



## Andalusia's Cultural Spirit and the Historical Ballads of *Romancero gitano*

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Though praised by its author for its unity, Lorca's *Romancero gitano* seemingly ends in disarray (*Obras* 3: 339).<sup>1</sup> The final three ballads appear arbitrarily grouped under the rubric, *Romances históricos*. First, *Martirio de Santa Olalla* embellishes the martyrdom of fourth-century Saint Eulalia in Roman-ruled Mérida; next, *Burla de Don Pedro a caballo* parodies the cycle of fourteenth-century Pedro the Cruel; finally, *Thamar y Amnón* lyrically revisits the incest of 2 *Samuel* 13: 1. What unites the three, other than remote temporal settings, and what makes them historical ballads? C. Marcilly unconvincingly interprets the Don Pedro ballad as an allegory of Saint Peter's three renunciations of Christ, appropriately placed between two additional religious ballads of *Romancero gitano*. Yet the religiousness of these two ballads is questionable. Also, the poem on Don Pedro, dated December 1921, preceded by three years the conception of *Romancero gitano* (Martín 344; García-Posada 9). The present study shows that Lorca grounds his understanding of historical balladry on the notion of *Volksgeist* or "cultural spirit," filtered through mid-nineteenth-century philologist Agustín Durán; and that Lorca's musical mentor and friend Manuel de Falla helps him focus *Volksgeist* theory on Andalusia, specifically, its gypsy component. The ballad on Don Pedro, Martín argues, contains a self-critique of Lorca as a poet (352).<sup>2</sup> His later insertion of this poem into *Romancero gitano*, I will point out, implies his self-reevaluation as a "son of Andalusia," according to C. Brian Morris.<sup>3</sup> Lorca self-consciously embodies its *Volksgeist*, which he finds rooted in a feeling of insufficiency in the cosmos. All three of these historical ballads form a triptych, inspiring atavistic sentiments on the mystery of Andalusian aesthetic tradition, which defies that sense of helplessness.

To pinpoint the idea of *Volksgeist*, a notion pervading nineteenth-century European culture, Nathan Rotenstreich defines that term as the "productive principle of a spiritual or psychic character, operating in different national entities" (490-91). The principle functions in "creations like language, folklore, mores, and legal order." The idea of a German national spirit influences Johann Gottfried von Herder, foremost theorist of German Romanticism at Weimar. Rotenstreich regards "national character" as an innate idea, hence, indestructible and perpetual. Even so, he paradoxically fears the disappearance of distinctions between national traits during the Enlightenment and urges their study before they vanish (491-92). This paradox will pass through many other minds

until reaching Falla's and Lorca's. *Volksggeist* theory enters Spain through multiple channels, but certainly through Herder's Viennese admirer, Ferdinand Joseph Wolf, Agustín Durán's friend.<sup>4</sup> Wolf encourages arousing nations from their lethargy and recovering self-awareness. According to him, they should save their uniqueness and independence by preserving their language and seeking their folklore (Beer 730). Given Wolf's appreciation of national identity, Agustín Durán esteems old historical ballads above all others as the origin of the poetry of the Spanish people. Hardly anywhere else can Durán find traces of the intimate sense of the nascent society producing such verse, a reference to the creative principle or *Volksggeist* (*Romancero general* 1: XXIV). He values such poetry for the study of the oldest literary, political, and philosophical history of the Spanish people. The ballad constitutes for Durán the primordial form of popular Castilian poetry and a product of the time when rustic Castilian breaks with its parent Vulgar Latin (*Romancero general* 1: XLI).

