Andalusian, Gypsy, and Class Identity in the Contemporary Flamenco Complex*

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For over a century flamenco has comprised a continuum of styles, from the spontaneous music of the informal gypsy *juerga* ("spree"), to the commercialized and adulterated fare performed in cabarets by professional musicians for non-gypsy audiences. Since the early 1960s, the unprecedented vogue of flamenco, together with a set of broader extramusical factors, has rendered the flamenco complex even more heterogeneous, generating a host of innovative, eclectic, and popular substyles that now coexist with traditional "pure" flamenco. While the flamenco scholarship (flamencología) that has mushroomed in the same period has produced dozens of informative books, these have tended to focus on traditional *flamenco puro* rather than on the contemporary status of the art and its related derivatives.

A holistic perspective of modern flamenco—including the traditional styles—must comprehend the panoply of flamenco-related hybrids that have flourished in recent decades and now form an intrinsic part of Spanish culture; moreover, such a perspective must situate these musics in the context of the social, economic, and political currents that have reshaped Spanish society in the last half-century.

Ideally, such a study should be the subject of a book, or several books; until these have been undertaken, however, this article may serve as an introductory attempt to contextualize the modern flamenco aggregate of styles in its sociocultural background. These styles include traditional flamenco, recent fusions of flamenco with Arab musics, *nueva canción andaluza* (Andalusian "new song"), and the variety of related commercial popular musics which have emerged in recent decades. This continuum of

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styles must be understood in the context of Andalusia's unique culture and history, its present crisis of underdevelopment and mass emigration, the rise of political mobilization and regional pride, and the special role played by Andalusian gypsies in the flamenco complex.

For modern Andalusians, the goal of revitalizing regional culture has become linked with the movements for political autonomy, socialism, and gypsy identity. Flamenco and its derivatives have come to play an important role in this cultural ferment, both through the deliberate efforts of socially conscious musicians as well as through the enthusiasm of intellectuals and audiences. In this article, after summarizing the region's current sociohistorical background, we will endeavor to illustrate the important role played by flamenco and related subgenres in expressing and, to a considerable extent, helping to shape modern Andalusian identity. In this way we will attempt to demonstrate how musical style as well as text content can function not merely as passive reflections of broader sociocultural phenomena that shape them, but also as active contributors to the processes of cultural change.

THE ANDALUSIAN LEGACY:
CULTURAL WEALTH, MATERIAL POVERTY, AND REGIONAL IDENTITY

It has been commonplace for Spanish authors to describe flamenco—both in terms of vocal style and text content—as a "cry of pain"—pain, most specifically, of the persecuted gypsies, but in a more general sense, of Andalusians as a whole, whose post-reconquest history of poverty and exploitation has only been aggravated by the memory of their former glory under the Moors. The sense of Andalusian oppression has been a central theme in flamenco, and the present political freedom and crisis of mass emigration have, if anything, intensified the use of flamenco as a vehicle for social commentary—both through text content and, less overtly, through stylistic innovations. Flamenco, whether traditional or contemporary, cannot be understood in isolation from its historical context—aspects of which are briefly summarized here.

The last centuries of Moorish rule bestowed upon Andalusia a period of cultural and economic prominence in many ways unsurpassed since the Castilian Christian reconquista, which culminated with the fall of Granada in 1492. Moorish Andalusia was the wealthiest and most populous region of Spain, its economy buoyed by commerce, intensive canal-based agriculture, and textile production. Its cultural life was arguably the most cosmopolitan in Europe, synthesizing the learning and arts of the Arab, Christian, and Jewish communities, which coexisted in relative harmony (see Comín 1985:25-27).
The *reconquista* put an end to this golden age. The Castilian crown replaced Moorish tolerance with the Inquisition, expelling Jews and Muslims, and persecuting and even massacring many of the remaining converts (see, e.g., Grande 1979, 1:59-64, 127). The imperial Madrid government treated Andalusia as a conquered and occupied territory rather than as a region of economic value to be developed. Hence, under Spanish rule, irrigation networks collapsed, trade withered, and land ownership became concentrated in the hands of a tiny absentee latifundista elite. Ruinous imperial wars, mass emigration to America, and internal stagnation and repression further devastated Andalusia, causing recurrent famines which persisted through the 19th century (see Molina 1985:35ff). While the development of mining around Linares and Murcia in the mid-1800s provided employment for many landless laborers, it also intensified emigration and condemned countless workers to blindness, lung disease, and early deaths. Even this, however, was preferable to the fate of the thousands of indigent Andalusian draftees who perished in the colonial 19th-century wars in America.

Such conditions generated two interrelated attitudes among Andalusians, which have intensified in this century and constituted basic animating themes of flamenco. The first of these is a sense of Andalusian solidarity, coupled with a hostility to Madrid authority. The immediate and disastrous effects of the *reconquista* on Andalusian culture and economy made contempt for central rule proverbial by the 17th century; this enmity was expressed in many Andalusian popular verses (*coplas*; see Comin 1985:29-30) and, more indirectly, in widespread smuggling and banditry (*bandolerismo*—also celebrated in innumerable *coplas*).

