Uplifting Corona Fictions: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Representations Encouraging Well-Being in Music Videos

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic continuously affects people around the world, exposing the already existing social interconnectedness and economic interdependencies of our times. Revisiting pandemic fiction, as well as crises narratives in literature and other cultural productions in general, has suddenly become a coping strategy to counteract the effects of physical distancing, but in particular the experiences of lockdowns. Interestingly, since the early stages of the pandemic in the Western world in spring 2020, numerous artists have not only dissected the reality of confinement across diverse genres but more so provided the public with uplifting content in various audiovisual formats – such as short films, web series, and music videos. Although anglophone music videos are more broadly known, many culture specific uplifting narratives emerged also in Romance languages.

Research results from psychology, social sciences and musicology all suggest that in times of crises listening to music, watching music videos and music-making have great potential as coping strategies and tools for mood regulation, significantly contributing to well-being.

In this article, we analyze from an interdisciplinary cultural, film, and media studies perspective how three music videos in Romance languages (*No tengas miedo* by El Canijo de Jerez, *Ya pasará* by Carlos Rivera, and *Andrà tutto bene* by Jack Savoretti) encode the uplifting storytelling, portraying the human need for connection, on a narratological macro (fictional arc) and micro level (textual and audiovisual cues). Across national, cultural, and linguistic borders, these Corona Fictions[2]

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demonstrate how fragile our social fabric is while, at the same time, strengthening the feeling of solidarity, togetherness/ unity, and cohesion in their representations and approach to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With this contribution, we intend to enrich the existing research from the intersections of psychology, social sciences and musicology with a specific cultural and media studies perspective beyond cultural products in English.

Keywords   Corona Fictions, narratives, pandemic, music video, romance languages, well-being

Introduction

Oh, I know that there'll be better days	*Ritornerà l'abbraccio tra la gente*	*Andrà tutto bene*
Oh, that sunshine 'bout to come my way	*Il sole sulla pelle tornerà*	*Vai ficar tudo bem*
May we never ever shed	*La libertà di correre per strada*	*Everything will be alright*
Another tear for today	*Baciarsi alla fermata e a un tratto*	*Andrà tutto bene*
'Cause oh, I know that	*Guardarsi negli occhi per poi dire (dire)*	*Tout ira bien*
There'll be better days	*Andrà tutto bene (bene)*	*Everything will be alright*
	Andrà tutto bene (bene)	
("Better Days"	("Andrà tutto bene" by Elisa ft.	("Andrà Tutto Bene"
by OneRepublic, 25.03.2020)[3]	Tommaso Paradiso, 10.04.2020)[4]	by Cristóvam, 25.03.2020)[5]

In the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, despite all its sociocultural consequences, there is a tendency in cultural production across media featuring uplifting content. As the three citations above indicate, these cultural products – in this case music videos – evoke that difficult times will pass and freedom and physical proximity will soon be restored. While the Anglophone world is broadly known for songs released at the beginning of the first

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3 OneRepublic: OneRepublic – Better Days (Audio). In: https://youtu.be/YOrMAW4pKuA, (2020) (25.8.2022).

4 ELISA Official: Elisa – Andrà Tutto Bene (Lyric Video) ft. Tommaso Paradiso. In: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBWTU_hQLDM, (2020) (25.8.2022).

5 Cristóvam: Andrà Tutto Bene. In: https://youtu.be/bUZIp_PKeZ0, (2020) (25.8.2022).

wave of numerous lockdowns in 2020, due to their language-specific coverage, especially cultural products in Romance languages are less known globally. Similarly, musicians around the world – unsurprisingly – released their 'lockdown music' pointing towards a hopeful outcome of the pandemic (e.g. "Everything will be alright" in Cristovám's *Andrà tutto bene*[6]) and using a hopeful perspective represented by the references to e.g. "sunshine" in the lyrics by OneRepublic[7] and "Il sole sulla pelle" by Elisa ft. Tommaso Paradiso.[8]

In times of crises research results from psychology, social sciences and musicology[9] all suggest that listening to music, watching music videos and music-making have great potential as coping strategies and tools for mood regulation, consequently significantly contributing to well-being. Based on these insights, in this article we analyze three uplifting music videos in Romance languages regarding the narrative representation of this uplifting potential in its multimodal form. For this exemplary case study, we choose a hermeneutic and qualitative approach from cultural, film and media studies and analyze the narrative representation of emotionally uplifting content in Corona Fictions music videos. We consider the latter as multimodal narratives (textual and audiovisual level) and analyze a narratological macro and micro level. Hereby, the main research questions are:

a) In what ways does the emotionally charged narratological uplifting storytelling occur on a macro level?

b) How do Coronas Fictions music videos encode the uplifting on a micro level in textual and audiovisual cues?[10]

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6 Ibid.

7 OneRepublic, Better Days, YT.

8 ELISA Official, Andrà Tutto Bene, YT.

9 See Sarah Hennessy et al.: Music and mood regulation during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. In: *PLoS ONE 16/10* (2021), n.p. See Pastora Martínez-Castilla et al.: The Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Lockdown in Spain. An Analysis of Personal and Context-Related Variables. In: *Frontiers in Psychology* 12/647837 (2021), n.p. See Lauren K. Fink et al.: Viral Tunes. Changes in Musical Behaviours and Interest in Coronamusic Predict Socio-Emotional Coping during COVID-19 Lockdown. In: *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8/180 (2021), 1-11.

10 Admittedly, as Putter and colleagues stated in their article, "consideration of both lyrical and musical variables together would further increase our understanding of this topic". Kaila C. Putter et al.: Popular Music Lyrics and the COVID-19 Pandemic. In: *Psychology of Music* 50/4 (2022), 1280-1295, 1290. However, this is beyond the scope of this article and demands a more music-oriented approach. Therefore, an in-depth investigation of specific musical cues and music video specifics are still up for more investigation.

Firstly, we contextualize Covid-19 related music videos through the lens of Corona Fictions. Then we explain the connection of music to mood regulation and well-being,[11] and, subsequently, to enhancing social cohesion.[12] Thirdly, we take a closer look at how the uplifting potential – whether by using textual or filmic (audiovisual) cues – is encoded in the three Corona Fictions music video examples. Our main corpus[13] in this article comprises *No tengas miedo* by El Canijo de Jerez, *Ya pasará* by Carlos Rivera, and *Andrà tutto bene* by Jack Savoretti.[14]

Through a cultural studies and broader Corona Fictions corpus lens, our hermeneutic approach and qualitative content analysis is based on the notion of popular culture as an early warning system, through which social grievances and disintegration may become visible, or audible, even before they surface in other discourses. The early detection of social grievances[15] negatively affecting people's well-being includes the potential to support the awareness to counteract them.[16] For the narratological analysis of the textual and audiovisual uplifting cues in the selected corpus of Corona Fictions music videos, we apply

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11 Alvarez-Cueva "understands well-being as 'the series of momentary affective states that occur through time' […] that may impact both individual and social." Priscila Alvarez-Cueva: Music to Face the Lockdown. An Analysis of Covid-19 Music Narratives on Individual and Social Well-Being. In: *Social Inclusion 10/2* (2022), 6-18, 8. In Spain and Italy, for example, listening to music had a significantly positive impact on people's perceived well-being. See Martínez-Castilla et al., Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing, 3.

