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ESPAÑOLES, INDIOS, AFRICANOS Y GITANOS.
EL ALCANCE GLOBAL DEL FANDANGO EN MÚSICA, CANTO Y DANZA

SPANIARDS, INDIANS, AFRICANS AND GYPSIES:
THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE FANDANGO IN MUSIC, SONG, AND
DANCE

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FANDANGO AND THE RHETORIC OF RESISTANCE IN FLAMENCO

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Resumen

El 25 de junio de 2014, tres cantaores del grupo de arte-guerrillero Flo6x8 interrumpieron el pleno del Parlamento de Andalucía. Su meta era llamar la atención de la opinión pública ante el creciente desempleo, la política de austeridad opresiva, la corrupción en el gobierno y el crecimiento drástico de la burocracia empresarial. Su vehículo de protesta: el fandango. En este artículo, examino el fandango como ejemplo de cómo el flamenco emplea un lenguaje de resistencia solapada para oponerse cultural y económicamente a regímenes opresivos. Basándome en el modelo de música de protesta de R. Serge Denisoff, sostengo que el flamenco 1) fomenta el activismo (*"magnetic protest"*) y 2) identifica las condiciones sociales que dan lugar a la marginalización de las clases trabajadoras y lumpen de Andalucía. Propongo que el flamenco incorpora ampliamente la música de protesta, que desvía la atención del público del status quo y la dirige hacia realidades de cambio socioeconómico. Como dice una de las bailaoras des Flo6x8, "flamenco captures perfectly how we feel about the crisis. You can use it to express desperation, rage, pain, and the desire to change things."

Palabras Clave:

protesta, oposición, fandango, flamenco, Denisoff, Diego del Gastor, Flo6x8

Fandango y la retórica de la Resistencia en Flamenco.

Abstract

On June 25, 2014, three flamenco singers from the guerrilla protest group Flo6x8 interrupted proceedings of the Provincial Parliament in Andalusia. Their goal was to draw attention to a ballooning two-thirds unemployment rate, oppressive austerity politics, governmental corruption, and a drastic rise in corporatocracy. Their vehicle of protest: the fandango. In this paper, I examine the fandango as an example of how flamenco relies on a veiled language of resistance to express opposition to culturally and economically oppressive regimes. Working from R. Serge Denisoff's model of protest music, I will show how flamenco 1) encourages activism (magnetic protest) and, 2) identifies the marginalizing social conditions of Andalusia's working-and-underclass (rhetorical protest). I suggest that flamenco exemplifies a broad range of protest music, one that demands

attention away from the status quo and toward effecting socioeconomic change. In the words of a Flo6x8 dancer, “flamenco captures perfectly how we feel about the crisis. You can use it to express desperation, rage, pain, and the desire to change things.”

Keywords:

protest, resistance, fandango, flamenco, Denisoff, Diego del Gastor, Flo6x8

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A FLAMENCO PARLIAMENT

We want to end this old system of privileges for the few and misery for the masses. We want to free Andalusia from the dictates of capital, vulture funds, and vulture bankers. Flo6x8 Manifesto¹⁾

On June 25, 2014, Spain's government officials met for a plenary session of the Provincial Parliament in Andalusia. As the measured voice and strategic rhetoric of the Socialist Senator, Mar Moreno²⁾ echoed through the cavernous chamber, a shrill and powerful voice abruptly interrupted the proceedings with a contemporary *fandango*: *Begging is how you want to see me or that I emigrate. Begging for a shit job while you all get fat off layoffs. And you all are lackeys of the Troika!*³⁾ Still singing as she was escorted out of the room, the singer's melismatic melody snaked its way downward to a somber resolution as the word “Troika” lingered in the air. Shocked parliamentarians reacted by shaking their heads in disapproval and the Prime Minister announced that there were to be no more

¹⁾ <http://www.flo6x8.com/article/manifiesto-flo6x8-ya-estamos-aqu%C3%AD-acortando-distancias-con-el-viejo-r%C3%A9gimen>, accessed 4/11/15.

