National holiday and remained there for three days," it is likely that they crisscrossed both Nogales townships to play.

27. Linda Ronstadt is recognized as one of modern popular music's most versatile performers. Jazz writer Christopher Loudon describes her as a "chameleon who can blend into any background yet remain boldly distinctive" (2004). Collaborations with Dolly Parton, Aaron Neville, Frank Zappa, Flaco Jimenez, and, most recently, Mariachi Los Camperos testify to Linda's hybrid musical exposure and her fluid navigation of the multicultural music she absorbed as a child within the intimate space of her grandfather's Tucson home.

28. My use of Benjamin is inspired by Ramón Saldívar's introductory movement in *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (2006, 7–8). Saldívar quotes Benjamin to discuss Paredes's concerns

with historical memory and cultural eradication. Ronstadt, like Paredes and many other Mexican American cultural producers of the early to mid-twentieth century, understood the dire consequences if they should fail to record the cultural and regional narratives of their lived experience.

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