12 Social cohesion (see Council of Europe: Methodological Guide on Social Cohesion Policy. In: *Council of Europe* (2005) http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/GUIDE_en.pdf, (17.6.2021), 63.) is based on the well-being and shared responsibility of its citizens as well as the integrity of civic values; more importantly, however, it demands feeding into the collective energy by practicing abundant mutual moral support in a cohesive society (see Anna Rita Manca: Social Cohesion. In: Alex C. Michalos (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Dordrecht 2014, 6026-6028, 6026).

13 El Canijo de Jerez: El Canijo de Jerez con La Mari – NO TENGAS MIEDO – (Videoclip Oficial). In: https://youtu.be/uX9Y_1UEGhw, (2020) (18.8.2022), Carlos Rivera: Carlos Rivera – Ya pasará (Video Oficial). In: https://youtu.be/eVamIJXZO5s, (2020) (18.8.2022) and Jack Savoretti: Jack Savoretti – Andrà Tutto Bene. In: https://youtu.be/xjG-6ZDmiP4, (2020) (18.8.2022).

14 In this article, we investigate Jack Savoretti's *Andrà tutto bene* which was published on YouTube in 2020 on April 2nd and, thus, is among the first Corona Fictions music videos in Italian. See Jack Savoretti, Andrà tutto bene, YT. However, Elisa also published a song with the same title only one week later (see quote above. Engl. "It will return the embrace among the people/ The sun on the skin will return/ The freedom to run down the street/ To kiss at a bus stop and suddenly/ To look into each other's eyes and say/ It will be alright/ It will be alright."; authors' translation). See ELISA Official, *Andrà tutto bene*, YT.

15 Denis Newiak: *Alles schon mal dagewesen: Was wir aus Pandemie-Filmen für die Corona-Krise lernen können*. Marburg 2020.

16 Although not uplifting and, thus, not focus of this investigation, interestingly "Zullow (1991) found that the frequency of pessimistic rumination in popular song lyrics predicted economic downturns with a 1- to 2-year lead" Putter et al., Popular Music Lyrics, 1283; see Harold M. Zullow: Pessimistic rumination in popular songs and newsmagazines predict economic recession via decreased consumer optimism and spending. In: *Journal of Economic Psychology* 12.3 (1991), 501-526.

established film analysis methodology, mainly relying on Torben Grodal,[17] Anne Bartsch et al.[18] and Jens Eder,[19] as well as close reading[20] of the lyrics.

Corona Fictions Music Videos

This research originates in a broader research project on Corona Fictions[21] in Romance languages.[22] We understand uplifting songs and their music videos as part of a larger, very diverse and multimodal Corona Fictions corpus of cultural products that appeared around the world. As we have observed, these narratives emerge across media (in literature, online media, film and theatre) and touch upon the Covid-19 pandemic, its related containment measures and its sociocultural consequences. As we have already demonstrated in a previous article,[23] beside the new social and hygiene practices, which were thoroughly modified by pandemic management, various recurring motifs stimulating hope and solidarity are used in diverse fictional narratives. Besides gratitude towards essential workers and, especially, medical staff, we identified the necessity of working together and collective clapping as motifs to reinforce a sense of community.[24] Another

17 See Torben Grodal: The PECMA Flow: A General Model of Visual Aesthetics. In: *Film Studies* 8.1 (2006), 1-11.

18 See Anne Bartsch, Jens Eder, Kathrin Fahlenbrach (eds.): *Audiovisuelle Emotionen. Emotionsdarstellung und Emotionsvermittlung durch audiovisuelle Medienangebote*. Köln 2007.

19 See Jens Eder: *Die Figur im Film. Grundlagen der Figurenanalyse*. Marburg 2008.

20 In this context, 'close reading' is not limited to the interpretation immanent to the text, as propagated by *New Criticism*, but is used as an umbrella term for all literary methods examining the text as an object. It contrasts with the collective term of 'distant reading' in the digital humanities that mostly uses algorithmic methods for its text examination. See Evelyn Gius: Digitale Hermeneutik. Computergestütztes Close Reading als literaturwissenschaftliches Forschungsparadigma? In: Fotis Jannidis (ed.): *Digitale Literaturwissenschaft. DFG-Symposion 2017*, Stuttgart 2022, 385-417.

21 "Corona Fictions […] emerge during the COVID-19 pandemic and negotiate the latter in their stories, continuing in parts the tradition of creating pandemic fiction. We argue that Corona Fictions reactivate certain structures and elements in the form of metanarratives. The pandemic produced collective experiences which can be understood as transnational and transcultural phenomena translating into the crisis while simultaneously tapping into existing pandemic narratives." Julia Obermayr, Yvonne Völkl: *Stay Away!* Negotiating Physical Distancing in Hispanophone Corona Fictions. In: *Altre Modernità* 28 (2022), 158-174, 161 [special issue on *Words, Powers and Pandemics*].

22 Yvonne Völkl: *Corona Fictions. On Viral Narratives in Times of Pandemics*. FWF-project P 34571-G, 2021-2024. In: www.tugraz.at/projekte/cofi/, (18.3.2023).

23 See Research Group *Pandemic Fictions**: From Pandemic to Corona Fictions. Narratives in Times of Crises. In: *PhiN-Beihefte* 24 (2020), 321-344, http://web.fu-berlin.de/phin/beiheft24/b24t21.pdf, (11.5.2023) [*Yvonne Völkl, Albert Göschl, Elisabeth Hobisch, Julia Obermayr].