Linked to this animosity toward Madrid was the emergence, among the Andalusian poor, of an acute class consciousness, itself a product of the extreme inequalities of wealth and the progressive currents of thought entering the region via the port of Cádiz. During the course of the 19th century, the inchoate antimonarchism and social discontent so widespread in Andalusia found new shape in Fourier-influenced proto-socialism, in anarchism, and, ultimately, in Marxism. The militant unionization of mine workers at Linares was a crucial development. By mid-century the civic discontent once expressed in *bandolerismo* and fatalism was generating strikes, unions, leftist publications, open revolts (e.g., in 1868), and explicit social commentary in flamenco *coplas* (see Grande 1979, 2:402-16; Ortiz Nuevo 1985:78-143; Comin 1985:32-40).

Although the conditions that formerly precipitated recurrent famines were ameliorated during the 20th century, Andalusians still found little reason to temper their resentment of central authority and *latifundista* landlordism. The socialist mobilization that had abounded under the Repub-
lic was brutally quashed by Franco, who recognized Andalusia as a hotbed of discontent. Subsequently, while central and northern Spain became increasingly industrialized and prosperous, neglect from the center and from the insouciant absentee landlords effectively inhibited development of Andalusia's rich agricultural, fishing, and industrial potential. Thus, throughout the century, Andalusia and neighboring Extremadura—long ago, the commercial and demographic centers of Spain—have remained the poorest regions of the country.

Urbanization has been one inevitable consequence of rural unemployment and underdevelopment, but the Andalusian cities—now quaint provincial towns with negligible industry or commerce—have been able to absorb only a tiny percentage of the indigent unemployed. Rather, it is the industrial centers to the north—Madrid, French and German cities, and above all, Barcelona—to which the unemployed have been obliged to migrate in search of work. The mass emigration of Andalusians—now measured in the millions—has become such a central feature of Spanish economic and cultural life that it has become commonplace to note that Andalusia must now be sought in the suburbs and slums of Barcelona and Madrid (see, e.g., Comín 1985:105-26). Because the Andalusian "guest workers" do not, on the whole, assimilate to their host cities, the diaspora appears to have heightened rather than diluted Andalusian autonomist sentiment as well as cultural solidarity.

Since the restoration of democracy in 1977, the autonomist and socialist movements have become basic and open features of Andalusian sociopolitical life, and further, they have become important influences on and themes of regional music, including flamenco and its commercial hybrids which have emerged among the proletarian emigrant communities.

Before turning at last to music, we must briefly complete our summary of flamenco's sociohistorical background with some mention of the ethnic subculture which has played such a crucial role in its evolution.

GYPSY SUBCULTURE IN MODERN SPAIN

A holistic view of the contemporary flamenco complex must include some discussion of the gypsy community, whose members continue to dominate not only flamenco itself, but also its commercial pop derivatives.

Since first arriving in Spain via France in the 15th century, the many thousands of gypsies who settled in Andalusia came to share the poverty of their compatriots while bearing an added burden of persecution (see, e.g., Grande 1979). Inquisitional intolerance, the need for scapegoats for imperial decline, and popular resentment of parasitic begging and thievery (real or imaginary) led to a history of repression and harassment. Such conditions, however, appear traditionally to have reinforced rather than to have broken
the defensive ethnic pride, endogamy, and isolation of the gypsy community; accordingly, the freedom-cherishing gypsies have tended to prefer self-employment in marginal, albeit functional sectors of the economy (e.g., skinning mules, trading horses, smuggling, basket-weaving, repairing kitchen utensils, and hawking cigarettes).

Nevertheless, from the late 1700s, when Romantic literature began to idealize nomadic gypsies (Grande 1979, 1:277-85), substantial communities of settled, assimilated gypsies (including many blacksmiths) arose in the cities and towns of Seville and Cádiz provinces. It was primarily these casero ("house-owning") gypsies, as opposed to their nomadic andarrio and canastero kin, that nurtured and developed flamenco in a complex process of syncretic, dialectic interaction with non-gypsy audiences and musics.

The mid-20th century was a period of adjustment and dislocation for most gypsies, especially since almost all of the traditional gypsy occupations became obsolete. In the period of adaptation, several casero gypsies (including many from former blacksmith families) were able to capitalize upon and further promote the spread of flamenco by becoming professional musicians (see Pérez de Guzmán 1982:105-13). Many more, including the tiny percent that remain nomadic, have been able to eke out humble livings in new marginal roles (recycling trash, shining shoes, selling lottery tickets, etc.). Perhaps the largest group, like Andalusians in general, have simply become proletarianized, in many cases emigrating to the barrios of Barcelona and Madrid. In the "miracle" decades of the 1950s and 1960s, many thousands of gypsies found decent jobs in the booming industrial centers, but the unemployment, inflation, and recession of subsequent years have once again marginalized the urban gypsies and constituted a new sort of threat to their cultural and economic survival (see San Román 1986:201ff.). It is the subculture of these urban gypsies that has generated the new popular music hybrids of flamenco, Cuban rumba, and rock, to which we shall return below.

On the whole, gypsies occupy the lowest rungs in the Spanish economy, with the Andalusian gypsies as the poorest of the poor (again, see Grande 1979, 2:575-622). Since the 1970s, significant attempts to organize and aid the gypsy communities have emerged. Nevertheless, probably the most important and effective vehicle for the emerging gypsy consciousness has been music—specifically, flamenco and its contemporary offshoots which have emerged recently as products of socioeconomic changes, external musical influences (especially rock and Cuban music), political and cultural freedom, and the flamenco boom itself.

