

## CHAPTER 15

*Manuel de Falla, flamenco and Spanish identity*

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Throughout his career, Manuel de Falla sought to create a Spanish identity in music, and until 1920 foregrounded his Andalusian origins in order to achieve this.<sup>1</sup> Flamenco and gypsy culture formed the cornerstones of his construction, even though by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these elements had become problematic in Spain. The perceived exoticism and otherness of flamenco and gypsy culture, both within and outside the country, led to a questioning of their relevance in emerging debates on Andalusian and Spanish nationalism and race. Falla became a key figure in overturning these views, transforming contemporary Spanish appreciation of flamenco both by his general advocacy of the genre and via his own flamenco-influenced creative output. He helped to shape Spanish perceptions of flamenco, and did so partly by relating racial categories to accounts of its origins and performance style.

ANDALUSIA, EXOTICISM AND THE MUSIC  
OF MANUEL DE FALLA

Falla's assertion of a distinctly Andalusian identity can be traced to his earliest works from the turn of the twentieth century and reflects ideas of Andalusia as a region with a distinct culture, which had become prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Unlike other constructions of Spanish nationalism, especially in the Basque and Catalan regions, Andalusian identity was not predicated on notions of racial purity. Andalusia's unique identity was often defined by the very multiplicity of cultural and racial layers from which it had evolved.<sup>3</sup> By the nineteenth century only the gypsy population maintained a separate racial status, while still forming an integral part of Andalusian culture.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuel de Falla was born in the port city of Cádiz in the Southern Spanish region of Andalusia. This region has the highest concentration of gypsy inhabitants on the peninsula and is closely associated with the origins and development of flamenco.

<sup>2</sup> There was a clear aspiration to self-government, coinciding with the rise of federalist models and the rise of regionalisms/nationalisms in Spain. These ideas led to the *First Charter of the Andalusian Country* (1881) which proposed a federation of the Andalusian provinces.

<sup>3</sup> Including Greek, Roman, Visigoth, Byzantine, Moor, Gypsy, over a 'Spanish' substratum.

<sup>4</sup> Timothy Mitchell has outlined some of the theories of Spanish authors since the 1930s who have contested perceptions of the gypsies of Spain in purely racial terms. These include ideas that Jews and

As Gerhard Steingress has pointed out, the region's resistance to French invasion and its 'exoticism' in the eyes of European Romantics were traits that fascinated many Spanish intellectuals, both conservative and liberal. Given the lack of socio-economic development in Andalusia, often a cornerstone of other European nationalisms, folklore acquired added significance in the emergent Andalusian ethno-nationalism, and flamenco was one of its most striking and unique features.<sup>5</sup> Studies of Andalusian folklore and flamenco by Antonio Machado y Álvarez, Manuel Balmaseda and Hugo Schuchardt appeared from the early 1880s and were complemented by folk-song collections of the region, the most comprehensive being that of Eduardo Ocón.<sup>6</sup> Despite these developments, the musical expression of Andalusian identity in Falla's early works was initially modelled upon exotic elements in Romantic salon music and the *zarzuela* (Spanish operetta), which often had recourse to folk melodies taken from anthologies. Yet even at this early stage Falla was searching for new ways of representing flamenco and gypsies. In his first opera, *La vida breve* (1905), Falla drew on notes he had taken of flamenco rhythms and guitar figurations and employed a flamenco singer (*cantaor*) on stage. The opera's protagonist, Salud, is a gypsy who is portrayed sympathetically rather than as a stereotype in the mould of Carmen. By going beyond the token gypsy presence as merely an element of local colour Falla broke away from common practice in contemporary *zarzuelas*.<sup>7</sup>

During his Paris years (1907–14) Falla's output became more clearly indebted to Romantic and Impressionistic imagery of Spain, with its perceptions of Andalusia as the nearest manifestation of the Orient. He began to read the seminal French texts by François René Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo and Théophile Gautier which disseminated the nostalgic vision of the Andalusian town of Granada, and by extension Spain, as the last European refuge of Arab culture and presented its gypsy dwellers as their progeny or exotic substitutes.<sup>8</sup> Though predating Falla's arrival in Paris, such nineteenth-century representations of Spain had culminated in

Moors escaped deportation by claiming gypsy status, and that there has been a conflation with gypsiness of other (at times nomadic) groups dedicated to marginal trades, such as the *quinquis*. *Flamenco Deep Song* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 51–71.

<sup>5</sup> Gerhard Steingress, 'Ideología y mentalidad en la construcción de la identidad cultural', in Gerhard Steingress and Enrique Baltanás (eds.), *Flamenco y Nacionalismo: Aportaciones para una sociología política del flamenco* (Seville: Fundación Machado, 1998), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Eduardo Ocón, *Cantos españoles. Colección de aires nacionales y populares* (Málaga: Unión musical española, 1876). Four editions of this work were published to 1906.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance the song delivered by a gypsy woman in the opening scene of Federico Chueca's *La alegría de la huerta* (1900).

