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El Último Grito: *Pena, Duende*, and Nostalgia in the Information Age¹

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ABSTRACT: El Último Grito is an avant-garde indie electronic neoflamenco band based out of Paris. I shall consider the rapid evolution of indie economics due to recent technological innovations which have effectively removed the barriers to entry for aspiring indie musicians and critics alike. I argue that the invention of the internet has induced rampant inflationary pressure on indie cultural capital, homogenized the international indie musical palette, fueled widespread conspicuous cultural consumption, and affected a global subcultural stillbirth. Throughout the study I will analyze El Último Grito's music, lyrics, and interview responses to illuminate their variety of stances: indie, flamenco, Spaniard, exorcist, expat, cultural critic, performance artist, and avant-garde indie electronic neoflamenco. El Último Grito laments a technological dystopia while performing a style of music which, in its very essence, is iconic of technological advance: indie experimental electronica. Live, El Último Grito invokes the *duende* spirit, exhorting reconnection with the emotional extremities many of us lost in the digital age: joy and sorrow, love and hate, fear and peace. Lyrically, they remind their Spanish audience to be aware of the *penas* of yore and to beware the *penas* to come. Musically, El Último Grito takes an unorthodox approach to preserving the purity of flamenco expression, as well as a completely unmarketable approach toward achieving global indie success. In so doing, they capture the original essence and authenticity of both musical genres.

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Nomenclatura: aproximaciones a los estudios hispánicos is an annual online academic journal dedicated to interdisciplinary scholarship on the literary and cultural traditions of the Hispanic world. The journal is a graduate-student production of the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Kentucky and publishes original research in both English and Spanish on diverse aspects of the Hispanic world, ranging from the medieval period to the present.

El Último Grito is an avant-garde, experimental, indie electronic neoflamenco band based out of Paris. The group was formed by two Spanish ex-pat musicians, Julián Demoraga (vocals) and Diego “El Kinki” (programming and vocals). Demoraga and El Último Grito help to explain how contemporary technological revolutions have affected the way the Spanish imagined community envisions itself within European and global spheres. Specifically, Demoraga mourns the death of the *duende* for the modern-day Spaniard. Is the mystical *duende* now truly absent? The technological dystopia which Demoraga and El Último Grito lament is, paradoxically, expressed through a musical technique which in its very essence is iconic of technological advance: indie experimental electronica.² In this article, I consider how Demoraga’s sentiment echoes those of the Andalusian poet Federico García Lorca and gothic post-punk troubadour Nick Cave. Both Demoraga and Cave seem to draw on an overtly regressive, anti-modern, anti-rational nostalgia. This kind of nostalgia is usually connected with totalitarian politics, but the causes and consequences of these poets’ nostalgia are quite distinct. Demoraga is troubled by the absence of the *duende* and *penas* in contemporary rock and pop music. Preoccupied with what he perceives as an increasingly isolated Spanish society, he is nostalgic for the aesthetic and political potential of such expression: the *duende* as unifier, the *quejío* as catharsis.³

Julián Demoraga moved from Madrid to Paris in 1982 in order to finish his studies of art history and restoration. In Paris, about a decade later, Demoraga began to first discover an affinity for electronic music. A little more than a decade after his first introduction to electronic sounds, Demoraga would meet his current collaborator,

Diego “El Kinki,” while the latter was performing with his electronic group Le Dernier Cri. Following some impromptu live collaboration between Diego and Julián, El Último Grito was born. The band’s first release, *Una hora* (2009) was based on this improvisational spirit, the cathartic release of a momentary rush of *duende*: “Para nuestro primer disco ‘una hora,’ la inspiración fue firme e inmediata: lo sentí, ¡lo hice! No hubo premeditación alguna” (“For our first album, ‘una hora,’ the inspiration was unwavering and immediate: I felt it, I did it! There wasn’t a moment of premeditation; Demoraga, “Re: ÚLTIMO”).⁴

