Recursos Fandangueros / Fandango Resources

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Introduction: Welcome to *Recursos Fandangueros*

Recursos Fandangueros ("Fandango Resources")[1] is a born-digital, community-based[2] music education website available in Spanish, English and French.[3] The site contains a variety of pedagogical videos, documents and other resources surrounding son jarocho music from Veracruz, Mexico and the celebration of the fandango. Before delving into the specifics of the site, it is necessary to review a brief history of the website as it relates to the son jarocho genre and the fandango celebration.

Son jarocho is a traditional musical genre from Veracruz, Mexico which fuses Spanish, African, Middle Eastern and Mexican Indigenous roots (García de León 2009). As a genre, son jarocho began to develop in the 14th century as Spanish explorers colonized the Americas and brought African slaves to Mexico. Over the centuries, son jarocho developed around the fandango, a community celebration in which music, dance and poetry are shared in the spirit of *convivencia* (roughly translated as "being together").

In the 1970s and 80s, son jarocho experienced a rebirth in the *movimiento jaranero* (Jaranero Movement), in which musicians such as Gilberto Gutiérrez and Arcadio Hidalgo, as well as groups such as Mono Blanco, began giving workshops in communities in which the genre had begun to disappear. In the 1990s and onwards, son jarocho was taken up by Chican@ and Mexican communities as a vehicle for community building through participatory music, dance and the act of being together (*convivencia*). In recent decades,

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[1] <http://recursosfandangueros.wordpress.com/>

[2] Throughout this paper, the terms "community" and "community-based" are used to refer to both specific communities (e.g. the community of the Seattle Fandango Project) and the larger "virtual" and international community of son jarocho and fandango practitioners.

[3] At the time of writing, the French version of *Recursos Fandangueros* is still under construction.

the genre has been part of an international musical diaspora, and is now played throughout Mexico, the United States, Canada, France and further abroad. These communities are connected through a variety of means, including son jarocho-related websites, online forums and Facebook, as well as through workshops, concerts and presentations in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.

One node of this diaspora is the Seattle Fandango Project (SFP), a community-based music collective that practices son jarocho and the celebration of the fandango in Seattle, Washington. The SFP began as a collaboration between Chican@ musicians and activists, local non-profit organizations, traditional musicians from Veracruz, as well as the University of Washington. While the personal and institutional affiliations of the SFP have changed, melded and transformed over time, the group holds weekly *talleres* (workshops) on Saturdays and regularly holds fandangos in different locations in the city and throughout the Pacific Northwest.

In the fall of 2010 I moved to Seattle to begin my graduate studies in Ethnomusicology at the University of Washington. As someone interested in Mexican musical genres and transnational movements, I was immediately drawn to the SFP, son jarocho and the fandango. With time I became increasingly involved in the group, performing in frequent *tocadas* (gigs), organizing events and fandangos, and participating in group conversations regarding collaborating with visiting artists, negotiating institutional affiliations, and networking with local organizations and non-profits dedicated to social justice and the arts.

As I became more involved in the SFP, both on a musical and organizational level, I began to reflect upon the group's decentralized approach to pedagogy and leadership. With

time I came to attribute this decentralization to three main factors: The first lies in the open and inviting structure of the fandango. A communal celebration, the fandango is open to all—essentially anyone is welcome to sing, play, dance, or simply observe. This openness has translated to both SFP workshops and fandangos, in which a "no experience necessary" mentality is valued and encouraged. The second source of this decentralized pedagogy lies in the roots of the SFP and the values of its founders. Chican@ artists and activists living in Seattle helped to promote the fandango as a decolonizing methodology that could be used to break from the capitalist system of music production and consumption, (a system that values the individual, self-interest and personal gain). The third and final source of this decentralization lies in the lack of local culture bearers able to delve deeply into the subtleties of the musical and cultural traditions of son jarocho and the fandango. While there have been many Seattle-based musicians that have led and supported SFP workshops for many years, (far too many to name here), the group has always recognized its own limitations in regards to reaching deep understandings of the intricacies of the tradition. With this in mind, the SFP has actively collaborated with a number of traditional musicians and groups visiting from Veracruz, including Son de Madera, Laura Rebolloso, Los Cojolites, Liche Oseguera and Colectivo Altepee. While the factors contributing to this decentralization may not be equally experienced in every fandango community, these factors have proved to be useful lenses through which to view and adapt to the SFP's approach to teaching and learning.

I personally experienced the pedagogical approach of the SFP through attending workshops and fandangos. As my involvement in the group increased during my first year in Seattle, I began to ask myself, "What resources might be available to complement this

style of decentralized pedagogy?" [4] A cursory search via Google revealed a wealth of son jarocho-related education materials, from video talleres on YouTube, to downloadable documents, articles and chord charts, to Facebook pages dedicated to son jarocho and the fandango. With simply one click individuals could access hundreds (if not thousands) of resources useful in a community setting such as the SFP and similar nodes of the son jarocho diaspora. However, this wealth of resources was spread all across the web, oftentimes overshadowed by materials that ranked higher in search engines such as Google. Thus, the goal of *Recursos Fandangueros* was born—to find, collect and organize son jarocho- and fandango-related materials under one digital roof, in hopes that these materials, once gathered, could be of use to the greater international son jarocho community.

Throughout the process of developing *Recursos Fandangueros* I have needed to deeply reflect upon my identity, role and position in gathering these resources and presenting them to the global son jarocho community. First and foremost, I identify as someone who genuinely loves son jarocho, the fandango and the community that has grown around it. As a Chicano and descendent of immigrants, I hold a deep respect and love for music from Veracruz, yet also recognize that my immediate family roots trace back to Sonora and Sinaloa, far from the birthplace of son jarocho. Additionally, I approach this project as an academic and researcher working within a large institutional framework (namely, a research university). Without a doubt, the ability to work within these frameworks is a position of privilege and an opportunity that many do not have or are barred from due to economic constraints, legal documentation and institutionalized

[4] Please note my use of the word "complement" over "supplement"—an important distinction.

discrimination against people of color, women, immigrants, the poor and other marginalized communities. In keeping this privilege in mind, it is my hope that: 1) the following pages remain as transparent as possible (both in terms of the development of the project as a whole, as well in regards to my own engagement with and within son jarocho and fandango communities), 2) *Recursos Fandangueros* remains an accessible and intelligible community resource, and 3) open community dialogue be maintained and encouraged, both amongst community members and directly with the author himself. Should the reader have questions, concerns or suggestions regarding *Recursos Fandangueros*, this written document, the website's design or any of the materials found therein, please contact Cameron Quevedo at cameron.quevedo@gmail.com.