<sup>8</sup> Falla's reading lists include references to Chateaubriand's *Le dernier Abencérage*, Hugo's *Les orientales*, and Gautier's *Voyage en Espagne* from this period. Falla's extant personal library at the Archivo Manuel de Falla (hereafter *AMF*) includes his annotated copies of Alhambrist texts like François René Chateaubriand, *Le dernier Abencérage* (in French and Spanish translation), Inventory Number *AMF* (IN) 2598 and 3401, Washington Irving, *Cuentos de la Alhambra*, IN 2014, and Théophile Gautier *Lois de Paris*, IN 3866.

1900, at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, in a 'theme park' entitled 'Andalousie au temps du Maures', which was established on the fringe of the official colonial pavilions at the Trocadero. The Moorish monuments of Spain were displayed through reproductions of the Giralda tower of Seville, and a more capricious conflation of a patio from the Alcazar of Seville with the Patio of the Lions from Granada's Alhambra. A racial ambivalence was also present in the exhibit, in which a variety of North Africans, Spanish gypsies and even the odd Frenchman provided the human local colour. Spanish dance troupes dominated the entertainment, with many flamenco numbers performed by the gypsy contingent. The irony of presenting Spanish folk and flamenco styles that had evolved over the previous century within a medieval Moorish and often primitivist setting was not lost on some contemporary commentators.

Some of Falla's Parisian output alludes to the literary themes of nineteenth-century exoticism and is even indebted to the means employed by Romantic composers to denote Spanishness in numerous espagnolades, while *Noches en los jardines de España* (1909–16) draws on various impressionistic evocations of Spain in its poetic conception and style.<sup>12</sup> However, a few months after returning to Madrid in August 1914, Falla commenced work on a radically different composition: the *gitanería* (gypsy scene) *El amor brujo* (Love the Magician), which was written for the popular gypsy entertainer Pastora Imperio and her troupe. In this work, Falla reinterpreted visions of the gypsy in light of the primitivist aesthetic that he and many in Paris had so admired in the productions of the Ballets Russes, particularly *The Rite of Spring*.<sup>13</sup> While most of the numbers in *El amor brujo* can be identified as stylisations of flamenco forms, some of the more popular numbers, such as the 'Romance del Pescador' (The Fisherman's Romance, originally entitled 'Magic Circle') and especially the 'Danza ritual del fuego' (Ritual Fire Dance), defy such classifications, though they display some gestural and intervallic affinities with Andalusian music.<sup>14</sup> To recreate the primeval rites of the gypsies Falla consulted examples of ritual music from the Far East. He believed that this more

<sup>12</sup> These include the 'Seguedille' from *Trois mélodies* (1900) and the *Siete canciones populares españolas* (1914). See Michael Christoforidis, 'Manuel de Falla's *Siete canciones populares españolas*: The Composer's Library and the Creative Process', *Anuario Musical* 25 (2000), 213–35.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the impact of primitivism on Falla's construction of flamenco see Michael Christoforidis, 'Un acercamiento a la postura de Manuel de Falla en *El Cante Jondo* (canto primitivo andaluz)', in Manuel de Falla, *El Cante Jondo* (canto primitivo andaluz), facsimile edition (Granada: Ayuntamiento, Archivo Manuel de Falla, Imprenta Utrama, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> In his extensive monograph on this work, Antonio Gallego repeats the often vague flamenco descriptions given by Adolfo Salazar, and authorised by Falla, in the ritual programme note, which include references to distant now forgotten dances of the gypsies and the dance of the tarantula for the 'Danza del terror'. Antonio Gallego, *Manuel de Falla y *El amor brujo** (Madrid: Alianza, 1991), pp. 1–3–6. Despite consulting secondary sources and raising the matter with leading Spanish folklorists and flamencologists such as José C. Valle y Bernaldo and José Blas Vega in private conversations, no satisfactory flamenco precedent has been cited for these numbers.

closely resembled the type of music that characterised the gypsies in prehistoric times, given his belief that they had originated in India. This assumption was based upon the speculations of Sales Mayo, which Falla had underlined in Francisco Manzano Pabano's 1915 book on the history and customs of the gypsies.<sup>12</sup> In his search for primitive musical elements which could be explored in the ritualistic passages of his drama Falla turned to Judith Gautier's *Les musiques bizarres*, which included transcriptions by Benedictus of Oriental music heard at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900.<sup>13</sup> In doing so Falla paralleled some of the exoticist strategies of French composers and the type of cultural conflation evident in 'Andalousie au temps du Maures'.