24 See ibid.: 333-334.

characteristic we detected in early Corona Fictions is the fact that these narratives "not only distill the importance of human connection, touch, and freedom to move outside, but also indicate the willingness for social change after the lockdown".[25]

For this study, we conduct a qualitative content analysis[26] of three songs in more detail which already through their title allude to their uplifting notion. They intend to strengthen people's beliefs that they do not need to be afraid (Span. *No tengas miedo* by El Canijo de Jerez), that bad things will pass (Span. *Ya pasará* by Carlos Rivera), and that, most of all, everything will be alright (Ital. *Andrà tutto bene* by Jack Savoretti). Even though all three songs have been published via music video on *YouTube* within the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, not all their creators intentionally planned on releasing pandemic songs.[27] Nevertheless, they tell fictional stories of overcoming obstacles and keeping the glue of the social fabric intact by reminding their audiences of the important role of each individual within society at large. In this sense and due to their date of release, all three music videos were consumed during the pandemic as Corona Fictions. On these grounds, the corpus songs to be investigated for this article have been carefully chosen a) due to their release in 2020 (during or after lockdown), b) due to originating in Romance languages and/ or cultures, and c) due to their encouraging titles hinting at an uplifting nature – on the textual (lyrics) as well as on the audiovisual (music video) level.

There have already been several studies from psychology, social sciences and musicology that underlined the potential of music itself and music videos as a significant tool to regulate one's mood in times of the pandemic.[28] What these studies confirm is, therefore, highly relevant and applicable to the corpus of this article, as

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25 Ibid.: 336.

26 Corona Fictions music videos are defined as music videos in relation to and published/ streamed (mainly on online platforms such as YouTube) during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to our definition the genre of Corona Fictions appears across media and in our analyses, we intend to allow a broad view of the genre, its characteristics and differences. Therefore, we focus on those aspects and characteristics comparable across media and, in this article, on the textual and audiovisual representation of the uplifting effect.

27 Fink et al. call these songs and music videos 'coronamusic'; or 'Corona Clips', see also Naomi Ziv, Revital Hollander-Shabtai: Music and COVID-19. Changes in uses and emotional reaction to music under stay-at-home restrictions. In: *Psychology of Music* 50.2 (2022), 475-491. Fink et al., Viral Tunes.

28 See Hennessy et al., Music and Mood Regulation; Martínez-Castilla et al., Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing; Fink. et al., Viral Tunes.

[t]he attractiveness and coping potential of coronamusic may primarily lie in its characteristic as a medium that explicitly addresses the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on people's lives and feelings. Coronamusic covers a broad range of topics, with various emotional tones, in an often creative and aesthetically appealing way.[29]

Nevertheless, from a cultural and media studies perspective what these researchers call 'coronamusic' has not yet been investigated. The particular corpus selection for this article is intended to demonstrate how differently (yet similarly in their potential of mood regulation) music videos portray and/ or inspire a positive approach on the hardships and crises of life provoked by the pandemic.

Although the length of a music video does not compare to a theme-related fictional feature film or novel, their audiovisual portraits of the Covid-19 pandemic more so compare to the powerful creation of multimodal narratives in the condensed form of Corona Fictions poetry. On an auditive level, the audience listens to the uplifting story arcs in the lyrics as well as to the music itself and, on a visual level, these impressions are supported by an uplifting composition and framing of the accompanying film aesthetic images (including scenarios, people and colours). Additionally, what distinguishes music videos published and distributed via *YouTube* from traditional media is the fact that on these new media platforms, the audience does not listen to music passively but has to actively choose to listen to music and to choose specific content. So, contrary to traditional offline media from the past, watching music videos on YouTube, in short, requires what Henry Jenkins also calls "participatory culture" (meaning a more active/ immersive audience involvement).[30] Thus, media consumption within our "convergence culture"[31] represents audience agency and their conscious decision of what to consume when and how – especially in times of restricted mobility and social interaction.

29 Fink et al., Viral Tunes, 9.

30 Henry Jenkins: *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture. Media Education for the 21st Century.* Cambridge, London 2009, xi.

31 Henry Jenkins: *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide.* New York, London 2006, 2-3.

Corona Fictions Music Videos Promoting Emotional Well-Being and Social Cohesion

> *[M]usic is highly efficient in regulating mood, defining self-identity, followed by reducing loneliness and creating a sense of togetherness. Music was found to be most efficient at attaining the goal of enjoyment and maintaining a good mood.*[32]

The United Nations Department of Global Communications[33] early on pointed out the uplifting effect of music practices and music videos gone viral during the pandemic. The e.g. Spanish group Stay Homas situated in Barcelona actively played music and sang together on their roof top terrace – as one of many examples mentioned by the UN.[34] In their songs these artists tackle the restrictive nature of the pandemic containment measures in an artistic way via lyrics of feeling like an encaged bird[35] ("Me siento un pájaro enjaulado" in *Ya no puedo más*)[36] but at the same time express the longing for singing, laughing, looking at someone and going out dancing together ("Yo quiero cantarte, reírte, mirarte, sacarte a bailar").[37]

Similarly, to the Stay Homas, many artists confronted the pandemic and the subsequent containment measures in a comparable way. The extraordinary amount of music videos with pandemic content published at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic inspired media studies scholars to classify these fictional narratives. These classifications considerably facilitate the identification of dominant tendencies within cultural production beyond the respective corpora the scholars investigated.

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32 Roni Granot et al.: 'Help! I Need Somebody'. Music as a Global Resource for Obtaining Wellbeing Goals in Times of Crisis. In: *Frontiers in Psychology* 12.648013 (2021), 16-17.

33 See Departamento de comunicación global: La música no cura una pandemia, pero alegra el alma. In: *Naciones Unidas. Respuesta a la Covid-19.* https://www.un.org/es/coronavirus/articles/el-poder-de-la-musica-durante-coronavirus (24.8.2022).

34 See ibid.

35 Similarly, this reference also exists – as its title suggests – in *Aves Enjauladas*. Rozalen: Rozalén – Aves Enjauladas (Lyric Video). In: https://youtu.be/B9rfD5WEJXM, (2020) (25.8.2022).

36 Stay Homas: STAY HOMAS, Sílvia Pérez Cruz - Ya no puedo más (Confination Song XXII). In: https://youtu.be/-kdrnEe5eT8 (2020) (25.8.2022).