In the coming pages I will discuss at length different components of the site, both as they relate to the context of the project as a whole, as well as how they reflect or challenge certain bodies of literature, theory and ethnographic practice. Chapter 1 focuses on "Mapping the Fandango," which combines online mapping technologies, geotagging and videos of fandangos uploaded to the Internet. Chapter 2 centers on YouTube and the many son jarocho- and fandango-related pedagogical resources found therein. Chapter 3 discusses the use of SoundCloud in cataloguing and organizing various son jarocho audio recordings, as well as how emerging technologies may alter the ways in which users engage with these materials. Chapter 4 provides a brief overview and description of other components of *Recursos Fandangueros*, including those that are currently being developed at the time of writing. To close, I offer conclusions on the site, as well as how projects such as *Recursos Fandangueros* may be of use to communities interested in exploring digital technology as a site of cultural production. This text is meant to serve as a written

complement to further inform the reader as to the theoretical, pedagogical and practical conversations surrounding *Recursos Fandangueros*. However, the most useful guide to the site will be to explore the site fully, familiarize oneself with its architecture and layout, as well as take a moment to ingest the rich sights and sounds found therein. It should be noted that roughly 90% of the materials found in *Recursos Fandangueros* have been recorded, uploaded or created by other individuals, and have a second digital home, be it YouTube, Facebook, or other sites such as SoundCloud, Vimeo, Scribd and Google.

Chapter 1: "Mapping" the Fandango World

One of the first components of *Recursos Fandangueros*, "Mapping the Fandango"[5] was launched in November 2011 with the idea of locating and organizing videos of fandangos found online and embedding them into an HTML-based Google Map. The end result is an interactive, media-rich map that contains over one hundred embedded YouTube videos uploaded by users in Mexico, the U.S., Canada, France and further abroad. Before diving into both the technical and theoretical elements of the map, let me first discuss its social and practical history.

As an active member of the SFP, I have had the pleasure of learning from a number of musicians from Veracruz, all of whom have given workshops, concerts and presentations in Seattle. A constant theme in our group conversations about son jarocho and the fandango surrounded the regional variation of style, especially in relation to playing, singing and dancing. "Each community has its own way of playing things, its own style," I was often told.

Interested in learning more about the local permutations of son jarocho throughout Veracruz, I turned to the handful of son jarocho albums that I had been gifted or had purchased. Surprisingly, I found that many son jarocho groups were recording individual arrangements of *sones* (traditional songs of the son jarocho genre), which varied greatly from their renditions within the fandango. Additionally, many groups (for instance, Mono Blanco, Son de Madera and Los Cojolites) were experimenting with the genre, incorporating Caribbean rhythms, jazz-influenced harmonies and more a soloistic and

[5] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/mapping-the-fandango/>

virtuosic performance. In an attempt to immerse myself more directly in fandango-centric practice, I began scouring the Internet for videos of fandangos. As I soon discovered, sites such as YouTube and Vimeo host hundreds of fandango-related videos, recorded in a variety of ways and spanning across many years and locations. As I came across more and more videos I began categorizing them by location, saving the URLs as the list grew. "Mapping the Fandango" was born as I began embedding these videos into a Google Map, adding colored location markers and information about the sones played in each video.

Now that I have discussed the initial inspirations for "Mapping," let us turn to the technical specifications and how they relate to the project as a whole. As mentioned above, "Mapping" was created using Google Maps, a free map-making application developed by Google Inc. Google Maps was chosen over other similar applications (for instance, MapQuest, Open Street Map U.S. and National Geographic MapMaker Interactive) for its ease of use, accessibility and advanced geo-tagging features. The map (the original may be found here)[6] is organized using colored location makers, which contain (once selected with the mouse) embedded videos of fandangos. Location markers are set on specific locations (for example, Xalapa, Toronto or Seattle). Each video within a location marker corresponds to the location of the marker (e.g. all of the videos within the Xalapa location marker feature fandangos held in Xalapa). The videos embedded within each marker are streamed directly from YouTube via the video's HTML code, which can be found in the video's description on YouTube. A significant technical shortcoming of using Google Maps over other services lies in its embed capabilities. At the time of writing, Google Maps can only embed videos from other Google-owned websites, such as YouTube. Consequently, videos

[6] <https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=205882081709328809818.0004b1967e257931d8fa1&msa=0>

from sites such as Vimeo, Facebook and Vine cannot currently be embedded into the map. Google is currently developing a new application, Google Maps Engine Lite, which will give users more control in creating a custom map. However, it is unclear at this point how Engine Lite's embed capabilities will differ from Google Maps. I have attempted to address this limitation in the introduction to "Mapping the Fandango":

> This is a map of the fandango world. It isn't complete and it never will be, for no single map could capture the breadth, depth and collective cultural value of the hundreds (if not thousands) of communities practicing the fandango. However, this map *does* represent an opportunity to see and hear many fandangos that have been held in Mexico, the U.S., Canada and France (Quevedo 2013).

While incomplete, "Mapping the Fandango" has grown into a useful pedagogical tool and has received over 3,100 views at the time of writing.

With these technical specifications in mind, let me now turn to a more theoretical discussion of "Mapping" and how technologies such as those utilized in "Mapping the Fandango" engage in larger conversations of audience, ethnography, participation and production. In their book *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, Jean Burgess and Joshua Green describe YouTube as a site of participatory culture that is a "platform for, and an aggregator of, content, but […] not a content producer itself" (Burgess and Green 2009: 4). Here the authors raise an interesting point. Although YouTube is currently home to some 85 million videos (and growing each day), the site is not responsible for the creation of any of its content. Here millions of YouTube users come forth as independent and creative agents, able to produce media and publicize it instantly. Like YouTube proper,

"Mapping the Fandango" serves as an aggregator, not a producer of content. Notwithstanding, the aggregation of these videos, drawn into the associative space that is the map, produces new meaning for these videos once embedded into the map. In relating this concept to ethnographic research, historian James Clifford argues that this associative formation of meaning is a constantly negotiated and contested reality. He writes,

> To say that an ethnography is composed of discourses and that its different components are dialogically related, is not to say that its textual form should be that of a literal dialogue. […] An alternative way of representing this discursive complexity is to understand the overall course of the research as an ongoing negotiation (Clifford 1983: 135).

