Registering Protest: Voice, Precarity, and Return in Crisis Portugal

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Registering Protest: Voice, Precarity, and Return in Crisis Portugal

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This article examines the circulation and reception of a song that catalyzed a youth movement and widespread protest in 2011 Portugal. Through a theorization of “register”, it argues for the importance of attending to micro-shifts in aesthetic form, engagement, and response, to understanding macro-shifts in public and political feeling.

Keywords: Portugal; Protest Song; Crisis; Europe

In November 2012, Spain and Portugal organize synchronized labour strikes; workers in Italy and Greece protest in solidarity. In February 2013, anti-austerity protesters occupy the parliament in Lisbon singing an iconic protest song from the 1974 Portuguese revolution. The following evening different protesters sing the same song in Madrid. Graffiti in an abandoned industrial zone in Cacilhas (across the river Tagus from Lisbon), in July 2013, states, Somos Todos Gregos (“We are all Greeks”) (Figure 1). Solidarities and affective alliances in Portugal, in relation to the rest of Europe’s South, are being recast in the context of ongoing economic precarity, shifting generational orientations to “others” (a generation who did not experience the long Portuguese dictatorship [1926–1974]), emergent economic partnerships, and social media. And this recasting is happening against a bolstering of the national through transnational discourses and practices of cultural heritage amplified in the context of “crisis”. (In Portugal, the sung poetic genre of fado was ratified as UNESCO “intangible cultural heritage” [ICH] in November 2011, following on the Spanish flamenco in...
Here I zoom in to focus on a mode of audibility and response, a shift in register in Portugal in 2011 that right in the thick of “crisis”, EU bailout, government collapse, and Egyptian uprisings (through a resurgent modality of protest song) somehow mediated between past and present, between “heritage” and edgy innovation, and between protest as local and protest as writ Mediterranean and Southern European (a channel in and a channel out).

Recent anthropological scholarship on “the crisis” as experienced on Europe’s peripheries calls attention to the ways in which local actors have productively used irony, sarcasm, humour, or play to shift the tenor of politics as usual (Knight 2015; Molé 2013), to shape possibilities for public discourse on topics which are fiercely contested or highly charged (Pipyrou 2014). At the same time, scholars of the crisis in Europe’s South have noted the ways in which specific local histories (potent symbols, memories,

Figure 1. Somos Todos Gregos (“We are all Greeks”): Icarus falling (Cacilhas, Portugal, July 2013, ©2013 Lila Ellen Gray).
and politically charged moments from the past) in the context of this crisis, return, are retold, re-enacted, or reappropriated, shot through with differently inflected political valences (Narotzky 2011; Panourgia 2010). “Crisis” has a way of collapsing or re-inflecting temporal narratives (Knight and Stewart this issue).

This article emerges from my current interest in understanding how emergent aesthetic, expressive, and sensorial practices are shifting the politics of belonging across Europe’s South in the context of precarity and shaping possibilities (or not) for livability. It investigates the efficacy of a song for simultaneously catalyzing protest, shifting a register of political engagement, and for affecting narratives of return, to an earlier (1974) moment of public sphere assertion. In so doing, it introduces the concept of “register” as a theoretical frame through which to understand the alignment of socio-political, historical, and affective dimensions of voice and the permeability of genres. I position my analysis against a backdrop of my long-term ethnographic commitments to understanding affective worlds shaped through musical and poetic practice and reception in the post-dictatorial, postcolonial metropole of Lisbon through the urban song genre of fado (Gray 2013). Musical experience, through polyindexical modes of signification (Samuels 2004), has a way of collapsing history as chronology, history as telos, condensing affect; in moments of listening to music, history might be experienced as a feeling (Gray 2013). (Poly)temporalities of “crisis” and a productive politics of play align with affective and historical trajectories of song with a particular salience in Portugal in 2011.

1. From Song to Street

Consider these two tales of song, circulation, and protest. In January 2011, in the context of financial crisis and soaring unemployment in Portugal (on the heels of an emerging “Arab Spring”), the Portuguese band Deolinda performs a song about the precarity of their generation (twenties and thirties). The song is “Parva que Sou” (How stupid [foolish] I am) and is the first encore to cap each evening in Deolinda’s four ambitious live concerts; the first two in the city of Porto, the second two in the Lisbon Coliseum (Coliseu dos Recreios). The lyrics tell the story, by now well worn across Southern Europe, of a generation of university-educated young people, chronically unemployed, stuck.