Uncertain about chronology, Durán favors balladic classification by content while prioritizing historical ballads for what they reveal as uniquely Spanish. He divides all ballads into three kinds, the chivalric, the historical, and miscellany (*Romancero general* 1: IX). This division could not have escaped the notice of Lorca while cutting the pages of the 1916 edition of Durán he owned (qtd. in Fernández-Montesinos 91). Nor could the poet have overlooked the part of Durán's book titled, "Romancero de romances históricos." Among its ten sections, one contains ballads of sacred history, including a piece on Amnon and Tamar (*Romancero general* 1: 299). Still another section, on Spanish history from the Visigoths onward, holds fifteen ballads on Pedro the Cruel (*Romancero general* 2: 36-45). For Durán, old ballads of the Spanish people or of minstrels inspired by its spirit ("espíritu") merit appreciation for preserving facts, traditions, and beliefs germinating among the masses, maturing and animated by them (*Romancero general* 1: XXV). The jongleur or any man of the people could sing ballads in different ways, and the people and other minstrels altered them when repeating them, filling in lapses of memory. The old ballads, revisions of even older oral ones, seldom antedate the year 1450 (*Romancero general* 1: XXIV-XXV). Ballads produced after 1570 by professional poets writing of remoter epochs deviate from the original forms, ideas, and expressions, and their oratory proves to Durán the imminence of Spanish decadence in the world (*Romancero general* 1: XXVII-XXVIII). In Durán's appendix on folk poetry in *Bable*, here identified as the language of Medieval Spain, the Asturian Antonio González Reguera is credited with authoring in 1639 a ballad on the lawsuit between Mérida and Oviedo for the possession of the ashes of Saint Eulalia (*Romancero general* 1: LXIV-LXV). Whether or not Lorca directly knew this ballad, irrelevant to the saint's life, the allusion to the widely known saint in Durán may have sparked him to write an Andalusian-style historical ballad about her.

His application of *Volksggeist* specifically to Andalusian gypsies comes from Falla. Lorca's 1922 speech on *cante jondo*, based on Falla's personal notes (Persia 90-94), holds that "el alma música del pueblo [andaluz] está en gravísimo peligro!" (*Obras* 3: 195). Here appears the paradox in *Volksggeist* theory noted by Rotenstreich: a creative principle regarded as permanent in a given territory (like Andalusia) risks extinction. The history of *Volksggeist* theory is traceable from Herder to Falla. Composers synthesize Herder's thinking with Romanticist folklore theory on reevaluating and revitalizing the heritage of their

“peoples” by incorporating folk themes. According to Niemöller, not only politically, but also culturally, the idea of the nation-state determines the consciousness of nineteenth-century European peoples (25). In music, Italy, Germany, and France reigned supreme, revering their composers and performers. Such nationalism became politicized as of 1848, with patriotic revolts against the Austrian empire. In Czechoslovakia, Smetana’s and Dvořák’s music defied Austrian rule; the Pole Chopin and much later the Finn Sibelius challenged Russian domination. Musical strivings for emancipation inspired descriptions of the life of the people, their landscape, and their nature; historical reminiscences of the nation; inclusion of folk music through melodies, dances, and typical instruments; and retrospection on the ancient music of the land as a buried tradition (Niemöller 29).

In Spain, Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922), composer and teacher of Albéniz, Granados, and Falla, applied *Volksgeist* theory to his nation in his manifesto *Por nuestra música* (1891). His word *nación* denoted the common people as well as the creative entity of a culture. Pedrell held that the national character of any music lay in folksong, in untutored music of primitive eras, and in works of genius from great artistic epochs. “National” art presupposed uninterrupted musical tradition, with persistently reappearing characteristics (Pedrell 9). Further, composers needed to draw on native forms (38). Falla appreciated Pedrell as a theorist, though not as a composer, as he was too dependent on old music for Falla’s tastes (Trend 114). In post-World War I Europe, Falla modified Pedrell under the influence of his friend, the French music critic Georges Jean-Aubry. Disputing German claims to musical hegemony, Jean-Aubry held in 1915 that military victory would hopefully awaken French artists to their racial purity and nobility; for French music sprung from a “race française” (qtd. in Hess 65). Hence, while unwilling to underestimate Wagner’s genius, Jean-Aubry adhered to the “truths” of Debussy’s early essays against Wagner, decried excessive foreign influences on French music, and favored the innovative select minorities of composers (qtd. in Hess 66). Falla applied this thinking to Spain (Hess 67-68). The Great War seemed to him to reestablish ethnic boundaries that had been vanishing, along with ethnic values worthy of preserving as a sacred treasure. Such values reflected the “espíritu autónomo de cada pueblo” (Falla, “El ‘cante jondo’” 44-45). In a 1919 interview with the London newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, the liberal, anti-German Falla deplored Spanish academicians who obliged students to compose like Mendelssohn, alien to the “special music implicit in our Spanish scene, in the gait and speech of our folk, in the outline of our hills” (qtd. in Hess 69).