For Clifford, a project such as "Mapping" is not simply a collection of dialogically related media (i.e. a collection of fandango-related videos), but a network in which each media element is connected to the next, creating associative meaning between videos and within the larger context of the map and the website. Additionally, site users engage in this "ongoing negotiation" in creating an individualized and self-directed path through the dialogic media network (a theme which will be explored below). In discussing the role of ethnographic authority in negotiated and dialogic texts, Clifford argues that power is exercised through the *arrangement* of these materials by the ethnographer (in the example of "Mapping," the choice of videos, the addition of location markers, the order in which videos appear, et cetera.) However, Clifford also argues that individual voices within the ethnography (which he terms "indigenous") may exercise power over the text once the dialogic and negotiated relationship is established. He continues,

> Ethnography is invaded by heteroglossia. If accorded an autonomous textual space, transcribed at sufficient length, indigenous statements make sense on terms different from those of the arranging ethnographer. This suggests an alternate textual strategy, a utopia of plural authorship that accords to collaborators, not merely the status of independent enunciators, but that of writers (Clifford 1983: 140).

Clifford's ethnographic heteroglossia is evident in "Mapping the Fandango" when analyzing the extended media networks to which each media element is tied. When opening a colored location marker embedded within the map, one or more embedded videos appear. In choosing to watch the video directly on YouTube, a new window opens which features the video itself, a description, suggested and related videos, as well as a link to the uploader's YouTube channel. Visiting this channel, the viewer is shown additional videos uploaded by the user, as well as any recent comments they may have made. One such navigation path might look like this:

1. "Mapping the Fandango" to…
2. Colored location marker for Xalapa, Veracruz to…
3. Video 2: Un toro zacamandu to…
4. Page for the video "Son Jarocho - Fandango con la pioggia"[7] to…
5. YouTube channel for Il Camino Della Musica[8] to…
6. Page for the video "La Bamba, a scuola con Los Soneros de Tesechoacán"[9] to…

[7] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=TOQrvtCb5C8>
[8] <http://www.youtube.com/user/musiczu?feature=watch>
[9] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37mUMH5eMl0>

7. A related or suggested video

This example is merely one path of the extensive associated network within which an individual media element operates. As a multimedia hub (a la Clifford's ethnographic heteroglossia), "Mapping the Fandango" serves as an associative nexus that draws together related resources and creates new dialogic relationships between them.

As made evident in the previous example, "Mapping" is home to virtually an infinite number of potential navigation paths through the map's associative dialogic. For Clifford, these multiple paths, or "readings," represent a critical shift in the structuring of ethnographic power:

> It is intrinsic to the breakup of monological authority that ethnographies no longer address a single general type of reader. The multiplication of possible readings reflects the fact that self-conscious 'ethnographic' consciousness can no longer be seen as the monopoly of certain Western cultures and social classes (Clifford 1983: 141).

As an associative hub, "Mapping the Fandango" does not favor a particular reading of the map or its contents. While there is a certain power exercised in the arrangement of these materials (again, choice of videos included, addition of location markers, order of videos, et cetera), each video is embedded in the same manner and made equally accessible to the viewer. As Clifford would argue, this lack of a linear navigation path can disrupt the "monological authority" typical of ethnographic texts, and thus empower viewers to choose their own path.

Visual and sensory anthropologist Sarah Pink argues that in this disruption lie new and collaborative forms of ethnographic expression. For Pink, one fruitful avenue of

exploration is the development of ethnographic hypermedia texts (of which "Mapping the Fandango" is one potential example). For the purposes of this paper I will define "hypermedia" as any form of interactive and/or participatory multimedia, which may include photos, video, sound and hyperlinks. Pink writes,

> [I]ndividuals and their sense of self and identity [...] hold together the multiple narratives of their experience of hypermedia. Thus hypermedia users produce knowledge by making sense of different types of information presented in multiple narratives, and making the text coherent by producing their own linear narratives from it. Each individual user may follow a different route through the multiple narratives of a hypermedia representation, creating their own narratives and unique, experience-based knowledge, which will be inevitably informed by their wider biographical experiences (Pink 2007: 198).

Here we see that users may produce their own knowledge through the iterative process of site navigation and, as Clifford might put it, "write" themselves into the ethnographic text. While site navigation is most certainly directed in part by the confines and constraints of the site's architecture and that of the technologies utilized therein (i.e. the limitations and technical boundaries of YouTube, Google, Wordpress, Scribd, SoundCloud, et cetera), users may choose *not* to navigate hypermedia in the same way twice, thus creating new bodies of knowledge within the associative media network (and its technical boundaries). In the example of "Mapping the Fandango," a user may choose to navigate in the following way:

1. "Mapping the Fandango" to...
2. Colored location marker for Xalapa, Veracruz to...