Falla copied Gautier's commentaries on the influence of Arab music, and was especially interested in the transcriptions of the *Danse javanaise* and the Ceylonese *Danse du diable*. From the two dances Falla noted various effects that he would employ in *El amor brujo*, most notably in the 'Danza ritual de fuego'. These include the insistent repetition of a single note, the ritualistic repetition of a short phrase, loudly and softly, the employment of arpeggiated but harmonically static bass lines, and the use of the extended trill. In *El amor brujo* Falla also drew from musical traditions which had closer ties to the Iberian peninsula and flamenco forms. He stated that this work's peculiar orchestral colouring was not only due to his attempts to imitate the guitar; it sprang from his desire to evoke 'primitive Arab instruments', which he associated with the Hispano-Arab tradition.<sup>14</sup>

While *El amor brujo* is now viewed as a quintessential representation of Spanish gypsiness, and even Spanish musical nationalism, contemporary commentators were estranged by Falla's primitivist and orientalist conception of flamenco, and by his modernist musical language. These were at odds with the employment of flamenco as an element of local colour in the *zarzuela* and its harmonic and rhythmic domestication in the *cuplé* popular song style of the early twentieth century.

Over the following years Falla continued to draw parallels between the music of the Orient and that of Andalusia, which in turn informed his composition of *El sombrero de tres picos* (1917–19) and the *Fantasia Baetica* (1919). This process had intensified with his greater exposure to performances of *cante jondo* – a term which denominates certain flamenco song forms<sup>15</sup> – particularly during the composition of *El amor brujo* and in the

<sup>12</sup> F. M. Pabano, *Historia y costumbres de los gitanos* (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1915).

<sup>13</sup> Judith Gautier, *Les musiques bizarres a l'Exposition de 1900* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1901), IN 1455, AMF.

<sup>14</sup> Falla's draft for a programme note of the work, unclassified papers, AMF. Most of the texts he read and annotated on Arab music highlighted the use of double-reed instruments and percussion, and he evoked their sonorities in many sections of the score.

<sup>15</sup> For Falla this term included the forms of the *Caña*, *Martinete*, *Serrana*, *Soleá* and *Sigüiriya gitana*. It did not include such forms as the *bulería*, *alegrías* and *tango*. See Manuel de Falla, *Escritos sobre música y músicos* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1988), p. 183; Manuel de Falla, *On Music and Musicians*, trans. David Urman and J. M. Thomson (London: Marion Boyars, 1979), pp. 102, 112 (hereafter *Escritos* and *On Music and Musicians*).

course of his journeys to Andalusia in the company of Serge Diaghilev and Léonide Massine in 1916 and 1917. Falla's perspectives on flamenco were undoubtedly conditioned by the value accorded to the primitive artefact and the Orient in his European cultural milieu. His association with the Ballets Russes prompted Falla to argue that oriental influences were responsible for the similarities between Russian and Spanish music, and this claim was echoed by his admired friend Igor Stravinsky, who stated in 1921:

It is not solely a matter of curiosity. Between the popular music of Spain, and that of Russia, I perceive a profound affinity which is, without a doubt, related to their common Eastern origins. Certain Andalusian songs remind me of the melodies from Russian provinces, awakening atavistic memories in me.<sup>16</sup>

Was this merely cultural rapprochement based on aesthetic sympathy?<sup>17</sup> Falla's orientalist conception of flamenco resonated with emerging constructions of Andalusian identity, which had cultural, racial and political dimensions, most notably in relation to Spanish expansionism into Morocco.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Stravinsky's fascination with flamenco's supposed Eastern origins may have drawn on his contemporary interest in radical proto-fascist Eurasian theories that highlighted the Oriental substratum of Russian identity.<sup>19</sup>

#### GRANADA AND THE *CANTE JONDO* COMPETITION

In 1920 Falla realised his long-held dream of moving to Granada, one of the emblematic Andalusian towns known for its Moorish legacy, large gypsy population and flamenco traditions. Within a year Falla became concerned with the progressive contamination and possible extinction of 'pure' *cante jondo* styles. In doing so he was echoing contemporary notions of the 'vanishing rarity' of the primitive artefact.<sup>20</sup> Falla's response was to organise, in collaboration with the poet Federico García Lorca and a circle of artists and intellectuals, the first *Cante Jondo* Competition in Granada in 1922, a pivotal event in the revival, dissemination and broader acceptance of flamenco in Spain and abroad.

To coincide with this event Falla wrote an extended essay entitled '*Cante Jondo*', in which he identified three historic factors that had an impact on

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), p. 129.

<sup>17</sup> Falla wrote notes on his discussions with Stravinsky regarding the similarities between Spain and Russia, which included the Castilian plains and the Russian steppes, the expression of religiosity, the folk types and colours used for ornamental designs. For details see Christofonides, 'Un acercamiento', p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> See discussion of Blas Infante's ideas in the final section of this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> See Richard Taruskin, 'Stravinsky the Subhuman', in *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Glenn Watkins, *Pyramids at the Louvre: Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 77.