Falla lauded Debussy as a leader of a select minority renationalizing music, as against the Germans Beethoven and Wagner, excessively universalistic (72). Once, Falla even viewed himself and true Spanish composers as members of a Latin brotherhood, part of a “raza [...] invencible” including Debussy as well (qtd. in W[hite] 2). To Falla’s delight, Debussy admitted modes, cadences, chord progressions, rhythms, as well as melodic phrases from *cante jondo* into the European musical canon in inspired compositions (“Claude Debussy y España” 69-70; cf. Falla, “El ‘cante jondo’” 182-83). Falla himself, in works like *Noches en los jardines de España*, often filters Andalusian-style melodies through chords and progressions frequent in Debussy (Demarquez 94). Moreover, he becomes focused on

*cante jondo* in 1921 when he voices his fear that pure Andalusian musical values are threatened with disappearance:

El canto grave, hierático de ayer, ha degenerado en el ridículo *flamenquismo* de hoy. En éste se adulteran y modernizan (¡qué horror!) sus elementos esenciales, [...] sus rancios títulos de nobleza. La sobria modulación vocal—las inflexiones naturales del canto que provocan la división y subdivisión de los sonidos de la gama—se ha convertido en artificioso giro ornamental, más propio del decadentismo de la mala época italiana, que de los cantos primitivos de Oriente, con los que sólo cuando son puros pueden ser comparados los nuestros. (Falla, “El ‘cante jondo’” 168)

Purity in Falla signifies the cultural spirituality of Andalusia. Therefore Lorca’s warning in his 1922 lecture on *cante jondo* stems from concern for the Andalusian cultural spirit: “¡El tesoro artístico de toda una raza va camino del olvido!” (*Obras* 3:195). Falla, Lorca, and other collaborators organized the “First Contest of Cante Jondo,” held in Granada on June 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of 1922. José Mora Guarnido explains that the content constituted “una especie de cruzada artística para la salvación, si era posible todavía, de un rico venero de música natural y popular” (160). *Romancero gitano* is bound to the aim of the salvation of the Andalusian *Volksgeist*. Lorca remarks that despite its title with the adjective *gitano*, he conceives the work as the “poem of Andalusia.” “Gypsy,” he says, expresses “lo más elevado, lo más profundo, más aristocrático de mi país, lo más representativo de su modo y el que guarda el ascua, la sangre y el alfabeto de la verdad andaluza y universal” (*Obras* 3: 340). Conversion of the gypsy into the archetypal Andalusian owes much to Falla’s personal notes and his 1922 pamphlet, *El “cante jondo” (Canto primitivo andaluz)*. Here the word *gitano* denotes a member of the gypsy tribes that emigrated to Spain in the fifteenth century and settled mostly outside the city of Granada, where they entered in contact with the Andalusian *Volksgeist*: “[S]e acercan espiritualmente al pueblo” (Falla, “El ‘cante jondo’” 141). Hypothetically originating in the Orient, they helped give Andalusian song the new modality of which *cante jondo* consists. Falla attributes that modality not to the gypsies themselves, but to the “fondo primigenio andaluz,” the spirit of the Andalusian people, fusing layers of music from the Visigothic Church, the Arabs, and the gypsies to form *cante jondo* (“El ‘cante jondo’” 141-42).