FLAMENCO

Flamenco, regardless of its ever-growing acceptance by foreign as well as Spanish middle classes, has evolved as a product of the Andalusian urban
lower classes and, in particular, the settled gypsies of Seville and Cádiz provinces. Since its coalescence in the mid-1800s, diluted and commercialized forms of the genre (e.g., flamenco opera) have flourished and perished in accordance with the changes in bourgeois taste, but a current of traditional flamenco, however inherently syncretic it may be, has always remained at the inspirational and stylistic core of the genre.

Flamenco texts have tended to reflect their social origins in more concrete terms than flamenco style *per se*, and indeed, Andalusian song lyrics in general (*coplas*, *seguidillas*, etc.) constitute a rich repository of oral history. A large number of flamenco lyrics focus on (unrequited) love, in a more or less ahistorical manner. In contexts where flamenco has served as light entertainment for bourgeois patrons (i.e., the *café-cantante* cabarets, flamenco opera, and the current tourist-oriented *tablao*), singers have tended to trivialize their verses, eschewing any content which might disturb or displease their audiences (see, e.g., Grande 1979, 2:427; Urbano Pérez 1980:13, 95; and Ortiz Nuevo 1985:10). Moreover, one function of flamenco—and particularly of the festive, lighter, dance-oriented *cantes chicos*—has always been to divert and entertain rather than to confront social woes. Nevertheless, even the amatory lyrics tend to display the values of *machismo*, fatalism, pride, and male self-pity which, although not unique to Andalusian society, are certainly characteristic of it. Further, most flamenco texts, regardless of the topic, express an intense sorrow which is regarded as basic to the Andalusian aesthetic. Just as gypsy flamenco style has always coexisted with and nourished commercial-oriented substyles, so have flamenco lyrics—especially in their private or lower-class milieux—served as persistent and ever-effective vehicles for expression of the anxieties and vicissitudes of Andalusian and gypsy daily life.

Many traditional flamenco texts clearly reflect their gypsy origin. In this category, for example, are those celebrating gypsy-style freedom from authority, and, more pathetically, the innumerable verses narrating persecution and prison life. Often cited is the following *copla*, in Spanish mixed with gypsy *cálo* (allegedly from Triana, Seville, ca. 1800):

> Los jeray por las esquinas con velones y farol en voz alta se decían: ¡Mararlo que es calorró! 
> The horsemen on the corners, with lanterns and torches Were shouting "Kill him, he’s a gypsy!"

Like most surviving traditional *coplas*, this one does not argue a case, make abstract sociopolitical generalizations, or rely on an extended narrative plot; rather, it is like a snapshot, a vignette of a specific, immediate personal event. At the same time, given the abundance of traditional couplets like this one, it would be foolish to argue, as some have, that the “political”
Andalusian, Gypsy, and Class Identity in the Flamenco Complex

perspective in flamenco is somehow new and artificial. Whether this *copla* argues a stance or not, it remains a terse and eloquent portrayal of the sociopolitical experience of its author.

Many gypsy *coplas* portraying indigence and contempt for civil authority were clearly perceived as expressing experiences and sentiments shared by Andalusians as a whole. In this sense such *coplas* merge with the mass of song texts, whether of gypsy or non-gypsy origin, which convey the hardships of Andalusian life in general. Like the *copla* above, these tend to present personal, specific vignettes—of hunger, of languishing in fetid hospitals, or of abominable work conditions in the mines. By the mid-1800s, however, *coplas* were expressing a more generalized and explicit class consciousness; such a perspective first surfaces in those songs originating among the increasingly mobilized and radical mining unions (see Grande 1979, 2:369-97).

Minero, ¿para qué trabajas si para ti no es el producto?
Para el patrón son las alhojas, para tu familia el luto,
Y para ti la mortaja.1

Miner, why do you work, if the profits aren’t for you?
For the boss are the jewels, for your family, mourning,
And for you, the funeral shroud.

Such overt politicization of flamenco lyrics increased in the 20th century, as Marxist thought swept through Andalusia and indigent workers discarded their traditional fatalism for radical mobilization (see, e.g., Ortiz Nuevo 1985; Urbano Pérez 1980). At the same time that imported radical political philosophies were spreading, flamenco singers’ use of sophisticated lyrics became commonplace, and many respected poets were happy to write verse specifically designed for flamenco performance. García Lorca was the most prominent modern poet to bridge the gap between rustic, often illiterate gypsy singers and the literary intellectual world. In his wake, singer-poet collaborations have proliferated, with a corresponding enrichment and broadening of flamenco lyrics.