37 Ibid.

From a narratological macro level and focussing on the production circumstances, early on during the Covid-19 pandemic, four sections for song classification have been identified.[38] These are: a) viral music from the initial period of Covid-19, b) online festivals, c) old songs as anthems, and d) UN professional collaborations. From another point of view, Marcel Vejmelka und Timo Obergöker discuss the following four groups of song classification equally focussed on a narratological macro level but highlighting the overall intentions of the songs.[39] These are: a) lockdown songs (narrating and portraying the lockdown), b) stay-at-home songs (strengthening a positive attitude towards lockdown while calling to stay at home), c) mostly covered songs for charity (calling for mutual support and solidarity), as well as d) 'the song is the dance' (including dance challenges such as 'Jerusalema').[40]

These two classifications for 'coronamusic' or 'pandemic tunes'[41] consider the narratological macro level and provide useful insights on the specific circumstances that determined cultural production during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, they elaborate more on dissemination and topicality than on potential emotional impact. Therefore, for the narrative representation of the 'uplifting effect' we additionally took into consideration further classifications in Priscila Alvarez-Cueva and her colleagues' article on emotions and shared activities in pandemic music.[42]

These researchers investigated songs by the Catalan trio Stay Homas that takes up the theme of *desconfinamiento*[43] and, on a narratological micro level, identify "five categories of elements that relate to a social reality lived within the time of quarantine in Barcelona".[44]

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38 See United Nations, UN, La música no cura una pandemia. See Priscila Alvarez-Cueva: Music to Face the Lockdown. An Analysis of Covid-19 Music Narratives on Individual and Social Well-Being. In: *Social Inclusion* 10/2 (2022), 6-18, 9.

39 See Marcel Vejmelka, Timo Obergöker: *Coronavirus and Pop Culture in French, Spanish and Portuguese-Speaking Cultures. A Transnational Approach*. London 16. February 2021 [Video]. In: www.sas.ac.uk/videos-and-podcasts/culture-language-and-literature/coronavirus-and-pop-culture-french-spanish-and (20.2.2022) [Link no longer available].

40 For more examples also see Yvonne Völkl, Julia Obermayr: Lockdown-Corona Fictions als Seismograf für sozialen Zusammenhalt. In: Barbara Ratzenböck et al. (eds.): *Sozialer Zusammenhalt in der Krise. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf Heterogenität und Kohäsion moderner Gesellschaften*. Bielefeld 2023, 255-279.

41 See Fink et al., Viral Tunes.

42 See Priscila Alvarez-Cueva, María-José Masanet, Ana Belen Cano-Hila: Las narraciones de la cuarentena durante la crisis de la COVID-19 a través de la música: emociones y actividades compartidas por Stay Homas. In: *Hipertext.net* 21 (2020), 67-77, 67.

43 Engl. "deconfinement".

44 Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena, 67.

They include a) wishes (returning to known activities like having coffee with friends), b) emotions (four subcategories of feelings: positive, negative, uncertain, and of longing/nostalgic[45] nature), c) people (particularly family and friends), d) practices (activities possible during lockdown such as yoga, painting, cooking, etc.) and e) reflections (reflecting on one's life with intentions of change for a brighter and hopeful future).[46] These emerging characteristics "connect with emotions and generate responses of interest, empathy, and solidarity beyond the variants of age, gender, and location",[47] thus, allow for useful categories to also apply to other artists' songs (re)created/ covered during the pandemic.

Particularly at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, music videos of different categories (as mentioned above), aimed at impacting human behaviour. On the one hand, they supported physical health by spreading information on hygiene measures[48] to combat the virus; on the other, they acted upon mental health offering a tool to actively combat anxiety, loneliness, and other negative emotions that have increased due to the restrictive containment measures.

As Saarikallio and Erkkilä showed, music is a valuable tool for mood-regulation of which adolescents benefit especially: "Music proved to be a versatile means for mood regulation. It offered the adolescents resources for increasing and restoring well-being, and made their emotional life more varied and colourful".[49] Nevertheless, regardless whether we take into consideration actively playing an instrument or singing together online or listening to music to uplift one's mood to support well-being,[50] mood regulation is an essential function of music practices.[51] Based on these insights, we can state that uplifting,

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45 According to Granot and colleagues, "[n]ostalgia, with its bitter-sweet qualia, is often associated with autobiographical memory, high arousal, familiarity, liking, and strong mixed emotions […], especially in sad music". Granot et al., 'Help! I Need Somebody', 17.

46 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena, 71-75.

47 Ibid.: 67.

48 'Practices' (see Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 12) represent the narratives primarily used to remind people of the official containment measures and function as a category helping to direct (and/or change) human behaviour by mentioning social (but more so physical) distancing or reminding people to stay at home. This can be observed in numerous hashtags in various languages emerging during the first lockdown, all referring to staying at home and following the containment measures set in place globally, e.g. #andratuttobene, #quedateencasa, #restecheztoi etc. See Völkl and Obermayr, Lockdown-Corona Fictions.

49 Suvi Saarikallio, Jaakko Erkkilä: The Role of Music in Adolescents' Mood Regulation. In: *Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research* 35.1 (2007), 88-109, 105.

50 See Granot et al., 'Help! I Need Somebody'.

51 See Hennessy et al., Music and Mood Regulation; Martínez-Castilla et al., Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing; Fink. et al., Viral Tunes.

positive lyrics and music video performances during the Covid-19 pandemic had the potential to counteract anxiety and a feeling of uncertainty due to the crisis.

As Alvarez-Cueva has observed, regarding personal well-being, music indeed made a significant difference,[52] as it "helped strengthen both individual and social spheres that, in turn, are the basis for well-being"[53]. Moreover, she considers music as an "antidote to the effects of the coronavirus"[54] since shared positive emotions through music may reduce the feeling of loneliness and reinforce social bonds.[55] She furthermore points towards the above-mentioned article by the United Nations, in which researchers sum up music practices during the pandemic as "a source of optimism and solidarity during confinement".[56]

Hennessy and her colleagues stated that "music had a salubrious impact on people during a global crisis that transcended potential differences in culture and governmental response to the pandemic".[57] Furthermore, their study specifically "showed that across four different countries on three different continents, listening to music and watching music videos to regulate mood was a strong predictor of affective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the mechanisms by which music is able to improve mood may change across people, the fundamental result is the same".[58] The disruption of everyday life,[59] social relations, and freedom of movement – commonly used as a form of legal and social punishment when e.g. considering prison – can be identified as a common stressor on a global level, demanding for a valve or transformational tool. Thus, consuming Corona Fictions music videos offered one of these tools.

When it comes to using music to reach well-being goals, interestingly "[n]one of the COVID19 context-related variables had significant effects (living in a region with a high

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52 When it comes to strengthening people's resilience, however, the findings differed. Hence, it has to be mentioned that one study's findings are astounding, since "[r]esilience was not significantly correlated to music's efficacy for any of the wellbeing goals. The lack of significance of resilience was unexpected". Martínez-Castilla et al., Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing, 7. More investigations in the future are recommended.

53 Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 8.

54 Ibid.

55 See ibid, 11.

56 Departamento de comunicación global, La música no cura una pandemia; Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 7.