3. Video 2: Un toro zacamandu to…

4. Page for the video "Son Jarocho - Fandango con la pioggia" to…

5. YouTube channel for Il Camino Della Musica to…

6. Page for the video "La Bamba, a scuola con Los Soneros de Tesechoacán" to…

7. A related or suggested video

Upon a return visit to the site, the user may choose a new path:

1. "Mapping the Fandango" to…

2. Colored location marker for Eugene, OR to…

3. Taller de Son Jarocho Eugene[10] to…

4. Web Links/Enlaces[11] to…

5. Page for the video "Fandango: Los Orígenes"[12] to…

6. A related or suggested video

This process could be repeated nearly ad infinitum, given the diversity and number of resources found in "Mapping the Fandango." Thus, as both Pink and Clifford would certainly agree, the non-linearity and polyphonous nature of hypermedia texts lead to a necessarily unfinished, open-ended and ever-growing product. While some may argue that this lack of definition represents a weakness in the ethnographic text, Pink argues that it is in fact a strength that demonstrates the text's vitality and engagement with the world:

> The notion of open-endedness can […] be taken further to regard hypermedia texts as permanently 'unfinished.' Theoretically, this means

[10] <http://tallerdesonjarochoeugene.wordpress.com/>
[11] <http://tallerdesonjarochoeugene.wordpress.com/linksenlaces/>
[12] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vm_q5pCjPM>

> neither knowledge itself nor representations of knowledge are ever complete; interpretations are open to re-interpretation and representations may be re-represented. Practically, this means that, unlike printed books and finished films, on-line hypermedia texts may be up-dated, added to, or altered. […] Hypermedia representations are also open-ended because their users can slip over their boundaries and explore their relationship to other texts. […] If authors create hyperlinks between their ethnographic web pages and other existing sites, users can follow links to sites of related interest. (Pink 2007: 202).

As a media-rich, non-linear hypermedia text, "Mapping" provides viewers with multiple avenues though which to learn, explore and create meaning of their own. In not only accepting, but also embracing the polyvocality of the site, the map encourages readers to "write" themselves into the associative dialogic, celebrating the simultaneously individual and shared creation of new knowledge.

A participatory ethnographic text[13], "Mapping the Fandango" relies on viewer navigation to create meaning. As an aggregator of multimedia, its meaning is produced once a viewer engages with and within the map's associative network. This reliance on viewer participation shifts ethnographic power (including the power of representation, the power of authorship, et cetera) from a "monological authority" to a more a collaborative process of meaning construction. Finally, the open-endedness of this text allows for

[13] While not an ethnography per se, "Mapping the Fandango" can most certainly be considered ethnographic in nature. The map's survey of shared musical culture (most specifically, the celebration of the fandango) over geographic space and across time invites users to explore elements, values and identities shared within the international and virtual son jarocho- and fandango-community.

updates and additions as new media resources become available, thus ensuring the text's continued engagement with viewers/participants. These themes will be explored further in Chapter 2, which will delve more deeply into the notion of audience, knowledge production and copyright.

Chapter 2: YouTube—Great Democratizer or Anti-Archive?

As discussed in Chapter 1, I found YouTube to be home to hundreds of fandango-related videos, some recorded by local participants, others by visitors to the community. However, in the process of mapping the fandango "world," I uncovered a wealth of pedagogical videos created for those interested in learning to play son jarocho music. Beginner jarana workshops, exercises for pandero players, discussions on the history of the guitarra de son—all of these topics could be found under the ever-expanding roof of this "participatory archive." In addition to these pedagogical videos, YouTube users have uploaded documentary films, podcasts and other digital resources related to son jarocho and the fandango. However, for the purposes of this paper I have chosen to focus specifically on the didactic resources found on YouTube, as well as how they have been incorporated into and have shaped *Recursos Fandangueros*.

As with my initial foray into "Mapping the Fandango," I found myself overwhelmed with the number of useful son jarocho-related resources available on YouTube. However, these resources were poorly organized in YouTube's search engine, which orders videos according to number of views (i.e. videos with more views are listed before those with less). While the international son jarocho community is comprised of thousands of web-utilizing individuals, these numbers pale in comparison to the visits, uploads and views made by YouTube users daily. A video that goes viral can receive tens of thousands (if not millions) of views in only a matter of days. While videos geared towards the son jarocho community can go "viral" in a relative sense, these videos (and the number of views they receive) cannot compete with the latest clips from American Idol or the most recent

blooper videos circulating on Facebook. Consequently, I found many of the most useful videos deep within YouTube's search results, buried under more popular (and oftentimes less relevant) material, seemingly forgotten by the larger YouTube community. In order to gather and organize these materials, I launched a YouTube channel of my own, "Videos de Son Jarocho."[14] Much like the Google Map I created (see Chapter 1), this channel was meant to serve as a multimedia hub for the resources I came across. Once "Videos" was established, I began collecting videos into YouTube video playlists based on subject (e.g. "jarana," "pandero," "guitarra de son," et cetera). As the channel grew, other YouTube users began subscribing in order to receive updates about new videos, comments, posts and playlists.

With time (and after consistently struggling with YouTube's ever changing user interface), I decided to embed the site's playlists into *Recursos Fandangueros*. The YouTube module[15] on the site features all of the playlists (updated real time from YouTube via the embedded HTML codes), as well as a direct link to "Videos de Son Jarocho," where users can continue to subscribe and leave comments. This move from YouTube proper to *Recursos Fandangueros* was, in part, brought about by my frustration with the limited ways users may access and view materials on the site. While the abovementioned playlists are readily available on the "Videos de Son Jarocho" channel, users are immediately redirected from the channel to a generic playlist window once they click to view a playlist. This window prompts users to view "similar" videos that, in fact, may have little to do with the playlist or the videos found therein. Similarly, redirecting users from the channel draws them away from the carefully designed channel architecture, which arranges playlists by

[14] <http://www.youtube.com/user/videosdesonjarocho>
[15] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/youtube-channel/>

theme, suggests other useful YouTube channels (all of which have been carefully vetted by the author) and provides links to son jarocho-related sites. Media scholar Alexandra Juhasz has criticized this lack of user control in directing site viewing:

> [YouTube's] architecture and ownership undermine fundamentals of academic inquiry and higher education: depth of dialogue, capability to find and link data, ability to sustain intimate and committed community, and structures of order and discipline (Juhasz 2009: 149).

As Juhasz's comments reflect, while YouTube is certainly home to a wealth of resources, the site's infrastructure impedes users' critical and sustained engagement with these materials. With its poorly designed search engine, ever-shifting layout, and rigid control over user viewing, YouTube falls short of its democratic and community-building promise. Juhasz continues:

> [T]he very tools and structures for community-building that are hallmarks of Web 2.0—those that link, gather, index, search, and allow participation, commenting, and networking—are studiously refused on the site, even as YouTube remains its poster-child. Why can't you comment in real time? Why are there no bulletin boards? Why does the site make it impossible for you to post other things next to your videos? YouTube does not answer, so people go elsewhere for these (rudimentary) functions, dragging their favorite YouTube videos behind them to more hospitable climes […]. YouTube is a place to upload, store (and move off) videos (Juhasz 2009: 148).