Spanish music history: 'the adoption by the Church of Byzantine chant, the Arab invasion, and the settlement in Spain of numerous groups of gypsies'. Falla echoed here late nineteenth-century anthropological constructions of Andalusian identity in which, in Steingress's words, 'flamenco was viewed by many liberal intellectuals as an aesthetic manifestation and [atavistic] memory of the various "races" that had set foot in Andalusia.'<sup>21</sup> Of the gypsies Falla claimed: 'Those tribes, who arrived from the East, according to the historical hypothesis, give Andalusian singing a new character which consists of the *cante jondo*.' By underlining the historic role of the gypsies in the definitive formation of its styles, Falla consciously sought to give pre-eminence to the primitive Indian roots of flamenco. He then proceeded to trace the origins of most flamenco songs to the (gypsy) *siguiriyá gitana* and pointed out that 'it is perhaps the only European song which preserves in all its purity ... the highest qualities of the primitive song of oriental people'. In comparing 'the essential elements of *cante jondo*' with 'the songs of India and of other oriental countries', Falla observed various similarities including: the use of enharmonic intervals melodically and as a means of transposition, restricted melodic range of a sixth, and the repeated, even obsessive, use of one note, frequently accompanied by an upper or by a lower appoggiatura.<sup>22</sup>

Despite stressing its Oriental origins, Falla highlighted the importance of local Spanish conditions and the influence of the 'Spanish race' in shaping flamenco forms:

It must not be thought, however, that the *siguiriyá* and its derivatives are simply songs that have been imported from the East. At the most, it is a grafting or rather, a case of the coincidence of origins that certainly did not reveal itself at one particular moment, but that is the result, as we have already pointed out, of an accumulation of historical facts taking place through many centuries in our peninsula. That is why the kind of song peculiar to Andalusia [*cante jondo*], although it coincides in its essential elements with those developed in countries so far away from ours, shows so typical, so national, a character, that it becomes unmistakable.<sup>23</sup>

Falla conceived of *cante jondo* as a folk manifestation of Andalusia and one of its principal markers of identity, although he believed in its relevance for all Spaniards. In doing so he positioned gypsy culture in the peninsula as an integral component of Spanishness.

One of the principal aims of the organisers of the *Cante Jondo* Competition was to encounter 'unadulterated' renditions of this repertory

<sup>21</sup> Steingress, 'Ideología y mentalidad en la construcción de la identidad cultural', p. 168.

<sup>22</sup> Falla also noted performance practices such as the use of ornamental features at certain moments to express states of relaxation or of rapture, and the shouts with which the public encourage and incite singers and performers. Manuel de Falla, *El 'Cante Jondo' (Canto Primitivo Andaluz)* (Granada: Urania, 1922), reproduced in *Escritos*, pp. 168–71; *On Music and Musicians*, pp. 101, 102, 103.

<sup>23</sup> Falla, *Escritos*, p. 171; *On Music and Musicians*, p. 105.

from amateurs and they therefore excluded professional *cantaors* (flamenco singers) from competing, although they were employed among the jury.<sup>24</sup> In setting these criteria Falla was not primarily invoking notions of purity versus contamination, which had racist overtones at this time. Rather, he was echoing writers from the late nineteenth century, such as Antonio Machado y Álvarez, who had bemoaned the commercialisation of flamenco and its loss of purity in the *tablaos* (flamenco taverns) and *café cantantes*, due to the professionalisation of artists and the formation of new styles in combination with Andalusian popular idioms. Machado had argued that flamenco songs were losing, bit by bit, their primitive character and originality. On the eve of the *Cante Jondo* Competition Falla echoed these concerns:

We would not have gone to the trouble of organising this competition for the sake of flamenco songs now in vogue . . . What we propose is to bring about a renaissance of an admirable Andalusian folk art that was about to disappear for ever, victim of the *couplet* and modern flamenco songs, which are about as Andalusian as I am Chinese.<sup>25</sup>

While it may not have been Falla's intention, this position has been taken as a critique of the gypsies' pivotal role in the professionalisation of the genre. Some flamenco purists had argued, partly on racial grounds, that the contamination of the pure *cante jondo* style was predominantly due to gypsy innovations in the *tablaos* of the second half of the nineteenth century. However Antonio Mairena's later influential revindication of pure *cante jondo* styles was predicated on bringing the gypsy elements to the fore.<sup>26</sup>

#### ANTIFLAMENQUISMO AND GYPSIES

Although several prominent Spanish intellectuals signed a proclamation of support for the *Cante Jondo* Competition, many expressed their misgivings.<sup>27</sup> Flamenco music and its subculture were seemingly incompatible with the calls for greater Europeanisation or the search for a new Spanish

<sup>24</sup> Some flamencologists have criticised Falla for failing to understand that the *tablaos* and professional *cantaors* were integral to the evolution of flamenco forms in the nineteenth century. On occasion, they have failed to recognise the esteem that Falla had for many professional *cantaors*. He admired the renditions of *cante jondo* by professional *cantaors* such as Chaon or La Nima de los Pemes and wanted such professionals to form part of the judging committee at the *Cante Jondo* Competition. See Christoforidis, 'Un acercamiento', pp. 6–7.

<sup>25</sup> Notes held at the AAE.

<sup>26</sup> Félix Grande, *Memoria del flamenco* (Madrid: Abauza, 1999), p. 42. The equation of *cante jondo* elements of flamenco with gypsiness is still prevalent, although it has been viewed as problematic by recent scholarship on flamenco. See Timothy Mitchell, *Flamenco Deep Song*, pp. 198–215.