The vocalist leans in, addressing the audience, “these lyrics aren’t funny even though they might seem like it, but they address a sad and stupid (imbecil) reality”. She begins, singing softly, slowly, eyes closed (a gesture that for a female fado singer could index interiority or deep feeling), “I am from the generation that has no salary and this does not bother me. How stupid (parva) I am! I am lucky if I can get an internship! How stupid I am!” (The audience erupts in applause and whistles.) She sings of a generation that still lives with their parents, postponing marriage and having children, unable to make car payments, unable to complain because there is “always someone worse off on TV”. She sings the final verse with her face contorted, mouth wide open, facial muscles strained at their limits, voice in a sung shout, her sarcasm audible in the final repetition of “How stupid I am”, concluding, “This situation has
gone on for too long! And I am not stupid! What a stupid world, where in order to be a slave, one must study.” The audience is on their feet.³

Amateur videos of the first performances, shot on cell phones, circulate almost immediately online, attracting tens of thousands of views within the first week. And from the outset, the rapid and wide circulation of the video and song features as one of the key elements of the story as presented by traditional media outlets in Portugal (like television); and they too use the amateur video, full of wobble, blur, distortions of sound and light.⁶ In February 2011 some of the phrases of “Parva que Sou” move to parliament, recontextualized as reported speech. Some called the song the hymn or the sound of the young lost (trashed) generation (geração à rasca).⁷ Many credited the song as the catalyst for subsequent massive street protests, particularly the “spontaneous” protest (organized primarily through social media) of 12 March 2011, which contributed to the collapse of one government and the institution of another; the size of these street protests had not been seen in Portugal since the era of the military coup which toppled the long-standing dictatorship in 1974 (Baumgarten 2013). Others heralded it as a return of canção de protesto (protest song), a genre politically salient in the years directly preceding and following the 1974 military coup, but since more subdued.⁸ (And on the evening of 12 March 2011, Deolinda was singing “Parva que Sou” live in a concert in Galicia, Spain.)

Story two. At approximately 12:20 am on 25 April 1974, the Portuguese radio station Rádio Renascença aired the protest song “Grândola Vila Morena”, by the activist folk musician José (Zeca) Afonso, as the second of two broadcast musical/sonic signals for the military coup in the capital of Lisbon to begin. In March 1974, Afonso had appeared at the Lisbon Coliseum (the very same Lisbon Coliseum where Deolinda sang), to sing. Prohibited by the censorship board to perform a song in his repertoire, he sang Grândola. The audience rose and sang with him (Carvalho 2004, 19–30). (Grândola is a town in the Portuguese Alentejo, a region which had a significant communist presence leading up to the revolution and where rural labour unions thrived immediately following [see Maxwell 1995, 163]). Subsequently, as this story goes, the song became a symbol of the 1974 revolution. This first story, of Deolinda’s “Parva que Sou”, became sutured to the second, along with its euphoric revolutionary and nostalgic affects. From the outset, images of José Afonso, and other revolutionary era protest singers, appeared alongside those of Deolinda, in the way that Portuguese media told the tale of the viral contagion that sparked the protests in 2011. These protests, as sociologist Baumgarten (2013) has noted, were one of the first of a series worldwide that referred back to another. Indeed, the Portuguese geração à rasca movement predates the emergence of the Spanish Indignados and the Occupy movements (Accornero and Pinto 2015, 505; Arnold 2013). In 2011, Portugal was simultaneously looking to Egypt, and then later to Spain, and to Greece, while at the same time turning back to an affect and to a particular relation of song, voice, and public sphere assertion from 1974.