Diego and Julián each contribute a foundation for their improvisations. Diego at times provides a beat and structure for a song based on a variety of *palos*: *bulerías*, *tangos*, *soleares*, *debla*, *taranta*, *petenera*, *tientos*, *seguirillas*, *copla*, etc., to which Julián will contribute text and melody.⁵ Alternatively, Demoraga will create a lyrical structure based on his poetry to which Diego composes a variety of beats. Whatever the case, the song is always initially performed without practice before an audience which functions to heighten sensitivity and awareness for both contributors. For *Una hora*, the pair desired to create a radicalized concept of improvisational neoflamenco by excluding the most essential element of flamenco music, the guitar. The rhythmic component of the flamenco guitar was replaced by *palmas*, while the guitar’s melodic elements were performed by a handful of Parisian musicians playing a variety of wind and brass instruments: the saxophone, the flute, the clarinet, the clarion, etc. The band only decided to finally incorporate the flamenco guitar after meeting Stéphan Péron, a French student of said instrument who joined the band in 2007. Julián and Diego decided they could integrate Perón’s guitar work into their sound while maintaining an

air of avant-garde *duende* by making him adapt his traditional flamenco guitar technique education to their very non-traditional, chaotic live improvisational performances.

El Último Grito derives a hybrid combination style from eclectic musical and cultural influences that comes off live as at times kitschy, at times chaotic, at times cacophonous, and at times truly *jondo*.⁶ The avant-garde indie electronic neoflamenco band has discovered a niche of like-minded French and Spanish expat followers in Paris. Nevertheless, El Último Grito's wild take on flamenco music can often be a difficult sell in France: “En España, la música electrónica está en todas partes (bares, salas, verbenas, tele). Es un fondo cultural común. En Francia, la gente no tiene las mismas referencias musicales. Y el público sensible al flamenco y muchos aficionados suelen más escuchar un flamenco tradicional, ‘puro’. Tienen una idea del flamenco, el mito del ‘puro’” (“In Spain, electronic music is everywhere (in the bars, clubs, festivals, tely.) It is a shared cultural foundation. In France, people don't have the same musical references. Also, the French audience that appreciates flamenco, and the many French flamenco aficionados typically listen to traditional, ‘pure’ flamenco. They have an idea about flamenco, the myth of ‘purity’;” García Ramos).

The primary reference point for most fans of indie electronic and flamenco music is the much more subdued band Chambao. The lack of trance and pounding rhythms in Chambao's slow tempo compositions led the band and producer Henrik Takkenberg to coin a new subgenre for their electronic flamenco music which they refer to as flamenco chill.⁷ Demoraga and Diego say that the only perceivable flamenco influence in Chambao comes through the vocal expression. El Último Grito's members believe electronic flamenco

should be richer, especially with respect to the traditional flamenco *palo* rhythms: “Chambao es ritmo de house, pero no van entrando en los ritmos bulerías . . . no van entrando en estas cosas. Hacen música más *mainstream*, salen los mismos ritmos habituales” (“Chambao uses a house rhythm, but they never experiment with *bulerías* rhythms . . . they don't involve themselves with these issues. They make mainstream music which employs the same old rhythms”; Diego “El Kinki”).⁸ El Último Grito, by comparison, begins the composition of every song structure based on a specific *palo* before putting flesh to the rhythmic skeleton: “Julián canta una letra flamenca, por bulerías, o por petenera, o por caña, o una debla, o una cosa así . . . Entonces la estructura ya es flamenca” (“Julián sings a flamenco lyric *por bulerías*, or *por petenera*, or *por caña*, or a *debla*, or something like that . . . So the structure is already flamenco”; Diego “El Kinki”).⁹

This tension between how flamenco authenticity is preserved (in this case the voice vs. the *palo*) by recent hybrid innovators is consistent with the entire history of flamenco. The struggle over who can perform authentic flamenco (i.e. gypsies vs. *payos*, professionals vs. amateurs, etc.) and how (i.e. operatic vocals vs. *voz afillá*, authentic *palos* and instrumentation, etc.) dates back to the mid-1800s. The *voz afillá*, for instance, is a mode of flamenco singing first employed by one of the earliest known flamenco performers, El Fillo (1820-1878). His hoarse voice delivered low, worn, and course tones which is still today considered by many flamenco aficionados to be quintessentially *jondo*. The authenticity of El Fillo's vocal delivery, however, was questioned by the very first famous flamenco singer, El Planeta (1770-1850). El Planeta, who had chosen El Fillo to be his disciple, admonished him regarding his singing voice: “Te digo, *El Fillo*, que esa voz . . . es *crúa* y no de recibo;