²⁾ As of the date of this publication, Senator Mar Moreno is one of five government officials being investigated for a billion dollar misappropriated funds scandal in which public money, earmarked to compensate those who had lost the jobs during the economic crisis, was funneled to dozens of people who never held the job for which they were compensated. Senator Moreno is scheduled to appear before the Supreme Court on April 27, 2015.

³⁾ An edited video of this event is available on Flo6x8's channel on youtube.com: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6LVQXKnuvuBrZrJuDwsSzw>. Last accessed on 4/13/15.

interruptions by the attending public.

Once the protester was no longer audible, Senator Moreno continued her report but she was only able to say a few words before she was again interrupted, this time by a male singer: *Let the whole world listen. Andalusia is a rich land. Let the whole world listen and you all hand over money to everyone who has sold us out because we work for the Troika.*

Again, Senator Moreno paused and allowed the authorities to escort the protester from the room, and, once again, she spoke. This time, she was able to get through a portion of her prepared statement before being interrupted for a third time. Interestingly, if not ironically, her statement foreshadowed the protester's main idea, that is, that Spain's current politico-economic system does not adequately meet the needs of everyone for whom it represents: "As I was saying there's no system we can call the very essence of democracy because the quality of democracy is the capacity it has to deal with the problems of the people."

After this statement, Senator Moreno paused momentarily to clear her voice and take a sip of water. Seizing this opportunity, a third protester, centrally seated among other citizens, stood with her right arm extended outward and her chin raised. Commanding attention away from the government officials, she filled the silence with her formidable voice and proclaimed: *And finally do it right. Let there be no one worth more than anyone else. And finally do it right. Confront the capital and a new law of laws.*

Although their unscheduled appeal to the Parliament was brief, the protesters' accomplishments were considerable. They identified a central problem (economic disparity), they recognized a root cause (corrupt officials), and they offered an equitable solution (a new constitution).

All three singer-protesters are members of Flo6x8, a group of activists who intend to "converge with emerging political movements" and demand a new democratic government reconstructed "through a collective and shared creation of a new Constitution."⁴ According to various statements available to the public via an active social media presence, Flo6x8 aims to draw attention to a critical unemployment rate, exceedingly oppressive austerity economic tactics, widespread governmental corruption, and a drastic rise in corporatocracy. The vehicle for this message is flamenco and one *palo* (style) of flamenco seems particularly apt for conveying it, that is, the fandango.⁵ In the

⁴ <http://www.flo6x8.com/node/78>. Accessed on 4/12/15.

⁵ The name of the activist collective, Flo6x8, derives its name, in part, from the musical meter of the fandango, an 18th-century song form with Moorish origins whose underlying meter is in 3/4 or 6/8.

words of a Flo6x8 dancer named La Nina Ninja, “flamenco captures perfectly how we feel about the crisis. You can use it to express desperation, rage, pain, and the desire to change things.”⁶⁾

In this article, I examine how flamenco relies on the use of an indirect, somewhat veiled language of resistance to express opposition to culturally and economically oppressive regimes. I hope to show that flamenco is not only deployed by politically-minded contemporary performers, such as Flo6x8, but that sentiments of resistance and dissent indeed form the core of flamenco’s ethos. Flamenco’s rhetoric and style of performance can temporarily distract observers from the status quo, briefly drawing their attention toward an alternate reality, toward the common pains and joys that are experienced by the masses living beyond the sheltered lifestyles of the elite.