Under what circumstances does song prompt people to take to the streets? Under what circumstances (aesthetic, sociopolitical, sensory, sonic, musical, and technological) might song move from the concert hall, the intimacy of the headphones, the cell
phone, or the radio, to the streets, to both fuel and to justify a protest in motion? Under what kinds of circumstances might the genre of public protest go for decades dormant, only to be rekindled by song? I think through the efficacy of these early performances of “Parva que Sou” and their social contagion, by attending to particular socio-aesthetic-historical nets of referentiality, repertoire, and charge, in which the song, its performances, and reception are enmeshed, and through which they resonate. I read the Deolinda “Parva que Sou” story within a frame provided by a constellation of repertoire and performances recorded live in their second Lisbon Coliseum concert in 2011 (in a performance of over two hours). I examine the ways in which the performance of this repertoire signifies against the grain of the genre-world of the Lisbon fado in its stereotypical renderings, in relation to sonic and musical indexical generational cues, and through the inclusion of reported speech which connects registers of the everyday to heightened performance, where these registers are reframed and critiqued in singing. I argue for the wildfire-like spark nature of the song, as linked not only to transnationally interconnected tactics, strategies, and technologies of uprising or protest, where again an emphasis on social media and global interconnectedness could feature prominently in how a story like this one might be framed, but as simultaneously dependent upon the percolation of locally writ histories and aesthetic-musical practices of world-making through the interplay of song, sound, story, and image.

These are worlds wrought through the aesthetic, to some extent bound by their own rules of engagement and by register as a range of possibility: for the sonic, the vocal, the social, and the affective (and thus the political). In thinking about register as a range of possibility connecting the material to the sociopolitical, I collapse multiple meanings of register: for example, register as to record a fact or to “produce a response in”, along with an alternate definition that emerged in English, as applied to the manual and sounded registers of an organ in the sixteenth century, then moving to the registers of the voice (as in range, timbre, and tessitura) in the early nineteenth, and then by the mid-twentieth century, in linguistics, to speech registers (marked by social context or subject position) (a formal register, a colloquial register, etc.),9 and lastly more recently by theorists of affect (as in affective register, or a register of complaint or of optimism [Berlant 2008, 2011]). I theorize register as at once a mode of voicing and social performance, and as an affective orientation, one that demands and catalyzes a particular kind of response. I think about the work of register in rendering genres porous, thus in this case, moving song to street. At the same time, I implicitly argue for the importance of considering the visual as centrally attached to sound in its circulation and across diverse media platforms. In turning to “register” as such, I build on theorizations of genre and intertextuality formulated by linguistic anthropologists Bauman and Briggs (1992, 149), “… to paraphrase Sapir, we might say that all genres leak” (emphasis mine). Attention to “register” foregrounds the ways in which nuanced aspects of voicing and sound, in moving from one generic context to another, often carry with them significations dense with history, politics, and affects. The modes through which register signifies are often oblique, relying upon tacit and highly embodied forms of knowledge. Critical then is to understand how different registers are signalled, marked (in this case, registers of assertion and protest), and move.
Shifting Registers

Deolinda, a quartet with a lead female vocalist (Ana Bacalhau, b. 1978) backed by three male instrumentalists (on guitar, bass guitar, sometimes on Portuguese traditional stringed instruments [like the viola braguesa] or instruments with transnational “folk” status [like the ukulele]), rose to prominence in 2008, with their first CD, Canção ao Lado (Song on the side), reaching double platinum status in Portugal. Deolinda’s music and lyrics are composed almost exclusively by the band member Pedro da Silva Martins. Illustrations in liner notes, online, and as animations and still backdrops to live performances are rendered by the artist João Fazenda, who began his career in comic book illustration. Deolinda’s visuality, playfully rendered and “cartoon”-like (Arnold 2013), with a retro patina, can be understood in relation to the simultaneous emergence of the rebranding of Portuguese “tradition”, for both local and international markets, through the kitschification of design, where a visual “ironic” retro frame does the work of specifically placing Portuguese histories and products in a wider internationally circulating retro (1950s–1960s) aesthetic. (One example is the Portuguese brand “Portugalo”, which has succeeded in curating and rebranding quotidian “made in Portugal” food stuffs and objects, for a tourist market, through an aesthetic which emphasizes an explicit retro frame, “We found from the past, inspiration for the present; what was useful yesterday, can be beautiful today” [www.portugalo.pt].) Musicaly, in the case of Deolinda, there are also links to folk revivals amongst urban youth in multiple locales, for example, mandolin and ukulelerevivals in contemporary Brooklyn.