y en cuanto al estilo, ni es fino, ni de la tierra. Así, te pido por favor . . . que no camines por sus aguas, y te atengas a la pauta antigua, y no salgas un sacramento del camino trillado” (“I’m telling you, *El Fillo*, that this voice . . . is unrefined and unacceptable; and with respect to style, it is neither smooth nor local. So I plead you . . . not to follow this route, but rather that you follow the long-established pattern, and that you do not stray one step from the beaten path”; Gamboa y Nuñez 602). Battles over authentic flamenco expression predate Antonio Mairena’s *cante jondo* revival, Lorca and Manuel de Falla’s 1922 Concurso y Fiesta del Cante Jondo, the invention of the phonograph, and most likely the *café cantante*.¹⁰

El Último Grito’s live performances are an experimental electronic take on a bygone era of raw, immediate, flamenco expression. Demoraga, while performing live, schizophrenically slips in and out of several of his influences. As if in a trance (which is a condition linked to authentic music production and appreciation for flamenco and electronic fans alike), Demoraga screeches like Bambino, then warbles like Marchena, before succumbing to a psychedelic freakout à la Triana. It is messy on every level. The live show is primarily composed of one or more of the following elements: howling, melodic, or stuttered vocals which fluctuate between the operatic and the *voz afillá*; a cacophonous mélange of horns and strings; and samplers/synthesizers approximating a number of *palos*.

El Último Grito’s recorded music mirrors the chaotic hybrid genre-bending of their indie neoflamenco colleagues in Spain. And yet their live performances further push this conceptual bedlam by adding another layer of temporal hybridity. The live spectacle is constantly fluctuating between the retro and the futuristic, at times intermingling both

at once. The warmth of the traditional call-and-response flamenco framework between the guitar and vocals is replaced here by the cold beat manipulation of Diego’s machines. The rigidity of Diego’s Ableton Live pre-programmed beat samples seems a technological innovation antithetical to the very foundations of flamenco tradition.¹¹ Yet the futuristic pulse of the machine is always conquered, bent, distorted, and rearticulated by Diego’s manipulations. Whereas Demoraga’s vocal and physical performance fluctuates between Bambino and Iggy Pop, his lyrical compositions oscillate between Federico García Lorca and Leonard Cohen. Demoraga seamlessly blends the shared concerns of twenty-first-century Europeans with those explored throughout traditional flamenco lyricism: loneliness, love, nostalgia, heartbreak, loss, and the fleeting, futile existence of mankind.

Despite the limitations of the machine, Diego and Julián complement each other when performing live according to an open-form flamenco framework: songs are not entirely fixed nor entirely improvised, but rather are based on a pre-established structure in which a series of mutually shared codes allow Diego to rapidly adjust to Julián’s interpretation, which is improvised according to the moment.¹² “Es un poquito como el flamenco . . . todo el mundo sabe cómo va a ser la letra pero no sabe nada de lo que va a cantar en este momento” (“It’s kind of like flamenco . . . everybody knows the lyrics, but nobody knows what will actually be sung in the moment”; Diego “El Kinki”). For El Último Grito, pure representation of the instinctive flamenco spirit trumps finesse: “la sofisticación no es una preocupación primordial” (“sophistication is not a primordial concern”; Demoraga, Re: ÚLTIMO).

The ubiquitous Spanish music producer Javier Limón best describes this group via an

enigmatic jumble of appropriate signs: “Romanticismo trágico asumido. Flamenco vudú (“Assumed tragic romanticism. Flamenco voodoo”; “El Último Grito: Flamenco Electronique”). Demoraga feels a mystical calling to perform this wild electronic flamenco in order to reawaken the *duende* that he feels has been long lost in both electronic and flamenco practice:¹³

La tendencia actual es la de la similitud general: los mismos arreglos, los mismos temas en las canciones, las mismas voces... Pero naturalmente que sí que hay buen flamenco, siempre lo habrá. [sic] Duende ay! Duende... Está un poco dormido. Hay que despertarlo, al Duende hay que llamarlo con sangre y carne. El Duende es un misterioso que todos sentimos y que nadie puede explicar. El Duende es un poder y no un querer, es una lucha a muerte. El Duende no está en la garganta; el Duende duerme en las entrañas y sube y sube hasta la voz... No es una cuestión de facultad, sino de sangre y carne, de viejísima cultura ancestral y al mismo tiempo de creación en el acto. Es el espíritu de la tierra... Y es necesario tener ‘un par de cojones’ para llamarlo y afrontarlo... Duende hay, lo que no hay son las penas que lo mueven.