57 Hennessy et al., Music and Mood Regulation, 12.

58 Ibid., 14.

59 "[R]esearch has suggested that it is the everyday life disruption caused by the lockdowns, and not the COVID19 incidence rates, what leads individuals to choose specific music patterns with the aim of reducing negative affect […]." Martínez-Castilla et al., Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing, 7.

COVID19 impact, perception of belonging to a risk group, being alone, having caring responsibilities […])".[60] Rather it was some personal variables – e.g. musical training and the age factor – making a significant difference. Despite the elderly being at higher risk of severe infection, "[t]he youngest participants reported higher efficacy of music in obtaining feelings of enjoyment and maintaining their good mood and to get distracted from the crisis".[61]

Regardless of age, concerning coping through musical engagement, Fink and colleagues identified the four following themes:

a) "During the COVID-19 lockdown, people have turned to music for regulating their emotions [bold in original]".

b) "People experiencing different types of emotional changes showed different patterns of musical engagement [bold in original]".

c) "Music listening and music making may provide different coping potentials [bold in original]".

d) "Coronamusic played a key role in socio-emotional coping [bold in original]".[62]

Arguably, most significant for this article were a) and d): a) proving that people use music to regulate emotions, and d) that specifically 'coronamusic', in this case, Corona Fictions music videos have a great potential impact on socio-emotionally coping with the pandemic. Particularly the disruptive nature of lockdowns was confronted by this means, since music listening increased significantly during that time.[63] Limited opportunities for social interactions and support animated people to "put music in the role of a compassionate vis-à-vis, with Solace-related [capital in original] functions".[64] Regarding c), the potentials in making music versus listening to music vary: making music requires more agency and is a way of expressing oneself, "thus [it] tends to merge with the performer".[65]

Reducing negative emotions by listening to music, on the contrary, "implies an expectation that the music is the agent, turning to the listener and addressing them in their

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60 Ibid.

61 Ibid., 9.

62 Fink et al., Viral Tunes, 8-9.

63 See ibid., 8

64 Ibid., 9.

65 Ibid.

distress".[66] This expectation applies especially to music videos distributed via new media platforms such as YouTube. In this specific context and contrary to traditional offline media, the users actively determine if they want to listen to music at a specific moment and choose the songs they want to hear and the videos they want to watch. Hence, additionally to their multimodal characteristics (music, lyrics and images), consuming music videos requires agency and represents an active choice and – in times of Covid-19 induced lockdowns – an act of selfcare.

Apart from recent studies related to mood regulation and well-being during the pandemic, as mentioned above, "there are relatively few studies on how individuals use music to regulate their emotions effectively in response to an acute major stressor, such as in the context of a significant, global event".[67] Thus, "[t]he COVID-19 pandemic provides a unique opportunity in which to study universal responses to a singular, unifying stressor on a grand scale".[68] With this contribution, we intend to enrich the existing research from the intersections of psychology, social sciences and musicology with a specific cultural and media studies perspective beyond cultural products in English.

In many languages, Corona Fictions music offered a positive outlook on life in times of crisis and even fostered social cohesion as Lauren Fink and her colleagues suggest.[69] In their study they "showed that it was not the music itself that served as a coping aid, but the purposeful ways people engaged and interacted with it (i.e., their music-related behaviour)".[70] As social cohesion is fundamental for a peaceful, inclusive society and for the success of pandemic crisis management, stabilizing people's mood must be regarded as significant contribution to fight the negative consequences of the pandemic. Social media 'tools' such as hashtags (e.g. #andratuttobene #musiquecoronavirus #musiquecovid19 #rapcorona #lockdownmusic #coronamusic #quarantinemusic #restezchezvous #quedateencasa)[71] create a sense of community and support this cohesive idea. Especially in a moment of physical isolation, these and similar digital tools gain importance creating a virtual cohesive network and a feeling of community.[72] Hence, through a cultural

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66 Ibid.

67 Hennessy et al., Music and Mood Regulation, 2.

68 Ibid.

69 See Fink et al., Viral Tunes.

70 Ibid., 8.

71 See also Völkl and Obermayr, Lockdown-Corona Fictions.

72 Similarly, regarding the multiple online concerts during the pandemic, Butler and Jeziński observe "the

studies lens, this article further aims to demonstrate that the three chosen Romance speaking music videos – as a language-specific example of a global trend – equally take on a significant and socially influential role when it comes to coping with pandemic challenges.

Don't Be Afraid, Everything Will Be Fine! Uplifting Narrative Representations in Corona Fictions Music Videos

Two or three months/ They're saying on TV/
Be safe in your shelters and soon we'll be free/
One day we'll remember the hardest of times/
When distance meant love and it kept us alive.
"Andrà tutto bene" by Cristóvam.

Despite the initially positive prognoses on the duration of the lockdowns in media and political reports during the first year of the pandemic, both the authors/ creators of cultural productions as well as the fictional characters of Corona Fictions were confronted with the 'first lockdown shock effect'.[73] Confined to the private spaces of their homes, their characters either also suffer due to limited social life and restricted activities together while struggling to maintain functioning social bonds (e.g. in *Ya pasará* and in *Andrà tutto bene*); or they embody protagonists of an almost utopian post-pandemic future (e.g. in *No tengas miedo*). No matter if this positive future is explicitly represented or solely implicitly alluded to, the uplifting potential of the three Corona Fictions music videos of our corpus, can be detected on both a narratological a) macro, and b) micro level:

On a *macro level*, the overall presentation of each of the fictional arcs in the corpus selected is intended to offer hope and a positive outlook on the future. In the selected corpus we identified two ways of creating this positive outlook. Some narratives continuous-

emulation of the social through virtual forms of communication". Martin Butler, Marek Jeziński: Pop, Pandemic, Politics. On the 'Virtual Social' and Ways of Engagement in Times of Crisis – A Conversation Across Borders and Disciplines. In: *Rock Music Studies* 8.1 (2021), 26-35, 31.