Deolinda refers to both the name of the ensemble and the name of the fictional persona developed and represented by the ensemble. Deolinda’s character takes shape through the narratives of song lyrics, melody, instrumentation, and musical style, through sound, visual iconography in liner notes, website and stage set design, music videos, costuming, and promotional materials, and through the vocal and performance choices of its lead vocalist. From CD illustrations, we learn that Deolinda is a woman, likely in her thirties, white, Portuguese. She peers out of a window onto cement block apartment buildings across the street from her home (in a Lisbon suburb) decorated with multiple iconic markers of a particular Portugueseness (a scarf for the Lisbon football team Benfica draped over the chair, traditional embroidered lace doilies on the tables). A stack of vinyl records sit on the floor next to a Victrola; an iPod with headphones is on the dining room table; a record album of the late fado diva Amália Rodrigues rests on a chair. From this vantage point, of the quotidian Portuguese “normal”, against a bricolage of recording playback technology and an archive of sound, where a particular sonic/musical past is a resource to be mined, dusted off, and recombined (and some of their songs contain an added hiss, mimicking an old LP), Deolinda narrates her stories in song. The genre of fado, in its public presentations of self, hides its technological secret (foregrounding tropes of “liveness”, originality, and “oral transmission” of musical skills); Deolinda, on the other hand, starts from the explicit foregrounding of the recorded archive, the past as solidified in media. Deolinda’s character accumulates nuance as the ensemble’s repertoire develops and expands.
The world wrought by Deolinda (the ensemble) is one in which a stereotypical fado cosmology is turned upside down, the obsessive nostalgic, sometimes colonial, gaze, the melodramatic complaint, the individual fate-filled suffering. It is a world where traditional saints become unmoored from their alters and dance around dizzy, irreverent, and cause mischief; where a colonial sailing ship is a bathtub toy, the sailor caught in a storm from the rush of the faucet and rammed by a rubber ducky who squeaks (at which point audience members hold up rubber duckies, making them squeak); where coloured fish swim animated on a stage set, where cutting the cable and going offline onto the street reveal a dusted off world of tradition (and the quotidian) rendered vibrant, a world where goofing around reveals both a political critique and a play of possibility, a shift in register.

Through an audiovisual alchemy, Deolinda (the ensemble) reframes a register of complaint or inertia, often through the frame of play or parody, as assertion. This re-registering happens in part against the ground of the genre of Lisbon fado and its aesthetic and sociopolitical stereotypes. Yet Deolinda’s music (in terms of repertoire, instrumentation, musical structure, and lyrics, which constitute Lisbon fado practice) is not fado; rather it dialogues alongside it. Deolinda pushes back against stereotypes of national or “cultural” character (Knight 2013, 157) in Portugal, which for many might be rendered in condensed form in iconic fado sounds, affects, or lyrics.11

Fado’s stereotypical complaint register can be understood as historicized within a particular politics of regime era Portugal (with fado subject to state censorship) and a transnationally circulating twentieth-century ideology of gender and nation. Fado performance often implicates protocols of silent attentive (interiorized) listening. Complaint in contemporary fado is often for the sake of complaint (or linked to a poetic ethos of saudade, a bittersweet form of nostalgia), where it is implicitly understood that complaint will not result in direct action (Gray 2013; Nery 2004).12 For listeners to get Deolinda’s message, they need familiarity with fado as a genre world that simultaneously enables and curtails certain registers, certain possibilities, and for some, certain politics, along with multiple speech registers of a particular Portuguese everyday and generational cues.13

In one of Deolinda’s meta-songs about fado, “Fado não é mal” (Fado is not bad) performed in the 2011 Lisbon Coliseum concert, Ana Bacalhau exaggerates her first utterance, the exclamation “Ai” in the phrase “Ai tristeza” (Oh sadness!) imbuing both the “Ai” and fado’s stereotypical complaint register with sarcasm and parody. Her mouth is open wide, the two vowels prolonged, sung slightly out of tune, on an exaggerated slide between two pitches. She makes an assertive downward body motion with her arms (hands with fists clenched), punctuating and framing an alternate register of reception of the “Ai”; the audience joins in. (In fado the “Ai” is often used as an exclamatory vowel sound where the singer emotes with vocal ornamentations. In contrast to Bacalhau’s performance, the gestural vocabulary of a female fado singer at the beginning of a song would be much more restrained.)14