The current trend is that of similitude in general: the same arrangements, the same themes in the same songs, the same voices... But of course there exists good flamenco, as there always will. *Duende*, alas! *Duende*... It is a little sleepy. You have to wake it; the *duende* has to be summoned with blood and flesh. The *duende* is a mystery that we all feel and nobody can explain. The *duende* is a power and not a desire; it is a fight to death. The *duende* doesn’t come from the throat;

the *duende* sleeps in the guts and rises and rises up to the voice... It’s not a question of ability, but of flesh and blood, of a very ancient culture and, at the same time, an on-the-spot creation. It is the spirit of the earth... And you need to have balls to summon it and cope with it... *Duende* exists, what doesn’t is the misery that drives it. (Demoraga, Re: ÚLTIMO)

According to Demoraga, the Spanish indie rockers, electronic musicians, and flamencos are unable to beckon the *duende* because they are afraid of the misery it signifies. Demoraga casts the blame for this absent *duende* on the inability of flamenco musicians to invoke it—either because they fear it, or because they cannot feel it. They lack “the misery that drives it.” And yet Demoraga also supposes that this absence derives from too much present-day agony: “A la gente le dan miedo las penas. No quieren cantar penas porque se sienten que hay tanta pena real... Cuando yo soy feliz no tengo tiempo de escribir canciones felices, estoy viviendo. Cuando uno está triste o tiene pena, siente y siente y escribe” (“People [nowadays] are afraid of *penas*. They don’t want to sing sorrow because they already feel enough real pain as it is. When I am happy I don’t have time to write happy songs. I am living. When someone is truly down and full of grief, one feels, and one feels, and one writes”); Demoraga Interview).

Demoraga seems to express conflicting thoughts in the prior two quotes. He states that the misery that drives *duende* no longer exists but also that no one wants to sing sorrow because they already feel enough real pain as it is. So which is it? Is there too much *pena* in contemporary Spanish society or not enough?¹⁴ Demoraga’s vision of the *duende*, *penas*, and the lack thereof in Spanish music today is expanded below by the post punk,

gothic troubadour Nick Cave, citing Lorca, to describe almost all contemporary rock music production:

In his brilliant lecture, *The Theory and Function of Duende*, Federico García Lorca attempts to shed some light on the eerie and inexplicable sadness that lives at the heart of certain works of art. ‘All that has dark sounds has ‘duende’,’ he says, ‘that mysterious power that everyone feels but no philosopher can explain.’ In contemporary rock music, the area in which I operate, music seems less inclined to have at its soul, restless and quivering, the sadness that Lorca talks about. Excitement, often; anger, sometimes - but true sadness, rarely . . . all in all, it would appear that ‘duende’ is too fragile to survive the compulsive modernity of the music industry. In the hysterical technocracy of modern music, sorrow is sent to the back of the class, where it sits, pissing its pants in mortal terror. Sadness or ‘duende’ needs space to breathe. Melancholy hates haste and floats in silence. I feel sorry for sadness, as we jump all over it, denying its voice and muscling it into the outer reaches. No wonder sorrow doesn’t smile much. No wonder sadness is so sad (Cave 7-8).

Demoraga’s and Cave’s critiques of the contemporary rock music industry as mystical call to arms against modernity may for some readers seem slightly reminiscent of the regressive, mystical, and anti-rationalist nostalgia politics of twentieth-century fascism. Nonetheless, the fundamental difference between these two anti-modern perspectives is the *kind* of nostalgia which they draw on (reflective vs. restorative) which

directly relates to the ends of their respective nostalgias (*italics are for emphasis*).

Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming—wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt. (Boym xviii)

Although there exist elements of what Boym refers to as the “restorative” in the nostalgia of both poets, Demoraga, like Nick Cave, explicitly aims to perform the reflective nostalgic sentiment underlying the kind of *duende* evoked in Lorca’s poetry: *Poema del cante jondo* (1921), *Canciones* (1927), and *Primeras canciones* (1936). Unlike their critiques above, the lyricism of Cave and Demoraga is not anti-modern but rather seeks to explore the complexity of emotions that has been extricated from much mainstream pop music. They focus on the *penas* of modernity which others are perhaps unable or afraid to express. Live, Demoraga and El Último Grito invoke the *duende* spirit, exhorting reconnection with the emotional extremities many of us lost an immediate connection with in the digital age: joy and sorrow, love and hate, fear and peace. They are not luddites. Nor do they hold notions of some triumphant return to Reconquest Spain. They do, however, wish to reflect on what has been sacrificed in Spain’s pursuit for modernity.

El Último Grito’s song “Iglesia abandonada” combines several different flamenco *palos* in its weaving of a tapestry lament for the abandoned *duende* soul of the flamenco of yore: the first verse is set to *bulerías*, the second to a hybrid Arabic-Andalusian pattern, the third to the flamenco *palo* known as *tangos*. The reverence paid by El Último Grito to the patrimony of traditional flamenco is referenced in its titular metaphor as church. The loss of this flamenco church, deserted by the once faithful Spanish souls, is alluded to in the adjective *abandonada* (abandoned). Demoraga sings of its downfall and redemption (English translation is in italics):

Perseguiré, perseguiré...
I will pursue, I will pursue...
 Los rastros deste afán,
The traces of this desire,
 como busca el agua a la sed,
as water searches for thirst,
 como busca el río a la mar,
as the river seeks the sea,
 la estela de tu perfume.
the trail of your scent.
 Yo tenía,
I used to have,
 yo tenía un alma.
I used to have a soul.
 Yo tenía,
I used to have,
 yo tenía un cuerpo...
I used to have a body...
 Yo tenía,
I used to have,
 yo tenía un sueño.
I used to have a dream.
 Yo tenía,
I used to have,

yo tenía todo.
I used to have everything.
 Yo tenía,
I used to have,
 y ya no lo tengo.
but no longer.
 Yo tenía,
I used to have,
 yo tenía un alma...
I used to have a soul...
 Y ya no lo tengo.
But no longer.
 ¿Regresarás? ¡No sé!
Will you return? I don't know!
 Me atravesó tu suave vendaval,
Your soft gale pierced me.
 Rumbo a tu recuerdo seguí,
I followed the path of your memory,
 la senda de tu perfume.
the trail of your scent.
 No hay soledad
There is no solitude
 que aguante el turbión,
able to withstand the flood,
 el impulso antiguo y sutil,
the ancient and subtle impulse
 del eco de tu perfume...
of the echo of your perfume...

(Demoraga and El Último Grito)¹⁵

The first verse of “[Iglesia abandonada](#)” [Click on the link to hear the song] begins with a playful mix of piano, synthesizers, sporadic cymbals, and *palmas* (notice the hyperlink over “Iglesia abandonada”). The lyrics represent El Último Grito’s quest for an elusive and always already absent flamenco purity and index the mirror reflection of the hunt, inverting the scent of the flamenco trail with the trail of the flamenco scent. It

is as if flamenco were like Hansel and Gretel, leaving a trail of pebbles to find the way home, and Demoraga the bloodhound, following the stones to speed up the process. A melancholic tenor is then introduced via the contrapuntal texture of several hybrid Arabic-Andalusian music symbols, especially with respect to percussive elements such as the darbuka, interspersed with off-beat *palmas* and pounding rhythmic synthesizers. This musical shift signals a change in tone from hopeful chase to weepy nostalgia, a nostalgia for all that flamenco has lost: the soul, the body, the dream... everything. The musical and lyrical transition is further underscored by a change in the locus of enunciation. The following lyrics come from the perspective of flamenco incarnate. The third stanza is punctuated by yet another change which returns to the instrumentation used in the beginning of the song set to a *tangos* (instead of a *bulerías*) *palo*. The lyrics also bring us back into the perspective of the protagonist tracking flamenco, instead of flamenco itself. Demoraga as hunter finally realizes that his efforts are futile. Flamenco will return regardless of his endeavors. Those souls who had once gone astray—those who had lost touch with the mystical *duende* dwelling within—will be brought back into the fold in time.