Explicitly progressive or leftist lyrics were, of course, prohibited under fascist rule, although they evidently circulated in private. However, as Franco’s grip loosened and, later, with the advent of democracy, such texts have again come to occupy an important place in flamenco expression. Particularly worthy of mention in this respect are the singers José Menese, Enrique Morente, Pepe Taranto, Manuel Gerena, and José Domínguez (“El Cabrero”). Morente, a dynamic gypsy vocalist, has recorded several eloquent verses of the late radical poet Miguel Hernández; Gerena, less popular a

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1From Ortiz Nuevo 1985:137.
singer, but no less outspoken, was imprisoned in the early 1970s for his views. Domínguez, in the mid-1980s, is clearly, along with Camarón de la Isla, the most popular flamenco singer on the scene. Born to a family of goatherds (cabreros), he continues to practice his hereditary profession alongside his successful musical career. His song texts generally extol rural life and the rights of the poor and downtrodden; these verses elicit such roars of approval from his audiences that his concerts often assume the character of political rallies. It is clear that much of Domínguez's popularity derives from his image as a “man of the people” who, together with his rustic lifestyle, has an acute sociopolitical consciousness.

Also noteworthy here is the theatrical production “Quejío” (“Lament”), which enjoyed considerable success in Spain (despite being censored) and in greater European and Latin American tours in 1972-73. “Quejío” consisted of a series of loosely narrative vignettes structured around flamenco cantos, focussing on themes of poverty, separation, and above all, social injustice (see Drillon et al. 1975).

Overt politicization of flamenco lyrics does not, however, elicit unanimous approval—especially since most of the top singers continue to favor more personal or amatory themes. We may mention, for example, the views of flamencólogo Félix Grande; Grande, although having devoted three books to the task of situating flamenco in its historical context of social injustice, observes that many of the committed texts employed by politically-minded singers are not entirely successful as song texts. He further notes that, for instance, a traditional taranta relating the plight of miners sung by Camarón, may convey a sense of social iniquity much more effectively than the prosaic pontifications of less gifted vocalists (Grande 1979, 2:639-41). For his own part, Camarón avoids explicit sociopolitical commentary, while not hesitating to give a benefit concert for the Socialist Party (PSOE) in 1987.

Insofar as gypsies still constitute the majority of leading flamenco singers, the genre continues to be an important focus and inspiration for the gypsy community. Gypsy vocalists appear to be sensitive to their value and significance to their community, recognizing that they, along with gypsy rock stars, are the most visible and even influential representatives of their people.

As we have noted, gitanismo (gypsy ethos) pervades many flamenco texts in the form of themes of freedom, persecution, gypsy lore, and references to other gypsies. Since the mid-1970s, musicians have self-consciously used flamenco as an explicit and concentrated vehicle of gypsy identity. The music of Camarón de la Isla is particularly noteworthy for its redolent gitanismo, without needing recourse to blunt sociopolitical sloganeering. Among leading gypsy vocalists, however, the most ardent and committed spokesman of gypsy identity has been Juan Peña “El Lebrijano,” who has devoted much, if not most, of his recent musical output to promoting the
cause of his people. Aside from his flamenco árabe excursions to be considered below, particularly noteworthy has been his 1976 LP "Persecución," which consists of a series of poems (by Félix Grande) recited or set to flamenco cantos, dramatizing the plight of the Andalusian gypsies over the centuries; the songs adhere to traditional forms, such as a romance regarding the royal edicts against gypsies, and a galeras and tarantas depicting, respectively, the woe of gypsies sent to row and perish in the galleons and of those suffering in the 19th-century mines.

Also worthy of special mention is "Camelamos Naquerar" (caló: "We Want to Speak"), a 1976 theatrical production of gypsy activist and intellectual José Heredia Maya. This opus was roughly similar to "Queijo" in form, but was devoted specifically to gypsy identity, calling attention to the gypsies' past and present misfortune and persecution, and attacking the romantic myth that gypsies have always been carefree, wild, and lazy sybarites, merrily drinking and dancing their way through life.2

Our discussion of flamenco thus far has concentrated on text and dramatic content, as it is within these parameters that social identity is most explicitly expressed. Nevertheless, style may also function as an important symbol of identity, and indeed, traditional flamenco style can be seen to proclaim its class, regional, and ethnic orientation fairly unambiguously. The specifically Andalusian character of flamenco is clear in its Arab-influenced modal melodies and melismatic vocal style, and in its combination, or juxtaposition, of European common-practice I-IV-V harmonies with progressions and chords that have evolved from modal origins (most notably, the familiar progression Am-G-F-E, in E Phrygian/major).3 Within this framework, flamenco includes cantos (song-types) specifically associated with gypsy origins (e.g., soleares, bulerías, siguiriyas) and others derived from Andalusian non-gypsy folk music (especially the fandango family). The gypsy cantos are markedly more modal in flavor than the non-gypsy ones, and thus modality per se is strongly associated with gypsy identity. Also valued in flamenco are stylistic features specifically associated with gypsies, such as raspy vocal timbre, sobbing-like falsetto breaks, and a generally strenuous, impassioned, and histrionic vocal style. The latter features have been interpreted as reflecting the sense of struggle and adversity so central to the Andalusian aesthetic and identity (Mercado 1982:91). Finally, in terms of its class character, it should be obvious that some of the most basic aspects of the flamenco aesthetic are antithetical to those of Western classical music, the music of the Spanish elite.