Acts of protest, such as Flo6x8’s interruption of Parliament, have fueled debate recently within the flamenco community as to whether or not flamenco is, or ever has been, a form of protest music or if such events amount to a forcible and potentially unsustainable misappropriation of the genre by a fanatical few. In response to flamenco’s recent activism, William Washabaugh writes,

...rarely did such politically charged art arise in flamenco circles in the last half of the nineteenth century or the first half of the twentieth. Artists back then focused their energies on survival, aiming for personal success rather than social transformation. And audiences for their part were too fractured into mutually competitive cities, towns, villages, and barrios to ally themselves with each other in pursuit of social change.⁷⁾

Moreover, there is a popular viewpoint that flamenco’s endemic fatalism and highly personalized introspection preclude it from being a true genre of protest. I suggest, however, that a close look at different styles of protest music will help us understand flamenco’s long struggle to manifest itself as a protest genre. By examining musical examples that date to the 19th century, I contend that flamenco’s cleverly indirect language of resistance is an essential aspect of what I will refer to as a form of rhetorical protest. Since the late twentieth century, there has been, among social researchers, a growing emphasis on the representative value of individual events, rather than organizations or movements, as units of analysis.⁸⁾ This study also aims to add to the growing discourse regarding the collective protests of austerity programs and neoliberal reforms (Auvinen,

⁶⁾ See <http://dw.de/p/1ASBE>. Last accessed 4/15/15.

⁷⁾ Washabaugh contends that flamenco as protest, although not surprising, is a recent phenomenon: <http://www.deflamenco.com/revista/mas-flamenco/flamenco-protests-now-and-then-1.html>. Last accessed 4/13/15.

⁸⁾ See Susan Olzak (1987,1989, 1992), Sarah Soule (1997,1999; Soule, McAdam, McCarthy & Su, 1999; Soule & Zylan, 1997), Myers (1997, 2000; Myers & Buoye, 2001)

1996, 1997; Walton & Ragin, 1990; Walton & Seddon, 1994; Williams, 1996) and attempt to integrate with a broader sphere of social movement theory.⁹⁾

ON THE QUESTION OF PROTEST

The maintenance of hegemony depends upon the continual reproduction of dominant interpretations of social reality as cultural truth (Buchanan 1995: 393).

“There are no relations of power without resistance.” (Foucault, 1980)

Flamenco emerged in the nineteenth century as an improvised genre that blended the musical aesthetics and emotional sentiments of Andalusia’s culturally marginalized and politically oppressed Gitanos, Jews, Muslims, and underclass. As a result, the dispositions of hardship and fatalism are indelibly marked on the flamenco ethos. It is a genre that is tied, Michelle Heffner Hayes writes, to “real people who lived in a world shaped by colonialism, class, race, regional competition for resources, repressive gender and sexual codes, and the international struggle for power” (2009: 2). This expression of lived experience is all too often lost among a flood of romantic tropes, such as intense (if not pathological) passion, femme-fatale sexuality, unwavering devotion, perpetual tragedy, and death that dominate both popular press and scholarly discourse. But, does such essentialism obfuscate flamenco’s potential to affect positive sociopolitical changes in the lives of Spain’s working class?

Shortly after the death of Pete Seeger in 2014, Brook Zern wrote a reflection on the apparent difference between flamenco and the affective protest music of the Civil Rights and Labor movements in the United States.¹⁰⁾ In it, Zern argued that “the great corpus of flamenco song verses are not expressions of protest [even] though they reflect the desperate situation and the feelings of a deprived underclass which spent centuries without power and often on the verge of starvation.” Admittedly, flamenco’s penchant for fatalistic lyrics seems to be at odds with the “tacit assumption that the protester can make a difference” (Zern 2014). Zern, who has shared both wine and song with the late Seeger and who recalls the power of the civil rights marches of the 1960s, offers an example of a flamenco lyric about incarceration: *They put me in a cell so dark/I could not see my hands,*

⁹⁾ For example, Marco Giugni (1998) examines how protest movements might affect regimes and distinguishes among incorporation (when movements become part of routine politics), transformation (a changing power structure that fundamentally changes society), and democratization (a shift in power that modifies the mutual rights and responsibilities between the state and its citizens). In fact, Máté Szabo’s study of the post-communist countries of the Slovak Republic shows that political protest is central to regime change and the consolidation of new systems (1996).