Demoraga is not seeking to restore the soul, the body, and the dream of some mythical Spanish past. He instead laments the loss of flamenco's aesthetic, cathartic, and political potential: the early twentieth-century flamenco expression of *penas* was itself at times indirectly political.¹⁶ The isolation alluded to in the final half of this stanza draws a temporal dichotomy between the communal spirit brought by the lost traditional flamenco culture and the *soledad* experienced by the individualistic mentality of present-day Spanish society. With the vast amount of downloadable

entertainment, made increasingly available by every incremental upgrade in the speed of internet connectivity, who needs to ever leave the house? With ever more rapid-fire communication potential, provided via every new iPhone upgrade, why converse with a friend while carousing Malasaña when you can post on Facebook that you are conversing with a friend while carousing Malasaña?

Technology can isolate, but it can also efficiently unify. The exponential growth of the nation-wide youth protest movement, beginning on May 15th, 2011, led by *Los Indignados* (The outraged) would be hard to imagine without the aid of rapid communication provided by social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.¹⁷ The ability for closely connected communal circles to quickly correspond with each other has been available for some time now. The universal acceptance of Facebook and Twitter, as the *de facto* modes of communication for youth, has just expanded this intimate network to extend throughout the entirety of nearly every imagined community. The national imagined community is itself beginning to lose meaning as social networks progressively erode preconceived boundaries of any inherently shared national identity. For Demoraga, nostalgia functions not as a means to destroy the global communal connections that technology has made possible, but to reinforce the local communal connections through *pena* and the *duende*, with all of the aesthetic and political weight that these two terms historically imply.

In "Iglesia abandonada," Demoraga reminds his Spanish audience to be aware of the *penas* of yore and to beware the *penas* yet to come: "yo tenía un sueño...yo tenía todo...y ya no lo tengo." With over half of Spanish youths under the age of 25 unemployed, Spain is undoubtedly experiencing widespread *pena* now (Allen 4). What Demoraga

believes it lacks is the pure flamenco expression—the cathartic *quejío*—with which to address them. The flamenco church of infinite *penas* has been abandoned. The *duende* is nearly dead. The flock has dispersed in pursuit of individualistic material

pleasures. All is lost...but not for long. Flamenco purity will be restored. A purity—lest we forget—called for by an avant-garde, experimental, indie electronic neoflamenco band based out of Paris.

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20. Print.

Endnotes

¹ The Spanish word *pena* translates roughly to hardship, troubles, woe, or sorrow. *Duende* is a term popularized by the Andalusian poet Federico García Lorca who quoted Manuel Torre's definition in his *Teoría y juego del duende* (1922): "Todo lo que tiene sonidos negros tiene duende" (Everything that has black sounds has *duende*; (2). Lorca further elaborates on the *duende* as some mystical spiritual force: "Para buscar al duende no hay mapa ni ejercicio. Sólo se sabe que quema la sangre como un tópico de vidrios, que agota, que rechaza toda la dulce geometría aprendida, que rompe los estilos, que se apoya en el dolor humano que no tiene consuelo" ("There is no map or exercise to find the *duende*. We only know that it burns the blood like a poultice of broken glass, that it exhausts, that it rejects all the sweet geometry we have learned, that is shatters styles, that it rests on human suffering which has no consolation"; (4). *Duende* has been translated in a myriad different ways, but the underlying sentiment frequently relates to the occult and the mysterious, often to a spirit which can only be conjured from within the blood. For flamenco musicians and aficionados it refers to the ability of a singer to convey the most profound and complex emotions. For Demoraga, it is the fundamental element that unites the gypsy, flamenco, Andalusian, and perhaps even Spanish imagined communities. It is the ghost of so much spilled Spanish blood and the lurking, ominous shadow--cast without light.

² Patrick Maguire defines technological dystopia as "a society in which the application of science has created a world much worse than what came before it" (qtd. in Riepe 8).

³ The *quejío* (in Spanish, *quejido*) in flamenco is a vocalized moan, groan, or lamentation.

⁴ My translation. All translations throughout this article are mine.

⁵ The term *palo* is a general designation referring to any subgenre style of flamenco song, dance, or guitar performance.