73 See Tania Singer, Sarah Koop, Malvika Godara: *The Covsocial Project: How Did Berliners Feel and React During the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020/21? Changes in Aspects of Mental Health, Resilience and Social Cohesion.* Berlin 2021. https://www.covsocial.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CovSocial_EN_WEB.pdf (28.11.2021); see also Völkl and Obermayr, Lockdown-Corona Fictions.

ly encourage a positive feeling in the audience on a macro level as El Canijo de Jerez has shown in *No tengas miedo*.[74] In this video, the musicians and singers are shown on a sunny day walking through a beautiful Spanish landscape with fields, trees and mountains in the background. They repeatedly look into the camera and address the audience with encouraging messages as they sing "Todo saldrá bien, no tengas miedo".[75] Additionally, they visibly enjoy the beauty of their surrounding and the contact with nature, as they turn their face to the sun and smile[76] or touch plants[77] and stones.[78] Other music videos present a supposed solution to a negative situation or feeling, as Carlos Rivera's *Ya pasará* demonstrates.[79] This video starts off with negative audiovisual cues of people having to close stores and others being treated at the hospital[80] but ends with clouds disappearing in the sky to let the sunshine through. These images are underlined by lyrics indicating that everything (negative) is temporary, that every 'storm will pass' ("Ya pasará, la tempestad").[81] Similarly, Jack Savoretti's *Andrá tutto bene*[82] at the beginning portrays the emptiness in the streets before lyrically reassuring the audience that everything will be alright by citing the song's title one minute into the song.

As they strongly focus on the lockdown, which obligated large parts of population to stay at home, Rivera's *Ya pasará* and Savoretti's *Andrà tutto bene* fall into the categories 'lockdown songs' and indirect 'stay-at-home songs'. Additionally, they also pertain to the newly created 'charity songs',[83] as they called for donations to organizations needing the

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74 El Canijo de Jerez, No tengas miedo, YT. We argue that the original intention of not writing *No tengas miedo* during or because of the pandemic (see La Higuera.net: El Canijo de Jerez. Constelaciones de humo. In: https://www.lahiguera.net/musicalia/artistas/el_canijo_de_jerez/disco/10472/, (2020) (18.8.2022)) does not significantly mean to exclude it from the Corona Fictions corpus, as it was first published during these challenging times, fulfilling the uplifting elements. In times of music videos and specific content being attached to hashtags going viral, the relatability in terms of pandemic experiences and the potentially uplifting factor on an emotional level in terms of mood regulation underline the significance of these songs amongst Corona Fictions music productions.

75 Engl. 'Everything will be alright, don't be afraid'.

76 El Canijo de Jerez, No tengas miedo, YT, 00:54.

77 Ibid., YT, 02:16.

78 Ibid., YT, 01:57.

79 Carlos Rivera, Ya pasará, YT.

80 Ibid., 00:04 and 00:18-00:30.

81 Ibid., 03:24.

82 Jack Savoretti, Andrà Tutto Bene, YT, 00:20.

83 See Vejmelka and Obergöker, Coronavirus and Pop Culture.

money to fight the (consequences of) the pandemic. While Rivera[84] mentioned donating 100% of income of this song to an international organization called Save the Children in the YouTube information below the music video, Savoretti introduced this information on a black background directly in the music video. He thereby stated that "'Andrà Tutto Bene' is Jack Savoretti's first ever song in Italian and was created during an Instagram live writing session with his Italian fans. All proceeds will be donated to the Policlinico San Martino hospital in Genoa for the project #genovapersanmartino".[85] He ended the music video by thanking his fans: "This work was made possible with the help of many people who sent their contribution from their homes. The rest of the footage collected was shared online by users or aired by TV networks".[86] Additionally to supporting an uplifting feeling on an individual level for people stuck in lockdown, these charity songs may at the same time remind the audience of the collective aspect of the pandemic crisis: mutual social responsibility. By this means they foster a sense of community beyond the virtual scope. Due, to its specific production circumstances, El Canijo de Jerez's *No tengas miedo*[87] does not fall into any of the four categories established by Vejmelka and Obergöker.[88]

In the analysis of the corpus on a *micro level*, we focus on uplifting *textual cues*, as well as, uplifting *(audio)visual cues* and relate to the categories established by Álvarez-Cueva and her colleagues, who detected five elements of life in quarantine that appear in music videos: emotions, wishes, reflections, people and practices.[89]

A close reading of the lyrics revealed their mostly encouraging content. With motifs such as the call to endure and persist until feeling better or to get up again after falling, the lyrics investigated suggest that it is a normal part of life to go through crises, such as the pandemic, but they encourage the audience to maintain a positive attitude towards the future, reflecting this notion indicated in the titles.

Regarding the narrative function of the audiovisual presentations linked to each song, we can confirm that the artists hereby focused on mood uplifting elements again. As dominant themes we identified warm colours, images of connecting with loved ones and

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84 Carlos Rivera, Ya pasará, YT.

85 Jack Savoretti, Andrà Tutto Bene, YT, 00:06-00:20.

86 Ibid. 03:50-04:01.

87 El Canijo de Jerez, No tengas miedo, YT.

88 Vejmelka and Obergöker, *Coronavirus and Pop Culture*.

89 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena.

the beauty of nature. Furthermore, empathy[90] (feeling the other's pain), unity and togetherness (either virtually sharing the same space or more so understood as physical proximity amongst humans within the same space), and solidarity emerge as recurring themes to counteract the restrictive nature and feeling of imprisonment of the lockdown.

Taking into consideration the classification by Alvarez-Cueva and her colleagues,[91] both Rivera's and Savoretti's Corona Fictions music videos make use of most of these elements in an intermingled way; except the category 'practices', which is hardly used in the chosen examples. Only when considering 'practices' such as clapping on the balcony together,[92] may we also identify them in both clips.

'Emotions', including all of the four subcategories of feelings discerned by Alvarez-Cueva (positive, negative, uncertain, and of longing/ nostalgic nature) can be found in all of the corpus investigated. While, the focus in our corpus clearly lies on generating uplifting ones via textual and audiovisual cues, Corona Fictions music videos with a more sad or nostalgic notion were also published (such as the song *CONFINEMENT* by Alexlxl68 2020/ 2024).[93] Interestingly, research has shown that "[p]ositive emotions are consistent even when a melancholier melody is used […]".[94] However, regarding the use and emotive potential of new media, intersectional axes of difference,[95] such as class, age gender and the cultural context[96] have to be considered. Nonetheless, similarly to Alvarez-Cueva,[97] in

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90 "[M]uch of the coronamusic repertoire seeks to provide information about the virus and essential hygiene measures in an attractive and convincing way, calling for peoples' understanding and compliance. […] [C]oronamusic not only provides empathy to its audience but can also be expected to elicit it and, ultimately, serve as a means to influence human behaviour, problem-solving, and adaptive coping". Fink et al., Viral Tunes, 9.

91 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena, 75.

92 "Italy and Spain saw mass communal singing from home balconies, and Lehman (2021) reported significantly increased streaming of some of the songs concerned". Putter et al., Popular Music Lyrics, 1281; see Eric T. Lehmann: 'Washing Hands, Reaching out'. Popular Music, Digital Leisure and Touch during the COVID-19 pandemic. In: *Leisure Sciences* 43.1-3 (2021), 273-279.