The process of "moving off" of YouTube to the more "hospitable climes" of *Recursos Fandangueros* (a self-published website) has raised a number of interesting questions

regarding the use and status of YouTube in both public and academic domains. While YouTube may maintain some elements of Burgess and Green's "participatory archive," it fails to be the democratizing media force and community center it promises to be. *Recursos Fandangueros* has been developed, in part, as a potential remedy to these shortcomings, pulling gems (and actively streaming them) from the media-rich chaos of YouTube, while organizing and presenting these resources in an off-site (and fully customizable) website.

Most would agree that technologies such as YouTube represent a tidal shift in systems of media production, distribution and consumption. Today, anyone with an Internet-capable cellular phone can create, view and share media. In reflecting upon the multiple media identities of YouTube, Burgess and Green ask, "From an audience point of view, is it a platform that provides access to culture, or a platform that enables consumers to participate as producers?" (Burgess and Green 2009: 14). As the authors would certainly agree, YouTube serves both functions. In an article entitled "Digital Scholarship and Pedagogy, the Next Step: Cultural Science," Cultural Studies theorist John Hartley effectively captures the nature of this tidal shift:

> The most important change [brought about by the Internet] is that the structural asymmetry between producers and consumers, experts and amateurs, writers and readers, has begun to rebalance. In principle (if not yet in practice), everyone can publish as well as "read" mass media. Users play an important role in making the networks, providing the services, improving the products, forming the communities, and producing the knowledge that characterize digital media. […] It is now possible to think of consumers as agents, sometimes enterprises, and to see in consumer-created content and

> user-led innovation not further exploitation by the expert representatives, but rather "consumer entrepreneurship" (Hartley 2009: 143).

For Hartley, this act of "rebalance" has fundamentally altered the ways in which we interact with and conceive of media and media production. However, while we now have the power to act as individual producers, to what extent do we control the distribution of the media we create? Videos uploaded to YouTube are screened for content deemed inappropriate ("inappropriate" videos are deleted, along with the user's YouTube channel). Once past this initial screening, videos are logged into YouTube's large search index and added to the site's media holdings. For users who wish to monetize their YouTube channels, YouTube (and its parent company Google) insert advertisements into the videos, either as a mandatory ad at the beginning of the video (currently ranging from 30 to 90 seconds in length), a pop-up ad that appears at some point during the video, or a sidebar ad that remains throughout the length of the video. In reflecting on corporate media filtration and censorship, Performance Studies scholar Diana Taylor writes,

> By owning the operating system, these commercial giants in fact become the ultimate guarantor of value and control. They can censor materials, cherry-pick titles, and rescind licensing privileges for us who now lease rather than own copies […] (Taylor 2010: 10).

As companies become the ultimate "guarantors of value and control," notions and understandings of copyright enter murky waters. Taylor writes,

> If print culture produced the copyright, it's not clear yet what legal and legitimating mechanisms will control issues of access and transmission online (Taylor 2010: 9).

Taylor's comments point to an important question: What is the future of copyright and ownership as media production makes its full transition to the digital age? In regards to YouTube, what rights do we forfeit (knowingly or unknowingly) in uploading to the site? Additionally, what guarantee, if any, do we have that YouTube and Google will continue to support user uploads as systems of media production and distribution evolve? It is with these questions in mind that Taylor, much like Juhasz, critiques the commonly held notion of "YouTube as archive." She writes,

> [M]ost of what people call online 'archives' are not archives though they may have some archival features. Skits posted on YouTube or other sites are not archived even though YouTube has been referred to as a 'media archive.' This is actually not a technological issue, or even a preservation issue—storage is cheap. It's a commitment issue—the owners may or may not commit to preserving the materials long term. Further, there is no selection process for materials uploaded online. No one vouches as to its sources or veracity. Expertise is irrelevant. The materials seem free and available to anyone with Internet access—avoiding the rituals of participation governing traditional archives (Taylor 2010: 9).

While some have described this "irrelevancy of expertise" as a celebration of popular culture (e.g. any video can become part of the YouTube "archive"), many have seen this as a threat to traditional archival practice and genuine dedication to preservation. Indeed, Taylor writes, "Preservation of digital materials […] is not the happy by-product of digitizing or uploading. While it may be true that 'data never die' it is also true that they live as bits of information that we might not be able to access. Changing technologies and

platforms render our materials obsolete far more often than they archive or preserve them" (Taylor 2010: 10). She concludes, "This digital 'archival' practice, I believe, can prove profoundly anti-archival. The shift from the archive to the digital has moved us away from the institutional" (Taylor 2010: 14). Although YouTube, as Taylor notes, certainly exhibits some archival traits, is the site in fact the "anti-archive?"

While the longevity and security of videos on YouTube may never be fully known, I have attempted to address some of these issues in both "Videos de Son Jarocho" and *Recursos Fandangueros* through a lens of digital *curation*. Despite the site's shortcomings, YouTube remains to be the digital home for millions of useful videos that can be used to build and strengthen musical communities. Rather than simply disregarding these resources as unsustainably archived, researchers and culture bearers should work together to "curate" these materials into a more useful, sustainable and, ultimately, dependable community-centered archival practice. As a hub of son jarocho- and fandango-related media, *Recursos Fandangueros* represents community-centric curation[16] working with (and around) the shortcomings of YouTube, while remaining critically aware of the materials' tentative (though presently stable) archival existence. While technologies may change, there will never be a replacement for traditional archival practice and experienced archivists. Nevertheless, media publishing websites such as YouTube, Vimeo and Facebook are empowering individuals and communities to upload and share their own stories. Where these stories will end up in the end (and who will own them) is something that will be revealed with time. For now, further exploration and collaborative curation of the

[16] In this instance, curation by the "virtual" and international son jarocho and fandango community.

world's largest collection of video materials promises to yield fascinating (and complex) results.