⁶ The word *jondo* is an Andalusian variant on the Spanish term *hondo*, an adjective meaning deep or profound, and a noun roughly translating to the depths or the bottom. When used to reference a quality of music, *jondo* becomes synonymous with the essence of flamenco artistry. According to Gamboa and Nuñez, the term used to refer to specific flamenco song forms (i.e. *tonás*, *martinetes*, *seguiriyas*, or *soleares*), but nowadays it describes instead a particularly profound vocal interpretation: "el estilo más jondo puede ser interpretado de forma totalmente superficial, y el más liviano de la forma más profunda y emotiva" ("the most *jondo* style can be interpreted in a completely superficial way, and the lightest with profound and moving manner"; (311).

⁷ Chambao is a flamenco-electronic band formed in 2002 in Málaga, Spain. Chambao founded the flamenco chill movement which blends flamenco sounds with ambient electronic music. As Diego mentions, most of their rhythms are based on traditional house and ambient electronic beats. Nevertheless, the band did occasionally experiment with traditional flamenco *palo* structures. Chambao continues to record and perform live throughout Spain and abroad, their most recent release to date being the album *10 Años Around The World* (2013).

⁸ *Bulerías* is a fast-paced flamenco *palo* (typically performed at around 240 beats per minute) which was developed in Jerez during the nineteenth century. It was brought back into vogue by Camarón de la Isla, Paco de Lucía, and like-minded flamenco performers from the late 1960s onward. Gamboa and Nuñez point to Pastora Pavón's *Niña de los peines* (1910) as the first album to record the style under that name (77).

⁹ *Petenera* is a slow-paced, melancholic flamenco *palo* which was originally considered to have derived from Sephardi Jewish folk songs due to thematic commonalities found in the lyrics within certain songs

from both traditions. However, recent evidence has shown the *palo* to be Mexican in origin (Gamboa 431-432). The *caña* is the first unequivocally flamenco *cante* to be described in print, dating back to 1812. The style is linked by Gamboa and Nuñez with a transition within flamenco performance to a more professional sphere given the extremely challenging technical requirements involved in its vocal execution (113). The *debla* (the Romani word for goddess) is typically sung *a palo seco* (a capella). Its performance is melancholic, melismatic, and rich with lyrical expressions of personal and communal *penas*. The *debla* tends toward communal catharsis, occasionally delving into the historical representation of the persecuted Andalusian Roma as long-suffering yet resilient.

¹⁰ The *café cantante* represents the first public space hosting flamenco performances. These bars originated in Sevilla and date back to the 1840s. The *café cantante* drastically altered the world of flamenco in that it allowed the general public to experience a flamenco performance. In order to hear a flamenco singer prior to the *café cantante* one would either have had to belong to a close-knit community of performers, hire a flamenco, or luck on to an impromptu street or tavern performance. The *café cantante* began the era of flamenco professionalization since musicians could now make a steady living by touring these establishments.

¹¹ After reading my comment on the inherent “rigidity” of the sampler, Diego “El Kinki” wrote to me with the following interesting critique and introspection: “me parece curioso a veces oírte hablar de rigidez. Joé, a mí me parece lo contrario, no tiene rigidez ninguna, el ordenador es un meta-instrumento, puede hacer de todos los instrumentos a la vez (los únicos que no consigue obtener un buen resultado, a mi entender, son los vientos...), ya sea imitándolos o sampleándolos, inventar nuevos sonidos, y tiene el poder supremo de juntar todo eso. Claro, la máquina en sí no es expresiva, pero el trozo de madera y metal que es la guitarra tampoco lo es, lo es el tío que la toca. (“Sometimes I find it funny to hear you talk about rigidity. To me it seems the very opposite, it is not rigid at all. The computer is a meta-instrument, you can produce all the instruments at once--the only ones that don’t work, in my opinion, are the woodwinds..., either imitating or sampling them or inventing new sounds-- it has the supreme power to gather all of that. Of course, the sampler in and of itself is not expressive, but for that matter neither is the piece of wood and metal that makes up the guitar--it's the guy who plays it”; “tu capitulo” [sic]).

¹² Open form refers to music that is open ended and can be repeated for as long as the performing participants and situation requires.