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2See introduction by J. Heredia Maya to the LP by the same name (EDX 73308).
3For further discussion of flamenco harmony, see Manuel 1986.
Flamenco style has changed dramatically over the last century, and its transformation can also be seen to reflect broader developments within Andalusian society in general. We have mentioned above that flamenco evolved as a product of the dialectic confrontation and interaction between Andalusian gypsy and non-gypsy societies. While private gypsy fiestas have been an important context for flamenco since its inception, so have professional formats in which gypsies earned money by performing flamenco for non-gypsy patrons. Thus, professionalization has always constituted an important trend within flamenco, and one that has reached unprecedented heights in the 20th century. Concomitant with this development has been the successive broadening of flamenco in image, audience, performer background, and style, from a purely gypsy genre, to a regional, national, and finally, an international music. These developments have involved not only enhanced professionalization, but also what Brook Zern (personal communication) has referred to as the self-conscious "dignification" of flamenco by several of its performers. 19th-century manifestations of this trend would include the introduction of a more polished and professional flamenco by Silverio Franconetti into bourgeois cabarets, and the adoption of the honorific "Don" by vocalist Antonio Chacón. In this century, the most renowned exponent of "dignification" has been vocalist Antonio Mairena (1909-83), who, in his writings, lectures, performances, and general demeanor sought to refute the negative associations of flamenco as the debauched music of lazy and uncouth gypsies (see esp. Mairena 1976). Meanwhile, the professional contexts of flamenco performance—large festivals, tourist-oriented tablao, and formal concerts—have come to dominate the genre, which was once commonly heard informally in cafes and homes throughout urban Andalusia.

The professionalization and dignification of flamenco have dramatically affected flamenco style. While raspy vocal timbre continues to be appreciated, the flexible intonation standards evident in many older singers and recordings have tightened considerably; modern audiences, accustomed to other musics and to close scrutiny of recordings, appear to be less tolerant of vocalists who sing out of tune. Another development particularly prominent in the tourist-oriented tablao, which employ the greatest number of flamenco artists, is the emphasis on dance. Knowing that tourists prefer dance to flamenco singing, tablao performers stress the former at the expense of the latter, and include choreographed solo and group dance to cantes like siguiríyas which traditionally never accompanied dance.

A third stylistic change is the emergence of solo flamenco guitar as a concert art. While short guitar solos were not entirely unheard of in 19th-century cafés-cantantes, on the whole, the guitar in this period was used only for accompaniment, and guitar technique was relatively rudimentary, limited
largely to strumming (*rasgueo*) and plucking with the thumb (*alzapua*). In the first half of the 20th century, however, Ramón Montoya (d. 1949) popularized solo guitar performances and inspired many imitators; subsequent artists like Sabicas and Mario Escudero further formalized and "dignified" the art by playing precomposed, poetically-named pieces rather than loose sequences of *falsetas* ("riffs" normally played between sung verses). At the same time, flamenco guitar technique became incomparably more complex and virtuosic, incorporating *picado* (single-note runs), tremolo, arpeggio, and a greatly enriched harmonic vocabulary. These trends have since culminated in the music of guitarist Paco de Lucia, who is generally described as having "revolutionized" a guitar idiom already in transition.

The rising standards of intonation and guitar virtuosity can be seen, on the one hand, as natural products of a maturing and dynamic art form. At the same time, however, they, and the unprecedented prominence of dance in the *tablao*, reflect broader developments within Andalusian society. Flamenco's professionalization, which has brought the genre from the gypsy and landlord *juerga* to the public stage, can be attributed in part to the extension of the market economy into previously informal sectors of Andalusian society. The advent of the mass media has also contributed to rising technical standards, as musicians since the 1930s have been accustomed to studying and imitating recordings. Finally, as we have suggested, flamenco's professionalization and stylistic advances can be seen to some extent as the products of a self-conscious desire to dignify the art and thereby enhance the image of Andalusia and its gypsies. Andalusians, whether personally fond of flamenco or not, are highly conscious of the genre's national and international renown, and as such it forms a particularly important symbol of their identity.

Of course, there are many critics and aficionados who prefer the older, rougher, and allegedly more soulful styles of singing. Such traditionalists (including several guitarists) also tend to regard the solo concert guitar style as a sterile and dull idiom, on the grounds, first, that it lacks the spontaneity of traditional flamenco guitar accompaniment, and second, that the essence of flamenco is singing, with or without guitar backup. Hence, flamenco's supposed dignification is opposed by those who regard the genre not as an international abstract art form to be cultivated at will by Japanese and American enthusiasts, but as the expression of uniquely Andalusian conditions and sentiments. It is ironic, and yet not surprising, that "dignified" concert flamenco, in reaching out to a bourgeois and international audience, loses some of the characteristics which were most cherished and symbolically expressive to its native patrons. Musical development, like socioeconomic development, inevitably engenders new contradictions and controversies.
FLAMENCO ARABE

We may now turn to a particularly unusual, if not extraordinary musical phenomenon, that is, the various fusions of flamenco with Arab and Moroccan musics which a handful of flamenco artists have generated in the last decade. Since Spaniards do not speak Arabic and have shown no special interest in Arab music or culture for several centuries, the emergence of such hybrids (under the rubric flamenco árabe) would seem an unlikely event. In fact, as should be increasingly clear to the reader, attempts by flamenco musicians to reunite Andalusian and Arab cultures are quite natural in view of the contemporary sociocultural climate of southern Spain.