Chapter 3: New Technologies in Community

In Chapters 1 and 2, I discussed and reflected upon the theoretical frameworks informing projects such as "Mapping the Fandango" and "Videos de Son Jarocho," as well as *Recursos Fandangueros* as a whole. This chapter will analyze how the site and its components have been used at a community level within the context of the Seattle Fandango Project, as well as discuss future potentials for community engagement through emerging technologies.

For communities outside of Veracruz, including those in Mexico, the U.S. and further abroad, audio recordings are oftentimes the first (and, in many cases, the most prominent) source of knowledge about the son jarocho genre. Groups such as Son de Madera, Mono Blanco and Los Cojolites have sold thousands of albums nationally and internationally. These recordings have spread to Mexico City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Eugene, Portland, Seattle, Chicago, New York, Toronto and Strasbourg. While there have been a number of artists that have visited the Seattle Fandango Project, many SFP members experience these musicians via recordings long before having the opportunity to learn from them in person. In the process of developing *Recursos Fandangueros* I became very interested in how communities (especially those outside of Veracruz) might use audio recordings to learn about son jarocho. While a great deal can certainly be learned from these recordings, I was equally interested in those elements that could *not* be transferred via recording, especially regarding the fandango.

As a community that practices fandango and son jarocho outside of Veracruz, the SFP is home to frequent dialogues surrounding representation, authenticity and

innovation, especially regarding performance style, musicianship and performance context. While these conversations have yet to result in any "official" community stance on a particular issue, there is general consensus that performance should remain within certain bounds. An important element of these conversations has been attempting to define the "swing," "groove" or "feeling" of individual sones. Each son, according to the many artists that have visited Seattle, has its own identifying features, so as to differentiate it from similar sones (for instance, "La guacamaya" and "El butaquito"). These features can range from a particular rhythmic cadence to the entrance point of the *verso* (verse) to the chord progression of the son. However, for a community such as the SFP, (which is largely comprised of beginners, myself included), it can oftentimes be difficult to discern the swing, groove or feeling of a particular son.

In an attempt to engage with these challenges, I and other SFP members began organizing and hosting weekly "listening parties" in which we could gather to listen to various recordings of a particular son, exchange notes about what we heard, and play together to familiarize ourselves with the ever-elusive swing. A new son was selected each week, typically by the attendees of the week prior. Each week I would select a handful of recordings of the selected son and upload them to a private SoundCloud playlist. Much like YouTube, SoundCloud is an online website that allows users to upload their "sounds" (typically recorded music) and share them online. Once created, SoundCloud playlists are highly customizable and can be embedded off-site through an HTML code. As our weekly listening parties continued to develop, I began embedding these playlists into the "Audio Playlists"[17] module of *Recursos Fandangueros*, which was eventually also utilized during

[17] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/audio-playlists/>

these gatherings. A total of twenty playlists were created as a result of these listening parties, all of which are currently available to SFP members via *Recursos Fandangueros*.

The pedagogical approach of these playlists remains fairly straightforward: listen to and compare different recordings of a particular son, (recorded by different groups), then discuss the similarities, differences, and character of each recording. Theoretically, this process could lead to a deeper understanding of the identifying features of the son—it's "swing." I say "theoretically" because the results of these listening parties were mixed. While all of the participants (myself included) learned a great deal about various son jarocho albums, seminal recordings and performance groups, we oftentimes found it difficult to come to any definite conclusions regarding "swing," "groove" or "feeling." This stemmed, in part, from the nature of the recordings themselves. While a handful of field recordings are featured in the playlists, the vast majority are studio arrangements recorded by performance groups. These recordings oftentimes feature more soloistic performance, complex harmonies and key changes. Additionally, the *zapateado* (percussive dancing), a key rhythmic element in son jarocho, is absent from many studio recordings. However, despite these complications, the "Audio Playlists" module serves as useful and educational tool with which to aurally observe and reflect upon the diversity of performance style between regions, across years and on- and off-stage. Additionally, the conversations that stemmed from these "listening parties" aided attendees in better understanding the formation of a local, Seattle-based style rooted in the lessons of the SFP's visiting artists, as well as influenced by many of these recordings.

Let me now turn to a discussion of the technologies behind these playlists, as well as how these technologies are situated in the larger context of *Recursos Fandangueros*. As a

site that attempts to streamline individual media production with social media networking, SoundCloud is built upon recently developed HTML5 technology. While videos on YouTube and Vimeo can be embedded into websites via a basic HTML code, HTML5 allows SoundCloud users to not only embed posted media, but to alter and enhance this media with user comments, tags and other posts. Logging-in to either SoundCloud or Facebook, users can attach text, (be it a question, a note of encouragement or a response to another tag), directly *into* the media itself. While this application has yet to be explored within the context of the SFP, such technologies hold great promise for community-centric media production and curation (see Chapter 2). HTML5 has the potential to bring producer and consumer closer together, and promotes a furthered dialogic relationship in the chain of production-consumption-production. Encouraging users to "leave their mark" on uploaded media, SoundCloud and other emerging HTML5 technologies are ushering in a new era of community feedback. In discussing the importance of community engagement in sound archiving, media archivist John Vallier writes,

> Community partnerships […] make these collections, along with the archives and libraries that cradle them, more meaningful, relevant, and resilient (Vallier 2010: 39).

By inviting users to participate in creating, evaluating and sustaining the "archives" of YouTube, SoundCloud and *Recursos Fandangueros*, such technologies become the home of negotiated, contested and co-produced knowledges. In turn, this dialogic, as Vallier would argue, helps to ensure the vitality and relevance of the archive and encourages communities to "leave their mark" on materials made previously inaccessible through traditional archival practice.

The use of HTML5 technologies in the development of the "Audio Playlists" resource in *Recursos Fandangueros* is an early foray into a new technology with currently unknown potentials. While the technology has yet to be fully utilized within the site, such advancements hold great promise for the ways in which "archives" (both big and small, institutional and 'popular') are conceived, accessed and altered by users tapping into new dialogic feedback systems. As an international and online community, the son jarocho diaspora is primed to take advantage of these new systems to share and spread son jarocho music, the fandango and the values shared therein. In the next chapter I will discuss additional emerging technologies and resources incorporated into *Recursos Fandangueros*, as well as site components that are being developed at the time of writing.