93 See e.g. Alexlxl68: CONFINEMENT (Clip Officiel). In: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpswgR 4lunI, (2020) (8.1.2024).

94 Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 11.

95 See Kimberlé Crenshaw: Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. In: *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989), 139-167 and Gabriele Winker, Nina Degele: *Intersektionalität. Zur Analyse sozialer Ungleichheiten*. Bielefeld 2009.

96 The listeners' "degree of interest in lyrics and the types of emotions aroused by lyrics may be important factors to consider within future research" (Putter et al., Popular Music Lyrics, 1290-1291), since they vary due to cultural differences and diverse strategies for coping with hardships and challenging times.

97 See Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 11.

our corpus we detected a significant dominance of positive emotions and direct textual and audiovisual cues related to physical proximity and unity.

In music videos with their audiovisual components, not only does the music itself address its listeners[98] but more so, the singer/ performer merging with the music, hereby, also addresses them by a) looking directly into the camera (e.g. Carlos Rivera in *Ya pasará*; El Canijo de Jerez and La Mari in *No tengas miedo*), and b) by calling for unity in the lyrics and implementing participatory audiovisuals (e.g. Jack Savoretti and/ or by including the audience into their video by integrating their snippets from Instagram lives etc. as in *Andrà tutto bene* and *Ya pasará*). Thus, the artists' overall presentations urge for strengthening social cohesion in their textual, as well as, audiovisual cues. Unsurprisingly, Alvarez-Cueva's findings support this, as she argues that "ideas of 'unity' were crucial not only to maintain faith in the future but also to encourage people to think of themselves and others and help them face the situation".[99]

Marco del Ojo from El Canijo de Jerez and María del Mar Rodríguez Carnero called La Mari from the group Chambao created *No tengas miedo*[100] together to uplift and encourage people to get up again after falling. The self-explanatory title already indicates a positive attitude towards the pandemic but its creators additionally explain their intentions explicitly in the information beneath their music video on YouTube uploaded on the channel El Canijo de Jerez in October 2020 as follows:

> Tres palabras, dos artistas y una canción. Esos son los números mágicos que marcan el nuevo single de El Canijo de Jerez, 'No tengas miedo' todo un canto a la esperanza, más necesario ahora que nunca si atendemos a los tiempos que nos ha tocado vivir.[101]

This music video directed and produced by Colirio Films is painted in warm light and soothing colours of a sunrise set in Spanish nature – a motif that we also find in *Ya pasará* and which is intended to encode hope.[102] The music video aims at counteracting fears

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98 See Fink et al., Viral Tunes, 8-9.

99 Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 15.

100 Engl. 'Don't be afraid'.

101 Engl. "Three words, two artists and one song. Those are the magic numbers that mark the new single by El Canijo de Jerez, 'No tengas miedo' (Engl. 'Don't be afraid') is a song to hope, more necessary now than ever if we consider the times we live in" (authors' translation). El Canijo de Jerez, No tengas miedo, YT.

102 For more details on encoding/ decoding hope in audiovisual Corona Fictions, see Julia Obermayr: Corona Fictions Agents. Cinematic Representations of Hopeful Pandemic Protagonists in Early Corona

with 'good vibes' ("buenas vibraciones")[103] and – according to the singer – has a clear message that getting up again after falling is the only option there is ("Caerse es necesario. Levantarse, la única opción"). The song is supposed to function as a healing remedy ("remedio sanador"), which – unsurprisingly – above-mentioned scientific studies on music as a mood regulator strongly confirm.[104] *No tengas miedo* is a song dedicated to "todos los soñadores que llenan espacios en blanco"[105] and strongly encourages its listeners to joyfully embrace the life ahead of us ("saludar a la vida que nos espera por delante") because life is better believing that everything turns out alright ("Porque, al final, todo saldrá bien").

The vocabulary used in the lyrics effectively a) enhances positive feelings and b) counteracts negative[106] feelings such as anxiety, as Canijo de Jerez' album "Constelaciones de Humo"[107] has shown. After an initial dominance of negative song titles (e.g. *Esto es una ruina*)[108] which indicates the bad state of the world and society and, therefore, seems inspired by the pandemic (although conceptualized before), the artists turn to more uplifting song titles and lyrics (e.g. *No tengas miedo*) in the latter part of their album.

Furthermore, we can confirm that the wish to "return to a pre-pandemic lifestyle" results in a trend to romanticize the life before Covid-19, as was pointed out by Alvarez-Cueva.[109] These exemplary 'romanticized references' also apply to what Alvarez-Cueva and her colleagues two years earlier classified as the category 'wishes',[110] found in *Ya pasará* where a child looks at a seed after sprouting while the lyrics announce that we will return even stronger than before ("Y volveremos, volveremos, volveremos ¡Más

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Fictions. In: Yvonne Völkl, Julia Obermayr, Elisabeth Hobisch (eds.) *Pandemic Protagonists. Viral (Re)Actions in Pandemic and Corona Fictions*. Bielefeld 2023, 277-301.

103 El Canijo de Jerez, No tengas miedo, YT.

104 See e.g. Hennessy et al., Music and Mood Regulation; Fink et al., Viral Tunes; Martínez-Castilla et al., Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing.

105 Engl. "to all the dreamers who fill in the blanks" (authors' translation).

106 "Interestingly, people who reported using music to discharge negative feelings actually preferred music that was more energetic and less acoustic, which is consistent with the goal of using music to purge or release negative emotions". Hennessy et al., Music and Mood Regulation, 13.

107 Engl. "Constellations of Smoke" (authors' translation).

108 Engl. *This is a ruin* (authors' translation) El Canijo de Jerez: Esto es una ruina. In: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qixqtkeGGmc, (2020) (22.1.2024). Engl. lyrics: "God made the world and it didn't work out very well/ It got out of hand and He has nothing left to do/ Now there are many of us screwing around without control/ we are the worst, we are heading straight towards extinction". (authors' translation; El Canijo de Jerez, Esto es una ruina, YT).

109 See Alvarez-Cueva, Music to Face the Lockdown, 10-11.

110 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena.

fuertes!").[111] Moreover, in *Andrà tutto bene*, the singer Savoretti lyrically 'wishes' for people to bloom like a flower in spring and go back to singing ("Quando arriva la primavera/ Sbocceremo come un fiore/ Torneremo a cantare").[112]

Furthermore, all songs selected touch upon 'reflections'[113] on the micro level, singing for a brighter future in a hopeful way. Falling under the category of 'reflections',[114] El Canijo de Jerez's *No tengas miedo* – through its audiovisual cues at the end around minute three[115] – reflects the unity of the musicians and singers. Five people stand where the singers sat before on the rim of a pool, which is located in the middle of the above-mentioned idyllic Spanish landscape. The sun is already up behind them higher than before, thus, the audience cannot see their faces but only their silhouettes until the camera frame shows the guitarist closer in their respective frame. Almost simultaneously around minute three,[116] the lyrics "Agárrate a la vida que empieza lo bueno/ Nunca te rindas, levántate/ Todo saldrá bien, no tengas miedo" call for 'taking a chance at life', and indicate a positive outcome, a 'new beginning', encouraging the audience to 'never give up/ everything will be alright, don't be afraid'.