An injunction to get out into the street, to do something!, runs through multiple song lyrics. Consider Deolinda’s music video for their song “Um Contra o Outro” (2010), produced by the documentary filmmaker Gonçalo Tocha; the song was featured on
their second CD and also performed in their Coliseum performances in January 2011. A car horn sounds. A “living statue” stands immobile in a square in central Lisbon. Two men with guitars face one another. A boy approaches the statue and puts down a coin; the statue tips his top hat. “Música!”, shouts one of the guitarists, and they begin to play. Deolinda sings from a balcony, “Come, cut the cable that links life to this game, play with me a new game, one against the other”. A girl plays hopscotch, a man spins a top, old men play dominos on outside tables, a hand pushes a skateboard up a miniature ramp. “Leave the house and come with me onto the street for this life that you have!” commands the refrain. By the end of the song, adults and children pour out onto the street, following singer and band in procession. In both the video and live performances, Deolinda sings one of the refrains through a megaphone (pantomimed in the live performance, her hands in the shape of a megaphone, with an audible muffled nasalized distortion in the vocal sound), the megaphone sound serving as a bridge between song as heightened performance (on stage or video) and the politics of and on the street.

In their 2011 Coliseum performance, the band sets up the generational register for the reception of the encore “Parva que Sou” by proceeding it with a cover of a well-known theme song for a children’s television show popular in the eighties, a romp in the jungle (“Fungagá da Bicharada”), with a call out, This is a song for everyone in their thirties. Let’s make some noise Ana Bacalhau spins a traditional wooden noisemaker (matraca) in circles above her head to audience applause. The song, particularly for Portuguese listeners in their thirties, would have had the potential to evoke an affectively dense and nostalgic audiovisual world while simultaneously serving as a generational indexical cue. The final encore, “Movimento Perpétuo Associativo” (Perpetual motion together), which immediately follows the cheering and applause after the encore “Parva que Sou”, begins with a forceful rhythm marked by the guitar, the vocalist sings stridently, her voice punctuated with movements of her fists pumping the air, “Now we have the strength to move forward! Go ahead, no one will stop us!” The lyrics which follow borrow common complaints and excuses from the register of the everyday in Portugal, sung back as reported speech (mirroring speech intonation of whining), “Now is the time to do something!” “Not now, there is a soccer game; [Benfica is playing]”. “Not today, my stomach hurts”. Ana Bacalhau (“Deolinda”), through a slight nasalization of her voice, parodies these, her whining heard against, and thus denaturalized, made audible, then dismissed, via the relentless forward rhythm of the song. The audience takes over the sarcastic refrain, “Go ahead without me, I will catch up with you later”, continuing alone chanting on their feet.

3. Precarity and an Aesthetics of Return

Canção de protesto, also known as canção de intervenção (song of intervention), was used extensively by activist musicians such as José Afonso to mobilize populations leading up to, and directly following, the 1974 revolution (Côrte-Real 2010; Sardo 2014). While the genre of fado has a long history of both state appropriation and as a vehicle for expressing social critique, canção de protesto is most often cast in a
politically direct register with the goal to elicit a political response from the listeners (Côrte-Real 2010, 221). In fado (particularly since the time of the dictatorial regime) sociopolitical critique, when rendered, is often voiced implicitly in a poetics that demands a listening in-between the lines (Gray 2013). During the first decade of the 2000s, I rarely heard the genre of protest song in Portugal being used to mobilize political action in the present. I did hear various actors on the political left speak of the genre (and the figure of activist and folk musician hero José Afonso) nostalgically. Talk about protest song tended to turn these actors’ memories to stories of exuberance and collective power, to the immediate euphoric aftermath of the revolution, insinuating that this was a time before things became complicated, fractured by multiple political parties vying for power, before the project of trying to make democracy after a dictatorship of almost fifty years became impossibly messy. And multiple scholars have noted a pronounced lack of civil society, street protest, and public sphere politics in post-dictatorship Portugal (Almeida 2008; Baumgarten 2013; Gil 2007).\footnote{At the same time, in invocations of “crisis” in Portugal there is a certain cyclicality of return (Santos 2012).}