¹³ Critics of electronic music might say that electronic music could not possibly lose a *duende* that it never had. Electronic music has often been portrayed as a sterile, mechanistic, and cold art form—the polar opposite of *duende* as an expression derived from the depths of the human soul. Yet early endeavors by practitioners of proto-electronica *musique concrète* saw the practice as a mystical, *duende*-like expression. *Musique concrète* appealed to a neurasthenic populace that ached to reconnect on a profound level with that lost inner-most being: “Pierre Henry announced the arrival of a music suitable for the accelerated information flows of the twentieth century. In his *Variations for a Door and a Sigh* (1963), the tape-splicing existential artist uses the microphone as a forensic probe to penetrate the ‘dooriness’ of a door. Where modernism had spent the first half-century collaging echoes from the past, this was an attempt to grasp enlightenment from the fractured materials of the immediate present, peering closely at what the snipped-up tape loops revealed like a Chinese seer examining the splinters in an ox’s shoulder blade. For Henry, writing in 1950, *musique concrète* meant a humanist descent from the absolute to the material realm: from ‘the sacred’ to ‘a relationship with cries, laughter, sex, death. Everything that puts us in touch with the cosmic, that is to say, with the living materiality of planets on fire’” (Young 16). This poetic description of *musique concrète* recalls the metaphysical exploration of the depths of *duende* provided by Lorca in his 1933 lecture, “Juego y teoría del duende” (“Play and Theory of the *Duende*”).

¹⁴ I extrapolate here the flamenco *pena* to comment on a broader phenomenon of a sorrow experienced throughout much of Spanish society. The two have not always been so closely intertwined. The marginalized state of the average flamenco performer throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth century meant that his *pena* was unique to his own experience. That said, this expression of individual *pena* was frequently a reflection of a wider issue that affected *gitano* and/or other communities on the margins. The sentiment expressed to me by Demoraga captures the essence of *pena* as a problem that is no longer a misfit-outcast experience, but rather a representation of a widespread social phenomenon so vast and devastating that it cannot or should not be voiced.

¹⁵ The title “Iglesia abandonada” is a reference to a Lorca poem by the same title from *Poeta en Nueva York* (published posthumously in 1940). The majority of the lyrics to “Iglesia abandonada” are borrowed from the song “[Perfume](#),” composed by the Argentine/Uruguayan electronic neotango band Bajofondo Tango Club (Notice the hyperlink over “Perfume”). El Último Grito changes the tone and code of the Bajofondo song by adding the chorus—which references the sentiment of loss and mourning that predominate the Lorca poem—and altering two verses. Whereas the Bajofondo lyrics describe an optimistic first-person epistle directed at a lost lover, the chorus added by Demoraga evokes a more pessimistic and introspective monologue lamenting the loss not of a lover, but of everything. The certainty of the lover’s return in “Perfume” is expressed in the affirmative verse “Regresarás” (Supervielle). El Último Grito transforms this verse into a doubtful one by changing the statement into a question followed by an emphatic expression of uncertainty: “¿Regresarás? [sic.] No sé!” El Último Grito replaces Bajofondo’s *envión* (meaning push, shove, or jolt) with *turbión*. The reference to a flood reinforces the religious undertones implied in the song title while recoding the effect of the echo of the protagonist’s perfume. Whereas a shove implies an individual recipient, a flood affects an entire community. The solitude that is unable to withstand the flood, then, must be a communal solitude. I interpret this communal solitude not as a reference to a community isolated from other communities, but as a community of isolated individuals.

¹⁶ William Washabaugh dedicates the first chapter of his study *Flamenco: Passion, Politics, and Popular Culture* (1996) to untangling the “hidden transcripts” in flamenco performance. He conjectures that many of these transcripts are indeed hidden from the performers themselves since they are ingrained in a flamenco body politics that is often learned by the muscles but never questioned by the mind.

¹⁷ Likewise, the September 25th, 2012 call to occupy the Madrid Parliament (*el Congreso de los Diputados*) by forming a human-chain around it was an idea gone viral via Facebook. The fairly aggressive retaliation on the part of Madrid’s metropolitan police force in response to the antagonistic tactics of a handful of protesters has been recorded in high definition from a variety of angles thanks to the ubiquitous iPhone and its camera’s high-speed recording capacity.

Appendix



Fig. 1. El Último Grito: Unlimited Trance Flamenco. El Último Grito members are pictured here from left to right: Diego “El Kinki,” David Marcos, and Julián Demoraga. Photograph by Régine Abadia, logo design and image layout by Julián Demoraga, 2013. JPEG.