The first flamenco árabe excursions were those of gypsy vocalists Lole Montoya and her mother, La Negra, who was born in Tetuan, formerly in Spanish Morocco. By the early 1970s these two became known for their settings of Arab songs to flamenco-style cantes. Lole, as part of the now disbanded duo Lole y Manuel, has pursued her Arab interest by performing, alongside her flamenco singing, contemporary Arab songs à la Umm Kulthum with Arab-style or flamenco accompaniment (e.g., "Sangre gitana y mora"); her eclecticism reached new extremes in June 1987, when she included in her major concert a blues, sung in Arabic, accompanied by drums, bass, and flamenco-rock guitarists.

In the late 1970s, the Arab connection was pursued in another theatrical production of José Heredia Maya entitled "Macama Jonda." A musical narrating the marriage of a gypsy and a Moor, "Macama (maqâma) Jonda" similarly matched flamenco singers and guitarists with a Moroccan Andalusian ensemble. (Moroccan art music derives from the Moorish court music which was transplanted to North Africa during and after the reconquista.) "Macama Jonda" adroitly juxtaposed and combined the two musics with a fairly even balance of emphasis. The blending is regarded by many as quite successful, in spite of the fact that the two musical systems do not really have much in common: Moroccan art music, unlike flamenco, is mostly precomposed, ensemble-oriented, reserved in temperament, and strictly monophonic and modal (maqâm-based).

In the wake of "Macama Jonda," during the mid-1980s there followed a derivative and soon-forgotten imitation ("Diquela de la Alhambra") and, more importantly, a set of recordings and concerts by Juan Peña, also fusing flamenco with a Moroccan Andalusian ensemble from Tangiers. Like Heredia Maya's production, Peña's show both juxtaposed and synthesized the two musics, the combinations consisting of flamenco singing over Moroccan background music, or flamenco cantes accompanied by guitars and Moroccan-style percussion and violin; song texts (e.g., "Dáme la libertad"—"Give Me Freedom") were oriented toward gypsy themes and identity.
Andalusian, Gypsy, and Class Identity in the Flamenco Complex

One might think that such hybrids could never constitute more than a marginal curiosity on the Andalusian music scene, especially considering that Moroccan art music can barely be regarded as commercially viable in its own homeland. Time will tell, of course, whether these musical excursions will have any lasting impact, but at present, the commercial success of these ventures, however marginal they may be, has been considerable. In particular, the recordings of Peña and Lole y Manuel (which also contain traditional flamenco) have been among the best-selling Andalusian flamenco-based cassettes in recent years.

Part of the explanation for their popularity, if the author may hazard a subjective value judgement, is that Peña's and Heredia Maya's experiments are quite tasteful and enjoyable as music. It is clear, however, that much of the appeal of flamenco árabe rests on the extramusical significance of the subgenre. Flamenco árabe represents a reaffirmation of Andalusia's distinct cultural heritage in the form of a celebration of its Moorish ties. At the same time it may be seen as a willful renunciation of the economic and political domination imposed over the centuries by Madrid, whose monarchs traditionally regarded Arabs as heathen enemies and Andalusians as suspect by virtue of their Moorish past. It seems that autonomous Andalusia, free at last from repression imposed by despotic kings and dictators, is finally able to attempt to reclaim aspects of its erstwhile cosmopolitan cultural richness. Flamenco árabe, in a word, represents much more than an eccentric musical experiment. The appeal of the subgenre also illustrates how musical style can function as an important symbol and vehicle of social identity, for the celebration of Andalusia's distinct heritage is explicit in flamenco árabe's form as well as its text content.

FLAMENCO POP

Despite the wealth of scholarly and journalistic attention focussed in recent decades on flamenco, the genre cannot claim mass popularity; the extent and, in some ways, the character of its appeal are perhaps comparable to those of jazz in the United States, with Andalusian folk music and blues constituting comparably broader traditional sources. Hence, flamenco is better classified as an urban folk music, rather than a true popular music, if we define the latter as music whose evolution is inextricably associated with the mass media and its production on a mass basis for sale as a commodity.

Commercialized pop forms of flamenco, however, have existed since the 1930s, and record companies often insisted that their flamenco singers record such lighter, more accessible pieces (see, e.g., Mairena 1976:106-07). It was not until the early 1960s, however, that a flamenco-related popular
music emerged that has gained a truly mass audience and, at the same time, come to serve as a vehicle for the expression of some of the same ideologies which animate traditional and modern flamenco.

The development of pop flamenco can be seen as a product of the social, cultural, political, and economic factors which have shaped contemporary flamenco in general. The flamenco boom of recent decades has been one obvious stimulant, engendering in its wake a variety of derivative subgenres. The expansion of the mass media—particularly cassettes and radio—has further promoted the flowering of syncretic musics. Political freedom has also removed a substantial impediment to the spread of popular youth musics; for example, while the Franco regime was hardly able to ban rock, it regarded such music as degenerate and corrupting and strictly circumscribed its transmission on the mass media. Indeed, such was the insularity of the dictadura that it banned the Mexican corrido “La Cucaracha” because of its whimsical reference to marijuana.