<sup>27</sup> Its supporters included Fernando de los Ríos, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Azorín, Tomás Borrás and Miguel Salvador. Among its most vocal critics were Francisco de Paula Vallada. See Jorge de Perisa, *El Concurso de Cante Jondo* (Granada: Archivo Manuel de Falla, 1992), pp. 28–35, 41–6.

identity steeped in the values of Castile, which were espoused by the intelligentsia of the cultural Generation of 1898. In the aftermath of the Spanish–American War and loss of Empire, and the ensuing search for identity, many of the intellectuals associated with the Generation of 1898 aimed their criticism at flamenco and its associated contexts.

Debates on *antiflamenguismo* first came to a head in the late nineteenth century in the context of a flamenco spectacle organised for the foreign delegates to Madrid's Congreso Artístico y Literario Internacional of 1887. Gaspar de Núñez de Arce, president of the Asociación de Escritores y Artistas argued vehemently for the cancellation of the spectacle, attacking the custom of presenting foreigners with flamenco acts that graced Madrid's popular stages. By the turn of the century the popularity of flamenco, especially in Madrid, was such that intellectuals became obsessed with it, identifying it with Spain's supposed decadence, an attitude evident in the *antiflamenguismo* of writers such as Miguel de Unamuno, Pio Baroja and José Ortega y Gasset. Writing in the 1930s, Carlos and Pedro Caba pointed to the roots of this *antiflamenguismo*, in their classic work *Andalucía, su comunismo y su cante jondo*:

Another prejudice of the [Generation of 1898] . . . was the *españolade*, the florid writings with which a Byron, a Gautier or a Mérimée presented Spain . . . they gave such great importance to the judgements of these literary tourists, [and] were so alarmed at the thought that Europe could believe that Spain could be like that . . . that they ended up venting their spleen on bullfights and flamenco.<sup>28</sup>

For the *antiflamenguistas* flamenco and its associated contexts (including taverns, jails and bordellos) were seen as grotesque caricatures of Spanishness which encapsulated the backwardness of the peninsula in relation to Europe. The perceived lower-class, low-life and immoral associations of its public and settings – which did not preclude aristocrats and intellectuals slumming it at the *tablaos* – was also linked by the *antiflamenguistas* to contemporary stereotypes of the genre's gypsy protagonists. There had been numerous Spanish royal decrees dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that had attempted to outlaw and later assimilate the gypsies within Spanish society, and many had settled in southern Spain (as so-called 'New Castilians'). Unlike the case in much of Europe, many gypsies became established in sectors of Andalusian towns by the nineteenth century – such as the Albayzín in Granada – and did not form part of an itinerant transnational population. However, this did not preclude an exoticising attitude and they were often still considered outsiders. Writing at the time of the *Cante Jondo* Competition, Vicente Manzanera highlighted both an identification and an overriding sense of

<sup>28</sup> Carlos and Pedro Caba, *Andalucía, su comunismo y su cante jondo* (Madrid: Biblioteca Atlántico, 1933). Cited in Yvan Nommick and Antonio Álvarez Cañibano (eds.), *Los Ballets Russes de Diaghilev y España* (Madrid: Centro de Documentación de Música y Danza, 2000), p. 171.

otherness, noting that the people of Granada had no social contact with the gypsies until a few years before; however, 'the passion and artistry of gypsiness had infiltrated into the heart of the city. Who in Granada had not felt the temptation to seduce a gypsy? ... Who in Granada has not heard of a man who has died, or rather has been killed, in search of a crazy love in the Albayzín.'<sup>29</sup>

The racialised characterisation of the gypsy as foreigner or exotic Other is encapsulated in the writings of authors of the generation of 1898 like Pio Baroja, as can be seen in this passage from *La Busca* describing a *bailaor* (flamenco dancer):

a gypsy of chocolate skin stood up and began an [Andalusian] tango, a dance with negro origins; he twisted himself, throwing his abdomen forward and his arms back. He finished the [twisted] movements of his feminised hips creating a complicated plait of arms and legs.<sup>30</sup>

Baroja's description is similar to that of numerous commentators who conflated the gypsy and flamenco with the African and resorted to a gendered, highly corporeal, and often deprecating description of flamenco dance. Baroja's comments reflect numerous damning critiques of flamenco dancing, especially aimed at its male protagonist, the *bailaor*, and his subversion of masculinity. The following description of a *bailaor* appeared in the popular newspaper *El Cronista* in 1887:

Far sadder and more incomprehensible is the fact that men, forgetting their dignity and stature, agitate and move themselves with ridiculous feminised gestures. The dance in this case becomes vice in all its ugliness, something repugnant and disgusting, the relaxation of all sense of morality.<sup>31</sup>

Most of the *antiflamenguistas* were not of Andalusian origin, as was the case with Eugenio Noel, the author from Madrid who led a series of campaigns against both flamenco and bullfighting. He dedicated much of his writing from 1911 to this end, as can be seen in his numerous critiques of flamenco singing and dancing that highlighted the otherness of the form and its detrimental effect on Spanish culture. His comments on flamenco dancing reflect those cited above and are not restricted to men, but present female dancers as similarly cheap illustrations of lowly sexual decadence:

One of the evils of *flamenquismo* has been the detrimental effect it has had on our dances. We have no sense of voluptuousness, refinement or subtle grace. Our *bailaor* is an indecent, androgynous and tortured being, and his partner is a disgraceful woman who handles her body as she does her soul, without art or science and in order to gain a few pesetas.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in De Persia, *El Concurso de Cante Jondo*, p. 52.

