

# Protest Intervention Reflection: Activist Encounters in Folklore and Beyond



## Black Lives Matter and Music: Protest, Intervention, Reflection (Activist Encounters in Folklore and Ethnomusicology) by David Ellefson

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Protest interventions are a powerful tool for social change. They can raise awareness about important issues, challenge norms, and create dialogue. Activists have used protest interventions for centuries to fight for justice and equality. In recent years, protest interventions have become increasingly common as a way to address a wide range of social issues, from climate change to police brutality.

There are many different types of protest interventions. Some are artistic, such as street theater or performance art. Others are more disruptive, such as blockades or sit-ins. No matter what form they take, protest interventions are always intended to make a statement and to provoke a response.

Protest interventions can be an effective way to raise awareness about important issues. By using creative and attention-grabbing tactics, activists can capture the public's attention and force them to confront issues that they might otherwise ignore. For example, the Occupy Wall Street movement used a variety of protest interventions, such as street theater and public assemblies, to raise awareness about economic inequality.

Protest interventions can also be used to challenge norms and to create dialogue. By disrupting the status quo, activists can force people to question their assumptions and to consider new perspectives. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement has used protests and other forms of intervention to challenge the narrative about police brutality and to demand justice for Black people.

Protest interventions are not without their challenges. Activists who use protest interventions often face criticism and opposition from those who disagree with their message. They may also face legal challenges and even violence. However, despite the challenges, protest interventions remain an important tool for social change.

## **The Role of Folklore in Protest Interventions**

Folklore plays an important role in protest interventions. Activists often draw on folklore traditions to create their interventions. For example, the Occupy Wall Street movement used the folk song "This Land Is Your Land" as a protest anthem. The Black Lives Matter movement has used the spiritual "We Shall Overcome" as a rallying cry.

Folklore can provide activists with a sense of identity and community. It can also provide them with a framework for understanding and responding to

social injustice. For example, the folk song "Joe Hill" tells the story of a labor organizer who was executed for his beliefs. This song has been used by activists for generations to inspire them to fight for justice.

Folklore can also be used to document and preserve the history of protest movements. For example, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History has a collection of protest posters and other artifacts that document the history of social movements in the United States.

### **The Ethical Considerations of Protest Interventions**

There are a number of ethical considerations that activists must take into account when using protest interventions. First, activists must ensure that their interventions are safe and do not harm others. Second, they must respect the rights of others, including the right to free speech and assembly. Third, they must be mindful of the potential consequences of their actions.

For example, an activist who blocks a road to protest climate change may be breaking the law. However, the activist may believe that their actions are justified because they are trying to raise awareness about a critical issue. It is important for activists to weigh the potential benefits and harms of their actions before they decide to use protest interventions.

### **The Future of Protest Interventions**

Protest interventions are likely to continue to play an important role in social change. As social movements become more globalized and interconnected, activists are increasingly using protest interventions to raise awareness about issues that affect people all over the world. For example, the #MeToo movement has used social media and other forms of

protest intervention to raise awareness about sexual assault and harassment.

The future of protest interventions is uncertain. However, one thing is clear: protest interventions are a powerful tool for social change. Activists will continue to use protest interventions to fight for justice and equality for all.

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The role of folklore in protest interventions is significant. Folklore can provide activists with a sense of identity and community. It can also provide them with a framework for understanding and responding to social injustice. Folklore can also be used to document and preserve the history of protest movements.

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## Further Reading

- The Long Tradition of Protest Art in America
- Protest art: a history
- The Ethics of Protest Art



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