Chapter 4: Site Components—Past, Present and Future

As discussed in Chapter 3, emerging technologies have played a critical role in the development and expansion of *Recursos Fandangueros*. As such, the website functions both as a multimedia hub for son jarocho- and fandango-related content, as well as an umbrella resource to house various projects (large and small) that build upon a variety of online technologies. In this chapter I will discuss these projects, as well as those that are currently being developed.

In discussing the potentials for visual and computer anthropology, visual anthropologist Alan Macfarlane describes his website[18] as a "site for intellectual productions over a lifetime of scholarship" and a way to "assemble the parts of a jigsaw of a life-work" (Macfarlane 2007: 241). While *Recursos Fandangueros* does not yet trace a "lifetime of scholarship," it *has* grown and developed over many years of conversation and engagement within the international son jarocho community. As new friendships have been made, new points of collaboration have surfaced. New components have been added to the website based on the feedback and assistance of fandanguer@s in Mexico, the U.S., Canada and France. The site may not trace an individual history of scholarship, but the resources found therein certainly trace individual strands of a larger history of dialogue within the son jarocho diaspora.

The first of these site components is the "Jarana Videos"[19] module, which contains a series of eighteen introductory jarana workshops. These workshops, given by Quetzal Flores in spring 2011, are meant for members of the Seattle Fandango Project and were

[18] <http://www.alanmacfarlane.com/>
[19] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/jarana-videos/>

recorded by the author. These videos demonstrate the basic *de a montón* and *atravesado* rhythms (two common rhythms in son jarocho) and provide examples of individual sones (for instance, "El Pájaro Cú," "El Cascabel," "El Aguanieves," et cetera). As a resource meant for the Seattle Fandango Project, the "Jarana Videos" module (like the "Audio Playlists" module) is password-protected. The password is available to community members upon request. The videos have proven to be a useful complement to the audio playlists, as they address the "swing" of each son and attempt to differentiate between similar sones.

The "Afinaciones Antiguas"[20] ("Ancient Tunings") module contains a second set of video workshops imparted by Arcadio Baxin, a traditional musician from the region of Los Tuxtlas, Veracruz. Recorded in 2011 by Natse Rojas, a fandanguera from Puebla, these videos feature Arcadio demonstrating and discussing alternate tunings for the jarana. These tunings are virtually unknown outside of Veracruz, making these videos valuable cultural resources for the genre's vitality and diversity. Paired with Natse's videos is a PDF document containing note and chord information for six of these tunings. This document was created by the author with the help of the Baxin family (including Arcadio and his brother, Felix) during a weeklong series of workshops in Mexico City in the summer of 2012. The PDF can be downloaded directly and the videos streamed via the "Afinaciones Antiguas" page. While a deep understanding of these tunings can only be achieved through direct apprenticeship under a master musician, these resources can serve as a useful supplement to such training.

Presas del Encanto (*Prey of the Encanto*) is a collection of short stories compiled by Andrés Moreno Nájera that chronicles local encounters with the "Encanto," a mythical,

[20] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/afinaciones-antiguas/>

shape-shifting spirit that inhabits the rainforests of Los Tuxtlas. This publication, translated and transcribed by Eduardo García, was originally meant to be accompanied by a series of video recordings of traditional musicians from the region. These recordings have since been uploaded to YouTube and are now available in the "Presas del Encanto" module of *Recursos Fandangueros*. While the original publication is currently only available in hard-copy and in Spanish, the videos streamed on this page contain many regional sones rarely heard outside of Los Tuxtlas and feature many musicians that have passed away since the videos were recorded. Paired with these recordings is a short description of *Presas del Encanto*, as well as a series of related articles written by son jarocho scholar Ana Zarina Palafox Méndez.

The "Index of Sones"[21] module serves as a type of site directory for *Recursos Fandangueros*. Within the index users will find the names of individual sones hyperlinked to material related to a particular son. For example, if one were to select "Guacamaya," the user would be redirected to a page that contains *all* of the site's resources related to the son "La Guacamaya." These resources include videos of fandangos (from "Mapping the Fandango") to video workshops (from "Videos de Son Jarocho") to password-protected talleres with Quetzal Flores (from the "Jarana Videos" module). This site index is useful in two ways. First, users are able to immediately access all of the site information for a particular son in one location, rather than navigating throughout the site's many modules. Additionally, new users are able to receive an "at a glance" look at the resources found within the site. Upon reviewing these initial materials, users may redirect their navigation to the site components in which they are most interested (for instance, seeing more

[21] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/index-of-sones/>

fandango videos in "Mapping the Fandango" or focusing on the requinto workshops found in the YouTube module).

In the "Downloads"[22] module, users may preview and download a number of useful documents, including chord charts, verses and tuning resources. As new versions of these resources become available, these documents are updated and embedded into the site via Scribd, an online service that allows users to upload and embed documents into a website via HTML code (similar to YouTube and SoundCloud). In the "Links"[23] module, users will find hyperlinks to other useful son jarocho- and fandango-related organizations, websites, musical groups, articles and other publications in English and Spanish.

As of the time of writing, the "Calendar"[24] and "Directory"[25] modules are in their early stages of development. The "Calendar" module will eventually contain month-by-month listings of son jarocho- and fandango-related events in Mexico and the U.S. Site visitors can have their events added to the calendar by emailing the requested information (event name, description, location, et cetera) to the author. The "Directory" module contains three sub-modules: "Permanent Workshops,"[26] "Luthiers"[27] and "Albums."[28] Of these, "Permanent Workshops" is currently the most developed. Here users will be able to find information about regularly held son jarocho workshops in Mexico and the U.S. Workshop listings are arranged by location and contact information for the workshop organizer(s) is provided. The "Luthiers" module will contain contact information for

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[22] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/downloads/>
[23] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/links/>
[24] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/calendar/>
[25] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/directory/>
[26] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/permanent-workshops/>
[27] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/luthiers/>
[28] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/albums/>

traditional son jarocho "lauderos" (luthiers or instrument makers) in Mexico and the U.S. Finally, the "Albums" module will contain a comprehensive discography of seminal son jarocho recordings and performance groups. This discography will serve to educate users about important and/or historical son jarocho albums and groups.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, *Recursos Fandangueros* is both a multimedia hub for useful son jarocho- and fandango-related resources, as well as a large umbrella for various community-centric projects. To borrow once again from Macfarlane, modules such as those listed above are the "jigsaw pieces" that comprise the larger mosaic that is *Recursos Fandangueros*. Each of these elements is meant to complement both the site as a whole, as well as the other modules. As time passes and new collaborative relationships are formed, the site will continue to expand and more modules will be created. This essay represents a "snap shot" of the website—it's past, present and future.