<sup>30</sup> Pio Baroja, *La Busca* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1994).

<sup>31</sup> *El Cronista*, 23 June 1887; quoted in Manuel Ríos Ruiz, *Apes y boy del cante flamenco* (Madrid: Istmo, 1997), p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> Eugenio Noel, *Campaña antiflamenco* (Valencia: Editorial Sempere y Cia., 1919).

Noel's description of the *cantaor's* singing brings to mind racist contemporary accounts of deformity and mental retardation among gypsies.<sup>33</sup>

To sing [flamenco] one needs a very special vocal quality, an exceptional mucous membrane in the throat and artistic taste that is so grotesquely exaggerated and absurd that it reflects ... voluntary stupidity and tones produced or accompanied by mysterious convulsions.<sup>34</sup>

And yet Noel was also highly knowledgeable of flamenco forms and this sensibility is evident in many of his essays. His critique of the dancer Pastora Imperio acknowledges her artistry while lamenting the consequences of her gypsy art for the progress of Spanish culture:

If only this spirit contained something of an artistic ideal! ... What great surprises it could have offered. But it is indomitable, steely, brutal, rough, crude and gypsy. Her gypsiness is savage and pure; there is nothing more genuine or lamentable.

I have long been a student of gypsiness. I know that it is the cause of our civil and moral decline. But this disconcerting woman has convinced me that gypsiness is the supreme formula of our art at present. Damn this art ... as it is an implacable movement backwards!<sup>35</sup>

Noel's ambivalence is palpable and in his comments on Pastora Imperio's dance one senses his difficulty in disparaging something that is so deeply rooted in his culture and sensibility.

Racial stereotypes of gypsies also precluded them in the eyes of some commentators from having contributed to the formation of flamenco genres. This was due to their perceived appropriation of the cultural artefacts they came into contact with. Well into the twentieth century Spanish writers on music, and even flamenco, have remarked on the gypsies' supposed limited musical talent, creativity and their lack of poetic ability.<sup>36</sup> Some authors, like the eminent philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, have gone so far as to deny on racial grounds the overall importance given to the gypsy element in Spanish culture, claiming that the image of gypsy Spain was historically false:

We are, in effect, convinced that the base of the Spanish people is, racially, one of the most homogenous, consisting of a Romanised Celtic-Iberian substratum, and that the various invaders and immigrants, numerically very small, were soon mixed with it ... And we come to believe that a people [like the gypsies], who pushed into Spain uninvited, without a homeland, history, literature or great historical figures ... has been given more importance than it deserves. Can people believe that in Spain there is more gypsy blood than that of the Visigoths?<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Such notions are alluded to in Pabano's 1915 *Historia y Costumbres*.

<sup>34</sup> Eugenio Noel, *Securitos chulos, fenómenos, gitanos y flamencos* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1916).

<sup>35</sup> Eugenio Noel, *Escenas y danzas de la campaña antiflamenco* (Madrid: Libertarias/Prodhufi, 1995), p. 241. Original edition: Valencia: Editorial Sempere y Cia., c. 1913.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard Leblou, *Gypsies and Flamenco. The Emergence of the Art of Flamenco in Andalusia* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995), pp. 81–2.

<sup>37</sup> Miguel de Unamuno, 'Gitanadas y judiadas', *El Sol*, 27 January 1912, 3.

*Antiflamenguismo* persisted in the debates surrounding the *Cante Jondo* Competition of 1922, with many intellectuals wary of reviving interest in music that had been so closely associated with exoticising and derogatory images of Spain.<sup>38</sup> However, the leading modernist critic, Adolfo Salazar, pointed out that one should not reject such incredible sources of 'popular' music 'because of the ways in which they have been abused by bad musicians, and if this abusive *casticismo* [Hispanic traditionalism] has degenerated into a topic, it is no less a topic to reject [flamenco] in the name of a second-hand Europeanism'.<sup>39</sup>

By the late nineteenth century the onus of creativity within flamenco performance had begun to rest with the individual and this gradually translated into the rising status of the gypsy *cantaor/a*, *bailaor/a* and *tocaor/a* (guitarist). Even *antiflamenguistas* such as Noel suggested that flamenco owed more to the caprices of its latest performer than to its lengthy historical genealogy.<sup>40</sup>

Falla and Lorca's espousal of flamenco and the gypsies' contributions to Andalusian and Spanish culture helped transform the attitudes of intellectuals and the subsequent cultural Generation of 1927.<sup>41</sup> Lorca's characterisation of the gypsy as encapsulating the ideals of the Andalusian race is presented in the introduction to his *Romancero gitano* (1924–7):

The book as a whole, though entitled 'Gypsy', is the poem of Andalusia. I have called it gypsy because the gypsy epitomises the loftiest, the most profound, the most aristocratic characteristics of my country; he is the most representative of its way of living, the keeper of the flame, the blood, and the alphabet of a truth both Andalusian and Universal.