¹⁰⁾ <http://www.flamencoexperience.com/blog/?cat=305>. Last accessed on 4/13/15.

and asks “can we march to this?”

Zern’s point is well taken. With the possible exception of Camaron’s iconic song, “Soy Gitano,” which has been compared to James Brown’s “Say it Loud” as an anthem of ethnic pride, flamenco does indeed lack a tradition of songs aimed at “rallying the troops” toward a common cause.¹¹⁾ There are few flamenco equivalents to Seeger’s “We Shall Overcome,” Bob Marly’s “Get Up, Stand Up,” or Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power.” Instead, flamenco lyrics are snapshots of personal struggles and celebrations. They are vignettes that briefly paint a picture in one’s mind of a common human emotion or experience. Authors of flamenco songs become interpreters in that they express, not only the emotions stemming from their own experiences but, they become translators of another’s circumstances. To quote a contemporary poet, “flamenco can tell a million stories at once” (Henares, 2015). Some are uplifting, some are tragic, but all are meant to evoke in the listener a visceral and immediate understanding of a performer’s emotional being.¹²⁾

ON CENSORSHIP

Since flamenco’s inception, political censorship and oppression have always weighed heavily on the minds of its performers. The years leading up to the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s and the subsequent Franco dictatorship that followed proved to be an especially difficult time to publicly express dissent and opposition. Performance venues, which were frequently subjected to surveillance, encouraged and produced artistically serious, yet largely de-politicized flamenco, “detached,” as Loren Chuse writes, “from any real concerns” (2013: 108). Theatrical events, including amateur plays performed on private stages, had to be approved by governmental censors.¹³⁾ Outspoken performers such as Manuel Gerena were often blacklisted and even jailed for speaking out against a notoriously repressive regime. Due to such strict censorship laws, performers across the

¹¹⁾ I credit flamenco producer and performer, Nina Menendez for drawing the comparison between “Soy Gitano” and “Say it Loud” (Personal communication 2014).

¹²⁾ Felix Grande, a flamenco poet and scholar, explains that writing flamenco lyrics “is a process of whittling down the essence of human experience. Thinning, stripping the abundance to a minimum, until all you have to say can be said in 30 or 40 syllables.” To illustrate, Grande provides the following examples of anonymous flamenco poetry: ...on suffering: ...on love:

“You tell me if I am wretched.
I long only for death
In order at last to rest
Under cover, protected.”

“When I die I ask you one favor:
With a braid of your black hair
May they bind my hands together.”

Grande’s discussion of flamenco poetry is available through Public Radio International at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXtLXpYGTiM>. Last accessed on 4/13/15.

¹³⁾ See Ramos López (2013: 248) for a description of Franco’s bureaucratic, three-phased censorship process in which every detail of a theatrical event, from wardrobe to gestures to the complete script, was subject to the highest scrutiny, either accepted (often with suggested revisions) or denied, and evaluated after a performance in order to assure adherence to the governmentally sanctioned performance. Due to this censorship, playwrights during the Franco regime did not directly allude to political issues.

arts avoided overt allusions to even slightly contentious political issues, much less outright criticism and protest (see Pilar Ramos López 2013: 248).

For the forty years of Franco's dictatorship, regressive politics kept Spain disconnected from the rest of the developing world. Guitarist, Juan del Gastor remembers North American students who took guitar lessons from his uncle Diego in the 1960s: "We were kept ignorant under Franco, and they [the Americans] exposed us to a new way of thinking" (Nagin 2008: 10). Mica Graña was one such student who arrived on the eve of America's Sexual Revolution:

...it was the only place in Europe where you could actually live in a pre-industrial world and so it was an amazing experience. As I said, nobody had TVs, nobody had phones, very few people had cars, so living in a pueblo was so different from anything that one would experience here (personal communication, July 21, 2009).

Given flamenco's repressive history and its proclivity toward individual fatalism, it is understandable that some would dismiss flamenco as an ineffective form of protest music. How then, do we reconcile this with the fact that flamenco is increasingly deployed by activists as a voice of protest? To begin with, we must first gain a better understanding of protest music.