Equally, Rivera's *Ya pasará* refers to this new beginning and positive future just before minute four[117] ("Ya lo verás, que este final/ Será el principio y lo mejor podrá pasar"). Consequently, the positive effect of focussing on a better future in situations of crisis or hardship is not only underlined here but moreover stands out in the way Rivera's song is presented visually. On this aesthetical level, the sunrise and its orange colouring hereby build a common theme throughout the video, either marking certain lettering, signs, objects such as an orange curtain or the framing/ design itself. The strong contrast created by using black and white as dominant colours, allows for any orange coloured scenario/ object to significantly stand out. This orange colouring reinforces the positive connotation of certain words, situations or objects to point out the importance of keeping a positive attitude throughout the pandemic. This uplifting feeling intensifies as it is contrasted with images of confident and caring medical staff. On the one hand, this reminds

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111 Carlos Rivera, Ya pasará, YT, 03:42.

112 Jack Savoretti, Andrà Tutto Bene, YT, 02:43-02:56.

113 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena, 71-75

114 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., ibid.

115 El Canijo de Jerez, No tengas miedo, YT, 02:52-03:17.

116 Ibid., 02:53.

117 Carlos Rivera, Ya pasará, YT, 03:42.

the audiences of the possibility of severe illness but simultaneously they radiate enough expertise and confidence to handle the crisis.

Similarly, Savoretti's song *Andrà tutto bene*, as the title indicates in Italian, underlines a positive outcome, particularly by mentioning the physical touch such as finally hugging loved ones again. Thus, in this case the category 'reflections' intermingles with the category 'people'. 'People' identified mainly family and friends, the social nucleus, who were terribly missed during lockdown or even more so solitary confinement (quarantine). As social bonds and the feeling of belonging to a collective strengthen identity building, having significant people physically present and close for all kinds of activities not only affects social cohesion but simultaneously our individual identity and relationships with others.[118] To counteract the mentioned lockdown shock effect, and more specifically isolation, Denis Newiak points out movie protagonists' strategies to self-strengthen their resilience during a crisis by keeping a daily routine (i.e. regular meals and sports or other physical activities).[119] This cinematic strategy equals 'practices'[120] possible during confinement, such as clapping or singing on the balcony together. Moreover, keeping social commitments (see category 'people'), within the common cultural norms, demonstrates the need for human interaction and connection: even if only by upholding the illusion via substitutes as Newiak mentioned.[121] Corona Fictions music videos virtually generate social connection via split screens or otherwise integrated film material by different individuals put together to form part of a collective, as can be seen in both *Ya pasará* and *Andrà tutto bene*.

Conclusion

The consumption of Corona Fictions music videos, to listen to music and to practice it in these unprecedented times functioned as a powerful tool in mood regulation. This tool includes the potential to have a salubrious effect on people during the pandemic, regardless of cultural differences and diverse containment measures. Hence, this sort of agency and act of self-care underlines how significantly people's well-being was impacted by the disease Covid-19, or, more precisely, by the disruptive containment measures taken such

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118 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena, 73.

119 See Newiak, Alles schon mal dagewesen, 92-94.

120 See Alvarez-Cueva et al., Las narraciones de la cuarentena.

121 See Newiak, Alles schon mal dagewesen, 96-97.

as the first lockdowns in spring 2020. Cultural production in terms of public events (concerts etc.) came to a sudden halt. However, people frequently turned to (mainly online) emerging literary and audiovisual productions such as Corona Fictions music videos to discharge negative feelings or stimulate positive ones to counteract anxiety, provoke solidarity and a sense of unity despite being physically apart during confinement. As numerous recent above-mentioned studies have shown from a psychological, sociological, and musicological point-of-view, the investigated Corona Fictions music videos equally demonstrate from a cultural studies perspective, how essential creating and consuming fiction can be – particularly in uncertain times. Corona Fictions music videos, thus, play a significant role in narrating pandemic experiences within our larger, multimodal and transmedia Corona Fictions corpus.

We selected the following three corpus music videos for this article due to their language, date of publication, and encouraging titles: Carlos Rivera's *Ya pasará* and El Canijo de Jerez's *No tengas miedo* in Spanish, as well as, Jack Savoretti's *Andrà tutto bene* in Italian. In these exemplary Corona Fictions music videos the film aesthetically and lyrically uplifting effect can be detected on both a narratological a) macro, and b) micro level:

On a macro level, we identified two ways of creating a positive outlook on the future: The narrative either continuously encourages a positive feeling by the overall presentation of the fictional arc and offers hope and a positive outlook on the future – as in *No tengas miedo* – or presents a supposed solution to a negative situation or feeling contrasting pandemic-specific images of empty streets or hospitals with uplifting ones, as demonstrated in *Andrà tutto bene* and *Ya pasará*. Additionally, the songs pertaining to the category of 'charity songs' remind the audience of their social responsibilities in a world affected by a major crisis. Despite the differences in their creation context and time, for the audience all three music videos fulfill the same role, supporting a hopeful future perspective.

On a micro level, the uplifting elements in Corona Fictions music videos can explicitly be noticed in *textual cues* (encouraging lyrics to endure and persist until feeling better) and *audiovisual cues* (lyrics sung and portrayed, as well as, film aesthetic specificities, e.g. warm colours, images of connecting with loved ones, the beauty of nature etc.). Similarly to the macro level, on the micro level some music videos acknowledge the necessity to persist and endure hard times for a better future, whereas others focus on positive messages only. Furthermore, the participatory elements we find in audiovisual cues, such as snippets on Instagram live, support a sense of community of artists and audiences. As dominant recurring motifs we identified, empathy, unity (also understood as proximity

within the same space), and solidarity emerge as recurring themes to counteract the imprisoned and isolated feeling produced by the lockdown.

In conclusion, our exemplary and qualitative analysis showed that on the various levels of multimodal media, in addition to the potential of the individual's uplifting mood and effect on wellbeing, all Corona Fictions music videos investigated point towards the importance of social cohesion and the essence of being human: connection.

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