#### FALLA AND DEBATES ON THE RACIAL ORIGINS OF FLAMENCO

The primacy accorded the gypsies in Lorca's constructions of flamenco and Falla's notion of the origins of *cante jondo* were not always in accord with contemporary Spanish cultural and musicological perspectives. The importance Falla gave to the Indian roots of flamenco contrasted with the thoughts of his Andalusian compatriot Joaquín Turina, who speculated on the defining role of Arab music in the transformation of Southern Spanish music, in line with his own Hispano-Arabic Orientalist musical style. Falla's essay provoked a bemused response from Turina, who wrote to him on 7 October 1922, 'I am now completely disorientated. Do you

<sup>38</sup> Vallada noted that 'there are no means of ridding oneself of the *españolade* in foreign lands and it is true that Spaniards are to blame'. Quoted in De Persia, *I Concurso de Cante Jondo*, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> *El Sol*, 16 February 1922; as quoted in De Persia, *I Concurso de Cante Jondo*, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Eugenio Noel, *Martin el de la Paula en Alcalá de los Panaderos* (Madrid: La Novela Mundial, 1926).

<sup>41</sup> Taking their cue from Falla and Lorca, other authors of the Generation of 1927, such as Rafael Alberti and Luis Cernuda, were powerfully influenced by flamenco and its literary, visual and musical manifestations.

really believe that *cante jondo* comes from India? Are we making Indians of ourselves?'<sup>42</sup> (a colloquial expression in Spanish for making a fool of oneself).

Falla also disagreed with his teacher Felipe Pedrell's assertion that the persistence of musical orientalism in various Spanish popular songs was solely the result of 'the influence exerted by the most ancient Byzantine civilisation', and that even Andalusian song 'does not owe anything essential to the Arabs'.<sup>43</sup> While Pedrell did give some credit to the role of gypsies, whose origins he traced to upper Egypt, it was only to stress their role in transferring Syrian influences and thus reinforcing the Byzantine legacy. Pedrell's promotion of Byzantine music as the possible conduit for Oriental influence can also be seen as an attempt to marginalise the Arab and Jewish legacies in Spain. Theories advancing Arab and Jewish influence on the evolution of flamenco only became more prominent from the 1930s.<sup>44</sup> *Antiflamenguistas* at times referred to the mixed origins of flamenco but generally regarded its hybrid nature as a negative.

While Falla had also alluded to Byzantine influence, he respectfully challenged Pedrell's ideas by admitting the Hispano-Arabic cross-influences on the rhythmic contours and instrumental timbres associated with some of the dance forms. He specifically related aspects of the *sevillanas*, *zapateados* and *seguidillas* to the Moorish Andalusian music of North Africa, and had even made attempts to bring a group from Morocco to perform for the 1922 *Cante Jondo* Competition.<sup>45</sup> At this time and later in 1930 Falla also considered visiting Morocco to study Arab-Andalusian music.<sup>46</sup> In a 1932 letter to the eminent music critic Adolfo Salazar, he expanded on the possible Arab influences on flamenco styles and even cited the sources he had studied:

As far as Arab-Andalusian influences are concerned, I have only found these in the music for dance. (Independently, of course, of the evident relationship of the purely Andalusian *cantos* with those of Oriental origin). You have the Yafil

<sup>42</sup> Mariano Pérez Gutiérrez, *Falla y Turina a través de su epistolario* (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 1982), p. 111.

<sup>43</sup> Falla, *El Cante Jondo*, p. 166. For an extensive discussion of Falla's essay and the sources of his ideas see Christoforidis, 'Un acercamiento'.

<sup>44</sup> In terms of Arab influence see for instance Aziz Balouch, *Cante jondo: Su origen y evolución* (Madrid: Ediciones Ensayos, 1955), and in terms of Jewish influence see, for instance, Medina Azara, 'Cante jondo y cantares sinagogales', *Revista de Occidente* (1930). Falla's reticence to admit Jewish influence may have also been due to a degree of anti-Semitism inspired by his Catholicism. For some progressives the 'cultural pluralism of the high Middle Ages were a source of patriotic pride' (see Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875–1975* (Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 84), and these ideas became even more prevalent during the Second Republic.

<sup>45</sup> See copy of a letter from Isidro de Cagigas to José Martínez Ribáño, *AMF*.