A TYPOLOGY OF PROTEST MUSIC

In a 1968 article entitled "Protest Movements: Class Consciousness and the Propaganda Song," R. Serge Denisoff offers a functional model of protest music in which he categorizes two kinds of protest song or "songs of persuasion." *Magnetic songs*, Denisoff explains, persuade the listener, both emotionally and intellectually, into supporting or joining a movement and subsequently strengthening social cohesion and solidarity among supporters of a movement or ideology. Alternatively, *rhetorical songs* effectively highlight and describe a condition without necessarily offering any ideological or organizational solution. In short, magnetic songs persuade while rhetorical songs reveal. For example, the 1931 song, "Which Side Are You On?," written by Florence Reece asks the listener to chose a side in the labor union debate: union v. scab. Its language sends a clear message that favors one side over the other and, like a literal magnet that pulls objects close, this song aims to increase union membership and support workers' rights.

Alternately, Bob Dylan's 1963 song, "Masters of War," represents a different kind of protest song. This song is a personal condemnation of international armament deals that, for Dylan, simply perpetuates war and violence rather than offering any real promise for political stability and peace:

You fasten the triggers

For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

*And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand over your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead.*
"Masters of War" Bob Dylan (1963)

Although Dylan's stern judgment is clear, his rhetoric falls short of recruiting membership to a cause or to incite action. Yet, how else would we categorize this song if not as one of protest? As Denisoff explains, rhetorical songs primarily emphasize the dysfunction of a societal situation and "may point to an event which is specific or endemic to a geographical or historical space in time and require little commitment on the part of the listener or the composer" (1966: 584). Thus, rhetorical songs may dissent from a dominant ideology without advocating any clear action be taken to change anything. Change may be desired or even deemed necessary but the function of a rhetorical song is simply to draw attention to a problem, not to offer a solution. The following *fandango* from the Spanish Civil War reflects such a tactic. It refers to Fermin Galán García Hernández, a firebrand captain in the Republic who was fiercely committed to bringing an end to the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Galán led a hasty revolt in 1926 that, in the end, failed. He was court marshaled, imprisoned, and eventually executed on December 14, 1930:

Por la libertad de España
murió Hernández, y Galán.
Un minuto de silencio
por los que ya en gloria están,
suplico en estos momentos.

For Spain's liberty
Galán Hernández died
A minute of silence

For those who are already in glory
I beg/pray right now

Similar to Bob Dylan's rhetorical protest song, this song articulates a clear position: a moment of silence for Galán is a powerful statement against the dominant regime and in support of revolutionary politics. It accomplishes this despite the fact that the strongest active verb in this verse, *suplicar* (to beg or pray), is hardly a way to inspire united, mass protest.

The technique of the rhetorical protest is not limited to *fandangos*, of course. *Triana*, a *tangos* popularized by La Niña de los Peines, relies on a similar technique:

Triana, Triana
Qué bonita está Triana
Cuando le ponen al puente
las banderitas Republicana.

Triana, Triana
How beautiful is Triana
When its bridge is decorated
with Republican flag

This verse, of course, does more than express an aesthetic appreciation for a flag's color scheme. It is a tacit endorsement of the democratic regime (i.e., the Second Spanish Republic) that represented the people in the years between General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930) and General Francisco Franco's Fascist regime (1939-1978). The significance of the reference was clear to Franco's censors who used the restrictive censorship laws to alter the original lyric to refer to the less contentious (and more exotic) Gypsy flag which had yet to be fully recognized internationally: *las banderitas gitanas/with Gypsy banners*.