More important catalysts in the development of flamenco pop have been the related phenomena of urbanization and the mass migration of proletarianized Andalusians to Barcelona and Madrid. In Spain, as throughout the world, the process of urbanization has generated new social classes with new social, cultural, and aesthetic needs and outlooks. A natural product of such situations is the rise of syncretic popular musics which fuse tradition and modernity, and local and imported elements. In the case of Andalusian society, as we have seen, the urbanization process has been accompanied by an economically-induced diaspora, leading to the growth of a substantial urban subculture of transplanted southerners in the lower-class barrios of Barcelona, Madrid, and elsewhere. It is this subculture that has given birth to the various hybrids of flamenco, rock, and Cuban music which have become among the most vital components of the Spanish musical scene.

In purely musical terms, the influence of Cuban popular music has also constituted an important stimulus of modern flamenco pop. The Cuban rumba (or, more properly, the son), had been incorporated, in stylized form, as a light flamenco cante chico in the early 20th century, and it enjoyed particular popularity, along with the fandango, in flamenco’s lean decades of the 1940s and 1950s. Spanish rumba as a commercial entity first emerged in the 1960s, when a Catalonian gypsy, Peret (Pedro Pubill Calaf), popularized a rather crude fusion of rock rhythm and instrumentation, Cuban refrain patterns, and, occasionally, flamenco-like harmonies and guitar backing. By the early 1970s, the rumba catalan had assumed a more definitive shape in the music of groups like Las Grecas, Los Chunguitos, and Los Chichos,

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4 Only since the advent of democracy have a few private radio stations (in Barcelona) been officially tolerated by the state. While records are still widely marketed, they are now by far outnumbered by cassettes, whether of multinational subsidiaries or smaller local firms.
whose members consisted mostly of first- or second-generation gypsy migrants from the south.

While the rumba catalan germinated in the barrios of Barcelona, it has nothing to do with Catalonian music. Further, it is much closer in rhythm and instrumentation to rock than to rumba. It does, however, bear some affinities to the flamenco-style rumba in its Andalusian harmonic progressions, simple instrumental arrangements, and, occasionally, vocal style. In most cases, however, songs are rendered by two voices, in unison, in a more or less straightforward and dispassionate style.

In the early 1970s the flamenco pop scene diversified somewhat. Particularly influential have been the eclectic experiments of the brilliant guitarist Paco de Lucía, often in collaboration with star gypsy vocalist Camaron de la Isla. Lucía's pop-flavored instrumental rumbas (e.g., "Entre dos aguas") and tangos (which he records alongside more traditional flamenco) have inspired many imitators and have come to constitute a sui generis pop substyle.

In Paco de Lucía's wake has flowered a variety of eclectic fusions of flamenco with more commercial rock, disco, and canción (sentimental ballad). Perhaps the most popular exponent of flamenco rock since the early 1980s has been Malagan vocalist Tijeritas, whose music reflects a greater influence of disco and, at the same time, a closer orientation with flamenco in its harmonic vocabulary and intense, impassioned vocal style.

In accordance with the flamenco associations of such music, much flamenco pop remains rooted in gypsy society, both in terms of performers and the core audience. This association is often made explicit in song texts through references to gypsies—hence the terms rock gitano (gypsy rock) and poder gitano (gypsy power) to denote such musics. More indirectly, many songs celebrate gypsy values of freedom and hostility to authority; others relate the alienation and marginalization which has beset gypsy society as never before in recent decades, when unemployment has erased many of the gains made by assimilating working-class gypsies in the 1950s and 1960s. As such conditions increasingly extend to lower-class non-gypsies, so does the audience of this music spread to non-gypsy Andalusians throughout the country.

While most songs deal with sentimental love, commentators tend to recognize as particularly significant and representative the songs relating the harsh realities of barrio life, i.e., unemployment, drug addiction, delinquency, and a general sense of alienation and marginalization. The mid-1980s hit of Los Chichos, "Vagando por ahí," is typical:

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5For further discussion of these themes, and of contemporary Spanish popular music in general, see Ordóñez 1986:298-309, and Manuel 1988, chapter 4.
Tienes diez y ocho años y estás cansado de vivir
Porque el mundo en el que vives no te puede hacer feliz...
Por un poco de dinero con cualquiera tú te vas
De noche y de día vagando por ahí
No sabes lo que hacer, no tiene donde ir
El mundo te olvidó, ¿qué va a ser de ti?

You're eighteen years old and tired of living
Because the world in which you live can't make you happy...
For a little money you'll hang out with anyone
Wandering about night and day
You don't know what to do or where to go
The world has forgotten you—what will become of you?

Such song texts should not be seen simply as passive expressions of social reality, but as active participants in the formation of a new urban identity. Via mass dissemination, pop flamenco has become an important symbol of the new urban Andalusian consciousness; amidst the complexities of modern barrio life, it serves as an arena of contention, a field of negotiation and mediation for the interlocking dialectics of tradition and modernity, corporate control and grassroots culture, indigenous roots and imported trends, proletarian and elite societies, and gypsy and non-gypsy identities.

In a more abstract, but no less effective sense does pop flamenco style serve to embody and mediate these dialectics of modern Andalusian society. Regardless of one's verdict on the merit of such music, its fusions, whether felicitous or artificial, of old and new, of Andalusian and foreign elements, and of commercial formulae and spontaneous populist elements serve to influence and articulate aspects of modern urban social identity; in its own way, flamenco pop style, like that of music in general, can constitute a symbol whose effectiveness derives from its very indirectness, its ability to convey meaning through abstract suggestion rather than prosaic argument.