Irony, as particularly “attuned to social and political instability and ruptures in socio-historical epochs” (Haugerud 2013, 32–36 cited in Pipyrou 2014, 533), sarcasm, and parody, in this most recent economic crisis, have served as productive (and hopeful) political registers for local actors, as “acceptable forms of confronting authority” (Knight 2015, 234) both in Europe’s South, and elsewhere (Boyer 2013). Irony and sarcasm do feature as key lyric registers in a number of songs in Deolinda’s (2011) Coliseum concert. Yet as I have argued here, the political and affective labours of this concert, and its wildfire-like encore song, “Parva Que Sou”, in 2011 were linked not only to the use of verbal registers of irony or sarcasm. Rather, the efficacies of these performances can be understood in relation to intricate local social histories regarding the aesthetics of song, performance, reception, and the politics of voicing (voicing carrying both aesthetic and sociopolitical valences). These are histories that are indexed and travel between genres partially through non-verbal and aesthetic qualities of register. And the symbolic saturation, overlay, and constant presence of the iconic 1974 protest song “Grândola Vila Morena”, in relation to the media stories of “Parva Que Sou”, and the 2011 Portuguese protests writ large, has much to do with the ways in which both “crisis” and music (through very different modes of signification) can in a flash collapse and condense temporal distance (to history, to memory) as sensed and experienced.

Allison (2013) has argued in her recent work on precarity in Japan, which had its own lost generation, that nostalgia for normativity as an aspirational striving for activism (in her case “home” or “job”) also risks the re-instantiation of the structures that enabled those possibilities to begin with.\footnote{So the challenge then is how to move from the moment of “crisis” or breach, into different kinds of possibilities, to open up a range and to jump start hope in the mist of long-standing structural affects of non-futurity or stuck-ness. To the extent to which Deolinda assisted in igniting a youth movement and re-catalyzing a register of protest in Portugal, they did so in part for their power in shaping an alternate aesthetic world that could compete affectively with the worlds}
and histories fado has made without negating them, through lightness, play, and audio-visual virtuosity, harnessing and re-infl ecting its power, inverting fado’s stereotypical mode of silent interiorized listening, to an on-your-feet listening where one shouts and talks back.

For scholars of music, aesthetics, and politics in an era of social media and protest, one challenge is how to investigate imaginative aesthetic practices engendered in globally interlinked processes and technologies of protest and uprising while steering clear of the traps of thinking music, mobility, social media, and politics through the frame of only utopic promise (with “democracy” and “aesthetics” particularly vulnerable in this respect). For all of the buzz about interconnectivity and shared tactics from abroad, with respect to the 2011 protests, in the end, they were still mired in the “nation”, still battling with local targets, their resources all but swallowed up just in handling the burdens of the local (Baumgarten 2013, 466). They were unable to fully tap the promise of the “elsewhere”. Yet the political mobilization of the aesthetic in this story should not necessarily be read in terms of an unequivocal success or failure in relation to the realization of specific political goals. The power of expressive aesthetic practice in relation to politics lies not always in the direct but rather in the diffuse, functioning “on the level of the sense of things rather than by strategic and articulated deliberation” (Meintjes 2004, 175). Read from inside out, the reinvigoration of wide-scale public assertion, in a post-revolution civil society read by some scholars as “inert” or “weak” (Baumgarten 2013, 460; Gil 2007), marks a substantial shift in register and imagination, an opening of a channel, heard both within and outside of the bounds of nation, rendered partially possible through the labours of the musical and aesthetic along with particular efficacies of voice (as sung, and as asserted).

4. We are all Greeks (redux)

Even within the periphery that is Southern Europe (anthropologically, geographically, and economically), Portugal has held a particular peripheral status. In cold war anthropology of the Mediterranean “culture area”, writ through the gendered discourses and practices of “honor and shame”, should it be included or not? In international media, it is often in the shadow of Spain. Here I have not foregrounded politically efficacious pan Southern European intercommunication, synchronized strikes and interlinked protests, or transnational heritage politics and resurgent nationalisms, nor stuck close to the ground to stories writ in the intimately local. Rather, I have argued for the importance of attending to micro-shifts in aesthetic form, engagement, and response, to understanding macro-shifts in public and political feeling, the tweaking of a channel between past and present, us and them, to a sense of possibility, new forms of solidarity, and of being heard.