Conclusion: New Paths Ahead

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, a project such as *Recursos Fandangueros*[29] would have been a technological impossibility only decade ago. The age of YouTube, Facebook and social media has and continues to revolutionize the way we think about media production and distribution. From a cultural and musical standpoint, users of these technologies are creating vast and complex networks of communication in which media and other resources can be easily created, reproduced and shared. While the lasting effect of these technologies on international son jarocho and fandango communities is yet to be fully known, *Recursos Fandangueros* represents a powerful platform of engagement through which to view issues of dialogic and community-centric media production, as well as notions and practices of cultural diffusion through ever-expanding and evolving technological networks.

In Chapter 1 I discussed the potentials of technologies such as Google Maps and YouTube for creating new visualizations of international community-based practice via the fandango. Although inherently incomplete, "Mapping the Fandango"[30] is the first of such visualizations to critically and digitally engage in the "geography" of the fandango, creating space for the cultural polyphony celebrated by the son jarocho diaspora. As a non-linear multimedia resource, "Mapping" allows for multiple paths of navigation, even by the same user. In this way, the site disrupts the "monological authority" (as Clifford would put it) of traditional ethnography, instead encouraging a dialogic and participatory engagement with the materials found therein. Additionally, as a multimedia hub of fandango-related videos,

[29] <http://recursosfandangueros.wordpress.com/>
[30] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/mapping-the-fandango/>

"Mapping" is a site of associative meaning creation between videos embedded within the site. This meaning, in turn, creates an iterative experience for the user as she or he travels through the map's associative networks.

The extended digital networks of the international son jarocho movement were explored in Chapter 2 and through the YouTube playlists of "Videos de Son Jarocho."[31] Technologies such as YouTube have resulted in a wealth of useful pedagogical materials uploaded to the site. However, harsh criticism of YouTube's architecture and organization has raised complex questions about the potential risks of utilizing the world's largest "participatory archive." While YouTube represents a tidal shift in systems of media production, frustrations with the site eventually led the author to "move off" of YouTube to the more "hospitable climes" of *Recursos Fandangueros* (to borrow again from Juhasz). Whether "participatory archive" or decidedly "anti-archival," YouTube represents a challenge to communities and academics alike to consider the opportunities and potential repercussions of such media technologies, especially as they relate to traditional and sustainable archival practice.

In Chapter 3 I discussed the importance and role of audio recordings within son jarocho communities, especially those outside of Veracruz. The SoundCloud playlists and "Audio Playlists"[32] module developed from the Seattle Fandango Project "listening parties" represent a community-centric approach to familiarizing ourselves with these recordings, the featured musicians and the ever elusive "swing" of particular sones. The capacity for HTML5 to seamlessly blend media production with social media networks holds great promise for communities interested in exploring dialogic media production and feedback.

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[31] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/youtube-channel/>
[32] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/audio-playlists/>

Although these technologies have yet to be explored in the context of *Recursos Fandangueros*, the site will surely grow to incorporate and embrace the potential applications of this emergent technology.

In Chapter 4 I discussed the remaining modules currently found within *Recursos Fandangueros*, as well as those still in their development stages. The "Jarana Videos"[33] module is a useful resource meant for beginner jarana players of the Seattle Fandango Project. As a community-centric media resource, this series of videos provides a multimedia complement to the SFP's weekly workshops and monthly fandangos. Similarly, the "Afinaciones Antiguas"[34] module provides site users with an introduction to alternate tunings for the jarana. The videos and documents included therein are sufficient to supply interested jaraner@s with basic information, which can, in turn, be fully realized with the guidance and mentorship of an expert musician. The "Presas del Encanto"[35] module provides an introduction to the publication of the same name, as well as the audiovisual resources that were to accompany the book. The "Index of Sones"[36] module allows users to easily navigate the site's resources of particular sones. As a pedagogical tool, this resource provides a necessary filter to navigate through the site's now extensive media content. The "Downloads"[37] module provides useful documents related to son jarocho, including chord charts, verses and other didactic resources. These documents may be downloaded and shared by any site user. Finally, the "Links,"[38] "Calendar"[39] and "Directory"[40] modules

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[33] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/jarana-videos/>
[34] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/afinaciones-antiguas/>
[35] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/presas-del-encanto/>
[36] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/index-of-sones/>
[37] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/downloads/>
[38] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/links/>
[39] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/calendar/>

provide users with information regarding other resources and events related to son jarocho and the fandango. While still being developed, these modules will encourage furthered dialogue and collaboration across son jarocho communities, both in Mexico and further abroad.

As stated in an earlier chapter, *Recursos Fandangueros* is an ongoing site of dialogue, collaboration and creation. It is possible that the site has changed significantly since the time of writing. Perhaps new modules have arisen or the site has been restructured to incorporate important advances in technology, social media networks and systems of media production and distribution. With this in mind, this essay should be considered a "status report" of sorts. However, while the look and functionality of the site may change and evolve over time, its core remains the same.

At its heart, *Recursos Fandangueros* is a forum for dialogue and engagement within and across communities. As a multimedia hub of son jarocho- and fandango-related resources, the site represents an attempt to collect, organize and "curate" these pedagogical materials into a vehicle to support community building through participatory music practice. As stated in the introduction, *Recursos Fandangueros* and the materials included therein are by no means a substitute for traditional apprenticeships with master musicians. However, as social, technological and cultural landscapes continue to shift and change, projects such as *Recursos Fandangueros* may prove to be valuable resources for exploring and negotiating new types of connectivity between individuals and new understandings of community-centric practice.

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[40] <http://recursosfandanguerosenglish.wordpress.com/directory/>

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