Another example includes a traditional 19th-century *Alegrias* from Cadiz, Spain. It expresses dismay over the Napoleonic War but admits to having no solution:

With the bombs that the politician throw
The girls of Cádiz make ringlets in their hair

Although they may put canons and artillery at your door
I have to pass through it even though it may cost me my life

Lets go lets go to the café of La Unión
Where Curro Cuchares El Paco and Juan Leon are

*I have no more solutions
but to lower my little head
and to say that what is white is black
Alegrías (Traditional)¹⁴⁾*

We can see in these few examples, an approach toward lyrics that expressed opposition to oppressive regimes but without the explicit bravado characteristic of a magnetic protest song.

TWO PROTEST EVENTS:

1) Camelamos Nequerar

Toward the end of Franco's rule in the 1970s, conditions softened slightly and the flamenco world breathed a sigh of relief. In the year Franco died (1976), the flamenco duo Lole y Manuel released the album *Nuevo Día* (A New Day) with the lyric: *The people awake/the morning is here*. Indeed the tide was beginning to turn and some performers found room to express their discontent openly. The Spanish novelist, J.M. Caballero Bonald recalls that in the late 1970s, flamenco singers such as Jose Menese, Enrique Morente, Carlos Cruz, Manuel Gerena, El Lebrijano, and others, began to adapt the themes of flamenco to their own historical and social reality.

One such performer was Mario Maya, a Gypsy dancer from Granada, Spain. Maya, who briefly lived in New York City, was deeply influenced by the Civil Rights protests of the 1960s, creating what is considered to be flamenco's first protest theater: *Camelamos Naquerar* ("We Wish To Speak"), a piece that dramatizes the unrelenting persecution of Gitanos by the Spanish government. Maya's production includes dance, music, poems, flamenco songs, and legal texts since the fifteenth century.¹⁵⁾ Alternating the

¹⁴⁾ The original lyric: Que con las bombas que tiran los fanfarrones/Se hacen las gaditanas tirabuzones

Aunque pongan en tu puerta cañones y artillería/Tengo que pasar por ello aunque me cueste la vida
Vamonos vamonos al cafe de La Union/Donde paran Curro Cuchares El Paco y Juan Leon
yo no tengo mas remedio/que agachar la cabezita y decir que lo blanco es negro

¹⁵⁾ One 1499 law called for the "Egyptians" to give up their nomadic lifestyle or risk receiving one hundred lashes, banishment, and even bodily mutilation: Los egipcianos y caldereros extranjeros, durante los sesenta días siguientes al pregón, tomen asiento en los lugares y sirvan a señores que les den lo que hubieren menester y no vaguen juntos por los reinos: o que al cabo de sesenta días salgan de España, so pena de cien azotes y destierro la prima vez y que les corten las orejas y los tornen a desterrar la segunda vez que fueren hallados.

For a detailed analysis of *Camelamos Naquerar*, see José Daniel Campos Fernández's article available here: http://ayp.unia.es/dmdocuments/alcms_tu_inv03.pdf. Last accessed 4/15/15.

reading of government edicts with short flamenco performances, Maya used flamenco as a form of sociopolitical critique and commentary, criticizing a long history of “surveillance, control, imprisonment, and death” (Sevilla 1979:10). The piece was first staged three months following Franco’s death and the still-active right wing officials came down hard on participating theaters.

2) Bodies Against Capitalism

It’s mid day and a plain-clothed man stands at the top of the stairs in a bank. No one notices him until he begins to sing: *The attitude and the will, my friend, has changed*. Suddenly, everyone in the bank stops what they are doing and looks at the man. Some smile, some laugh, some exchange puzzled glances, and some look concerned. One person chooses not to look at all and merely stand with his back to the singer. After all, who sings loudly in a bank? Again, he sings: *Oh, since you have the money, it makes you unbearable*, and as he draws out the word unbearable, cascading the vowels slowly downward, an unamused-looking bank employee picks up the phone to call the authorities. The singer finishes his first verse: *These are the things of the nouveau riche*. Several people respond to the singer by clapping...in unison...with a specific rhythm! These are performers! The singer is not alone. This is a flashmob in a bank lobby!