**Nueva Canción Andaluza**

The musical genre which addresses most explicitly Andalusia's current ideological ferment is *nueva canción andaluza* (Andalusian "new song"). This music, like its counterparts in Latin America, Catalonia, and elsewhere, is specifically committed to the expression of sociopolitical sentiments through the medium of song. While a leftist perspective underlies much *nueva canción andaluza*, its main themes are the specific problems of southern Spain which have been discussed above. Such themes as emigration, unemployment, and urban alienation have, of course, become common in flamenco and pop flamenco, as well as other genres like *sevillanas* and the folk *rangos* and *pasodobles* of the Cádiz carnival. *Nueva canción* differs from these genres in its core audience—a relatively small group of students
and activists—and in the styles that it encompasses. Despite the genre’s anticommmercial ethos, much of it may be said to resemble mainstream Western commercial soft rock or even sentimental pop ballads in style. Indeed, like much Latin American nueva canción, Andalusian “new song” may be said to be essentially bourgeois in style—as well as in the constitution of its audience. However, a specifically Andalusian or flamenco flavor does enliven some nueva canción andaluza (especially, for example, the music of Miguel López); the use of such stylistic elements is clearly self-conscious and intended to express regional solidarity. Leading exponents of the genre (López, Carlos Cano, Pepe Suero, and others) tend to sing relatively highbrow poetry, generally at relatively small concerts, but occasionally at larger events such as the 1978 “Festival of Andalusian Emigration” in Madrid. While the genre cannot claim mass popularity, it appears to be generally respected, and it does reflect the politicization of the Andalusian intelligentsia.

CONCLUSIONS

It may seem anomalous to hear and read of an Andalusian “crisis” at a time when the region’s level of autonomy and standard of living are dramatically higher than they have been for several centuries. But more important than such factors in terms of the nature and coalescence of regional identity are the heritage of prolonged poverty and oppression, the state’s unfulfilled economic potential, and above all, the perception that Andalusia is exploited and neglected and that its culture is being debilitated by emigration, political impotence, and marginalization. For many Andalusian intellectuals, the cultural and socioeconomic predicaments are closely linked, as are the autonomy and socialist movements. Envisioned both as a tool and as a crucial goal in itself is the development of new, revitalized forms of Andalusian culture—forms which are at once nonelite and distinct from those of northern and central Spain (see, e.g., Vázquez Medel 1980:332-33) and which reclaim the region’s rich cultural heritage while at the same time adapting to the realities of a modern, predominantly urban society.

Since music, and particularly flamenco, have traditionally been the most renowned of Andalusian arts, it is not surprising that the course of modern flamenco and its derivatives should be of special visibility and importance in the region and that flamenco should play a particularly prominent part in the promulgation of a heightened Andalusian identity. This importance is reflected on literary and bureaucratic levels by the profusion of recent literature (much of it published by the state government) that is devoted

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to flamenco, regional identity, and, often, the relation between the two; the
special role and contribution of gypsies in Andalusian society, and particu-
larly in flamenco, are important subsidiary themes in these discussions.

For their part, flamenco singers, now as always, have used their music
as a vehicle for the expression of social reality as well as of more conventional
romantic themes. Thus, both the work of flamenologists like Félix Grande
and the music of artists like José Domínguez can be said to be aimed at
reestablishing flamenco's legacy as a mouthpiece of the full spectrum of
Andalusian sentiments—including but going well beyond the romantic love
which dominated the distorted flamenco of the opera and, to some extent,
the cabarets.

Meanwhile, a different sort of visibility and importance is enjoyed by
the varieties of flamenco-related popular musics that have arisen in recent
decades with the advent of political freedom, the mass media, regional
autonomy, and external musical influences. All these musics at once influ-
ence and have been shaped by the cluster of interlocking ideologies—espe-
cially autonomy, socialism, and gypsy identity—that address the problems
of Andalusian underdevelopment, emigration, and alienation. In some cases,
as in *nueva canción*, the conveyance of sociopolitical messages is deliberate
and explicit in song texts; in other cases, as in *flamenco árabe* and most
*rock gitano*, it is the general nature and style of the music in question that
reflect its social context and, by extension, the dialectical forces shaping
contemporary identity.

While all music can be said to reflect social identity in one way or
another, the relation between Andalusian identity and the flamenco complex
of musics should be particularly intimate and visible. The task of articulating
this relationship acquires special importance because of previous and per-
vasive efforts to obfuscate or deny it. The widespread traditional misconcep-
tion of gypsies as merry and carefree hedonists has been one unfortunate
product of the popular misunderstanding of flamenco. A more deliberate
and cynical misrepresentation was the prolonged attempt by Franco to use
a sterilized image of flamenco to present, for foreigners as well as Spaniards
themselves, a picture of an idyllic Spain engrossed in joyous music and
dance (see Heredia Maya 1977). Ortega y Gasset's warped idealization of
Andalusian life was equally obscurantist in this regard (see Comin 1985:41-
42). Finally, formalistic studies by bourgeois musicologists have often dis-
torted the social significance of music by inferring that the musical meaning
resides primarily, or even solely in its internal structure. A study of contem-
porary flamenco and its derivatives should well illustrate how music can be
at once a product of and an active influence upon the formation of social
identity in general.
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