<sup>46</sup> Falla's proposed trip to Morocco to listen to Arab-Andalusian music is referred to in a letter from Prosper Ricard (February 1922), *AMF*. J. B. Trend's descriptions (and transcriptions) of Moroccan music are found in letters to Falla from March 1930 (see especially letter dated 2 March 1930), *AMF*. In a postcard dated 15 March 1930 Trend attempted to organise a trip to Marrakesh for Falla, *AMF*.

collection. Look at numbers 17 and 22 (Tuchiats Ghrib and Sika): Sevillanas and Zapateado . . . But how can one know if the origin of both is Moorish or Spanish? In any case, both examples are interesting.<sup>47</sup>

Falla's personal library includes copies of the Collection Yafil which display the composer's annotations.<sup>48</sup> It is also evident from Falla's remarks to Salazar that he did not discount the possibility of the influences travelling in the other direction, from Spain to North Africa.

Despite admitting the possible, if somewhat limited, influence of the Arabs on certain flamenco forms, Falla denied their more generalised impact upon Spanish music. While displaying interest in Julián Ribera's initial studies on correspondences between Spanish and Arab music, Falla became openly critical of Ribera's more controversial affirmations,<sup>49</sup> which signalled the impact of the Arabs upon a wide spectrum of Iberian music, from the Aragonese *Jota* to the medieval *Cantigas de Santa María*. Some of the tenets of Falla's position can be viewed within a tradition of Spanish scholarship which sought to minimise the Arab influence on the Spanish peninsula, its culture and race. The *Reconquista* (the Christian reclamation of the Peninsula from the Moors and the Jews) was interpreted as a defining force in Spanish Nationhood and identity and the disastrous contemporary military campaigns against the Moroccans (1919–22) were viewed by some commentators as a continuation of that struggle.<sup>50</sup> Falla's identification of pan-Andalusian elements in flamenco that cross the Ibero-African divide also parallels contemporary cultural-political theories of identity, such as those of the modern father of Andalusian nationalism Blas Infante, who sought to incorporate Northern Morocco as an integral part of the Andalusian state within Spain.<sup>51</sup>

In the early 1920s Falla's musical nationalism progressively assimilated some of the ideals of the Generation of 1898, most notably their Castilian bias and modern European aspirations. His music shifted from evoking Spanish folklore, and especially the flamenco genres of Andalusia, to exploring Spain's musical past in the light of emerging neo-classical trends, a style followed by most musicians of the cultural Generation of 1927. However, Falla retained elements of flamenco and the musics that had supposedly played a part in its evolution.<sup>52</sup> Examples of this shift include

<sup>47</sup> Manuel de Falla, letter to Adolfo Salazar, 7 March 1912, *AMF*.

<sup>48</sup> The Tuchiats Sika referred to in the above letter is marked 'Sevillana' and Falla's annotations provide a rudimentary harmonisation while transforming the metre indicated in the score. See IN 91.

<sup>49</sup> Adolfo Salazar, letter to Manuel de Falla, March 1912, *AMF*.

<sup>50</sup> Both Catholic conservatives and progressives embraced the concept of the *Reconquista*, although progressive commentators were more ambivalent about its significance. While celebrating the triumph of the Spaniards (with concepts of nation and political rights) over the Arabs, they recognised the extraordinary achievements of Hispano-Arabic culture. Boyd, *Historia Patria*, p. 84.

<sup>51</sup> Steingress, 'Ideología y mentalidad en la construcción de la identidad cultural', p. 188.

<sup>52</sup> For instance, in *El retablo de Maese Pedro* elements of the prosody and harmony are indebted to flamenco practices, and there are references to Indian rags in the sketches.

works like *El retablo de Maese Pedro* (Master Peter's Puppet Show, 1918–23), the puppet opera based on passages from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. He also projected a scenic cantata based on El Cid, the legendary figure of the *Reconquista*.<sup>53</sup> It could be argued that the climax of *El retablo de Maese Pedro* reflects something of the ideals of the *Reconquista*, and possibly even the contemporary Spanish campaigns in Morocco, with its destruction of an army of puppet Moors by a deluded yet chivalrous Don Quixote.

Issues of race and identity were central to the cultural politics of Falla's time, and they are evoked whenever his writings and music addressed flamenco. While his ideas and compositional output also reflect many of the primitivist ideals prevalent in Paris, Falla achieved a new modernist construction of flamenco, which highlights its multiracial origins and the defining influence of gypsies in its evolution. Falla's musical construct of flamenco eventually prevailed with Spanish audiences and, perhaps more importantly, his thoughts on the genre and gypsiness helped shape Spanish cultural consciousness and identity. The ongoing significance of this vision of flamenco is demonstrated by more recent manifestations of cultural exchange, in which Spanish gypsies have engaged with and reinterpreted Falla's music and Lorca's poetry.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> See Federico Sopena (ed.), *Correspondencia entre Falla y Zuloaga (1915–1942)* (Granada: Ayuntamiento de Granada, 1982); Michael Christoforidis, 'Hacia un nuevo concepto de ópera en los proyectos de Manuel de Falla (1911–1921)', in Emilio Casares Rodicio and Alvaro Torrente (eds.), *La Ópera en España e Hispanoamérica. Una creación propia* (Madrid: Fundación Autor, 2002), vol. II, pp. 363–71.

<sup>54</sup> Versions of Falla's music have been recorded by musicians such as Paco de Lucía and Ginesa Ortega.



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