Contemporary comparative ethnographically grounded theoretical work across Europe’s South is the exception. This is remarkable in light of shared histories of twentieth-century (interlinked) fascisms, relationalities of periphery to the so-called core, and even in relation to cold war US funding to social scientists to eradicate communism from Europe’s “vulnerable underbelly” (Goddard, Llobera, and Shore 1994, 2). Without
returning to inhabit the “Mediterranean” as “culture” and as “area” writ by midtwentieth-century anthropology, let us think about the possibilities of where theoretical and ethnographic attention to comparative and collaborative work across Europe’s South might lead us now, what it might foreground or foreclose, both in terms of parsing a politics of the past in the present and for understanding emergent registers of the everyday that might tap into the promise of a specific Southern European “elsewhere” (Figure 2).

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Notes


[4] First verse of “Parva que Sou”: (lyrics and music by Pedro da Silva Martins): Sou da geração sem remuneração/ e nem me incomoda esta condição. / Que parva que eu sou!/ Porque isto está mal e vai continuar/ já é uma sorte eu poder estagiar. /Que parva que eu sou!/ E fico a pensar, que mundo tão parvo, onde para ser escravo é preciso estudar. Translation by the author.

[5] A video recording of the performance of “Parva que Sou” I write about can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGS7vAlilJL.

[6] For an example of this early circulation (February 2011) on the television news (Telejournal RTP 1) in Portugal, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=387WJG8o108.

[7] For examples in Brazilian popular press of “Parva que Sou” as the “hymn of the lost generation” and Deolinda as the “sound of the lost generation”, see: Capelas (2013); Claudio (2011).

[8] For an alternate reading of Deolinda in relation to the geração à rasca and fado (“neo-fado”), see Arnold (2013). Arnold notes that lyrics to “Parva que Sou” were chanted in every protest he attended in Portugal in 2011. See also Accornero and Pinto (2015, 505); Baumgarten (2013, 466).


[10] While the primary ensemble consists of one vocalist and three instrumentalists (guitar, bass guitar, and string bass), and sometimes these instrumentalists sing, Deolinda’s instrumentation, and choices of invited guest musicians, has grown increasingly adventurous, expanding with their repertoire to create a multifaceted sound world. For example, the 2011 Coliseum concert featured the pianist Joana Sá (known in Portuguese avant-garde art music circles for her compositions for prepared piano) on the toy piano and bells; other instruments included a classical string quartet, noisemakers, and a clarinet.

[11] Deolinda’s 2011 concerts occurred during the same year in which the genre of fado was awarded ICH status by UNESCO, during which time fado sounds and discourses were increasingly amplified, and linked to nation, in the public sphere.

[12] I refer to some of fado’s stereotypical registers and not necessarily to nuances through which fado musicians, poets, and skilled listeners might perform, craft, or understand fado.


[14] Deolinda’s (2011) performance of the song can be found at the following url: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCZf4C2ErKk. In contrast is the ornamental and plaintive “Ai” performed by Amália Rodrigues in the fado song “Ai Mouraria” in the mid-twentieth century: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkKiyyIAhRM.


Music and lyrics by Pedro da Silva Martins. I use the English subtitles and my paraphrased translations of the Portuguese (Deolinda 2011). Carlos Paredes (1925–2004), a beloved virtuoso of the guitarra portuguesa (Portuguese guitar), had a well-known, but very different “Movimento Perpétuo” in his repertoire.

See Sardo (2014) for an historical account of the relations between protest song and fado.

Anthropologist Almeida (2008, 5, 45) describes post-revolution Portuguese politics as a “sudden leap from ancien régime authoritarianism to post-modern globalized capitalism, without the transition and change of mentalities that was witnessed in Northern Europe in the post-World War II period and in the 1960s”.


Richardson and Gorbman (2013, 10) write about digital media as implicated in an academic discourse of “techno-optimism”. See Juris (2012) on techno-optimism and the Occupy movements and Briggs (2013) on “contested mobilities”.

See Theodossopoulos (2013) on actors in Greece engaging with an “international community of discontent” vis-à-vis the Spanish “Indignados” movement.

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