A woman dressed all in black makes her way to the center of the lobby across from a baby in a stroller. *You have lowered my salary and raised the price of everything*, the gentleman sings, and the woman-in-black raises her arms above her head while rubbing her thumbs against her fingertips in the universal sign for money. The singer continues his verse while the dancer punctuates his every word with the fullness of her body: her hands, her feet, her shoulders, her rear end. The singer continues: *To hold my own, I’ve had to pawn the parrot and I’ve even had to sell my house*, and the dancer ends with a flurry of movements: feet stomping, hands clapping, elbows bent and arms jabbing. Her final punctuated movement erupts from her core as her hands flick violently in a man’s face – the performers have his full attention now, his back is no longer turned away from the spectacle.

The singer, still perched at the top of the stairs, forcefully sings two more verses as more and more dancers join the woman in black, perfectly in synch. Some are wearing all black, some are dressed casually while some are in business attire. If not for the choreographed movements, it would be difficult to tell who is a performer and who is just caught up in the moment. The dancers all turn to face a bank employee who is sitting behind a desk and talking on a phone. The singer ends: *I do not love you, Bankia*, and the dancers, wiping their hands as if to rid themselves of dirt, turn their back to the employee, and walk away.¹⁶⁾

used body and song to express frustration over a \$23 billion public bailout of Spain's third-biggest bank, Bankia. Nothing about the above performance overtly encouraged strangers to participate in a group act of protest in a way that one would expect from a protest song. Yet, this was nothing less than a protest. The language of the verses leave no doubt about the singer's dissatisfaction; nor did the gestures of the dancers. "We're fighting back against capitalism with our bodies," one protester says. "The body is an element that we all have; it's what makes us human. But capitalism on the other hand is totally the opposite. It's an arbitrary construction, one that's so far from anything that makes us human" (Kassam, 2013).

Banks, like all financial and retail institutions, writes Jill Lane, have "no place—literally and figuratively—for individuals to act in any way other than as consumers" (2012: x). The physical space of both banks and Parliament are defined by clear boundaries that predict orderly appearance. Usurping this construct, Flo6x8 engages in what Lane calls a *situated freedom*, in which performers mark out a "temporary space through embodied practice that both claims and enacts an alternative social economy" (ibid.). The stomping, unrestrained flamenco bodies rupture the institution's semblance of order and command attention away from the status quo while the singer's forceful accusation of corruption is left for all to ponder.

Flo6x8's contempt for the fiscal mismanagement that led to the economic crisis, the group's accusation of widespread governmental corruption, and their mistrust of corporate influence are all sentiments that have a long tradition in flamenco. This contempt and mistrust is endemic to flamenco's rhetorical style and to the disposition of many of its celebrated performers. In the 1950s, Diego del Gastor, a guitarist who many feel

¹⁶⁾ The complete song's lyrics are: The attitude and the will, my friend, has changed

Ay, Bankia, Bankia, Bankia

The attitude and the will

Oh, since you have money it makes you unbearable

These are the things of the nouveau riche

For you, six lungs

for me, not even a few fish gills

Bankia, Bankia, Bankia

You have lowered my salary

and raised the price of everything

To hold my own, I've had to pawn the parrot

and I've even had to sell my house

payments

For you, six lungs

for me, not even a few fish gills

I'm not going to love you

even though you may cancel my interest

Don't mess around with me anymore, Rodrigo

Because of your bad leadership, we'll end up on the run

and because of your "bad head," Rodrigo

We'll end up on the run

I do not love you, Bankia

I do not love you, Bankia

I do not love you, Bankia

I do not love you, Bankia

In the final verse, the singer singles out former International Monetary Fund managing director and former Partido Popular finance minister, Rodrigo Rato, who has been accused of misleading Bankia customers into purchasing shares in the bank shortly before its collapse. This resulted in a financial windfall for bank executives but financial ruin for the masses.

epitomizes non-commercialized flamenco, was admired for possessing what a close friend of his called “a complete disregard, even scorn, for money and material possessions” (Pohren 1979: 22).

This ambivalence toward capitalism can be found in many verses similar to this 1930s fandango entitled: *Por No Haber Tanta Mentira* (To Rid The World of Lies):

Dios, que es tan poderoso
debía de hacer un mundo nuevo
pa no ver tanta mentira
porque tan mala es la vida
que solo impera el dinero
se diga lo que se diga

God, the all-powerful
should have made a new world
to get rid of all the lies
because life is so cruel
that only money rules
no matter what you say to the contrary

Another fandango, sung by José Cepero, addresses labor issues:

A la mujer del minero
se le puede llamar viuda,
que se pasa el día entero
cavando su sepultura.
¡Qué amargo gana el dinero!”

A miner’s wife
you could call a widow,
who spends the whole day
digging her grave.
How bitter the money earned!

Diego del Gastero’s ambivalence toward capitalism seems amplified with Flo6x8. On the same day as their Parliamentary protest, Flo6X8 published a manifesto that accused banks, specifically Bankia, of promoting a “system of debt bondage” that was responsible for Spain’s economic crisis. Furthermore, they blamed the legislative and executive powers, especially on the Andalusian regional level, for their “facilitating role” in capitalism. Thus, Flo6x8’s criticism is twofold, that is, they intend to 1) draw attention to the economic disparity caused by capitalism and to 2) replace the system that perpetuates this disparity

with a more equitable framework. This new framework would rebuild “the foundations of a democratic state through collective creation of a new Magna Carta” that repeals labor reforms, promotes labor rights, ends job insecurity, to end colonialist attitudes toward Andalusia, and to reverse exceedingly stringent austerity measures imposed on Andalusia by the Troika (i.e., the European Commission, International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank).

CONCLUSION

In the hallowed chambers of Parliament and within the delineated and orderly spaces of banks, the normative rules of corporeal engagements, that is, of gestures, locomotion, physical interactions, and overall bodily decorum, are followed, without question. By extension of this normative corporeality, the standards of ideal speech and rational discourse follow. In short, the architecture of space is an efficient disciplinarian of the docile bodies within. As such, reasoned debate and rational interactions are favored over other forms of communication.¹⁷⁾ In her study of the performance of political ideologies, Jessica Kulynych points out that, “persons whose speech is richly colored with rhetoric, gesture, humor, spirit, or affectation could be defined as deviant or immature communication” (1997: 325). But it is exactly this spirited discourse, she shows, that “can effectively disrupt the culturally common sensical and actually provide new and compelling alternatives to disciplinary constructions” (ibid.). Flo6x8’s disruptions, provide a break from the normative patterns of behavior and being that have been established by the very institutions that pose the greatest threat to the socioeconomic stability of the people.

When compared to the magnetic protest music of the Civil Rights or Labor movements, flamenco, seems to lack a certain spirit of activism that is apparent in many popular protest songs. However, when viewed through the framework of rhetorical protest that Denisoff provides, and taking into account the disposition of its performers, flamenco exemplifies a broader range of protest music. It is an efficient and powerful form of protest that gets to the heart of a problem in such a way as to leave the observer entertained and intrigued. Rhetorical protest cleverly engages both the senses and the mind, the emotions and the intellect. From this perspective, it should be clear that flamenco’s recent activism arises from a genre whose resistance has been denied for far too long. In the June 1978 edition of *Jaleo*, a periodic newsletter dedicated to flamenco, J.M. Caballero Bonald (a Spanish novelist, lecturer, and poet) writes that “Flamenco, which has always been a sort of undirected protest, has lately begun to search for direction” (1978: 1). What we are witnessing from the Flo6x8 activists is a fine tuning of flamenco’s voice of resistance after a long history of that voice being censored and silenced. Now, in a post-dictatorship Spain, flamenco performers are able to build on a history of a clever rhetoric that is endemic to

¹⁷⁾ See Iris Young, “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference*, 1996: 120-135.

flamenco's ethos and work toward changing the socioeconomic landscape for Spain's working class and its historically oppressed peoples.

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