Lorca identifies the gypsy with *cante jondo*, the art perfected by him (Torrecilla 231). Therefore the qualities attributed by Falla to the cultural product accrue in Lorca to the partial producer: 1) elevation; 2) depth; 3) aristocracy; 4) authentic Andalusianism; and 5) universality. For Falla the gypsy *siguiriya* epitomizes *cante jondo* (142), just as for Lorca the gypsy epitomizes Andalusia. 1) Falla finds the *siguiriya* the only European music structurally and stylistically preserving “las cualidades más altas” of primitive Oriental song (“El ‘cante jondo’” 142); hence, the loftiness of Lorca’s gypsies. 2) The height of that music refers Falla to its depth, since its scale seems to him to derive from vocal range as in ancient song of the Orient (“El ‘cante jondo’” 144). From here, Lorca infers that the music “lleva en sus notas la desnuda y escalofriante emoción de las primeras razas orientales” (*Obras* 3: 197), and that the gypsy acquires the profundity of contact with that atavistic emotion. 3) Falla reveres *cante jondo* as noble because of its restraint in adorning melody only in response to the emotion of the text (“El ‘cante jondo’” 145), as opposed to

the economic motivation of commercialized flamenco. Word and melody obey only the exigencies of natural need, imitating birdsong, animal screams, and the noises of matter (Falla, “El ‘cante jondo” 144). Therefore, Lorca’s gypsy becomes the vehicle of “la Pena que se filtra en el tuétano de los huesos y en la savia de los árboles” (*Obras* 3: 340). 4) In Falla, the song peculiar to Andalusia “acusa un carácter tan íntimo, tan propio, tan nacional, que lo hace inconfundible” (“El ‘cante jondo” 146; *Obras* 3: 198). Lorca esteems the gypsies as creators of those songs, an expression of the Andalusian soul, “alma de nuestra alma” (*Obras* 3: 201). 5) Falla finds *cante jondo* universal in various senses: with its obsessive repetition of a single note, often accompanied by upper and lower appoggiatura, that music approaches primitive magic charms, and seems to suggest that in general song precedes language (“El ‘cante jondo” 145); but in addition, as Falla puts it, the “música natural andaluza” (“El ‘cante jondo” 147) is the only Spanish music consistently imitated by non-Spanish composers such as Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Balakirev, Debussy, and Ravel (“El ‘cante jondo” 150-52). In Lorca’s words, “las modulaciones tristes y el grave orientalismo de nuestro cante influye desde Granada en Moscú,” and he attributes that fact to the impregnation of Debussy by “cante jondo en toda su pureza” sung by a group of gypsies in the 1900 World Fair (*Obras* 3: 203). To synthesize, if we extend the traits noted by Falla in gypsy song to the characters of Lorca’s literary gypsies, we may ascribe to them: 1) Life in harmony with nature; 2) Antagonism toward social, commercial or economic constraints; 3) Docility to natural emotion; 4) Primitive fear of occult forces of nature, accompanied by a sense of personal powerlessness; and 5) Insecurity about the mystery of the universe, whether in natural, social, or personal contexts, because docility to nature can bring death. All three of Lorca’s historical ballads set these characteristics in a remote past. Let us examine each ballad individually, starting with “Burla de Don Pedro a caballo,” a self-reflective poem on literary history, followed by “Martirio de Santa Olalla” and “Thamar y Amnón.”

Lorca conceives “Burla de Don Pedro a caballo” as a palimpsest stemming from the Andalusian offshoot of an old theme of Castilian history. He apparently heard Granadan children singing verses from the cycle of Pedro I the “Cruel” of Castile (*Llanto* 207). Late in 1921 he experienced a crisis of personal and poetic confidence, and decided to annex his personal problem to a long balladic tradition (Martín 349). His own conflict would become legible between the lines as the most recent step in the decay of the King Pedro legend. Durán had traced the evolutionary process of historical ballads from the first primitive creative spark of the *Volksgeist* in oral composition to the death-throes of balladic literature in periods of national decline. Prior to 1928, when his *Primer romancero gitano* first came into print, “Burla de don Pedro a caballo” bore the title “Romance de lagunas,” but this became its subtitle when the poem passed into the anthology of ballads (*Primer* 281, n. 1). The change may have responded to two needs: first, the naming of Don Pedro, the hero mocked, would underscore the historicity of the theme, making the poem appropriate to the section “Romances históricos”; second, the new title would contribute to Lorca’s self-mockery, born out of his flagging self-confidence at the time.

The *burla* of a hero constitutes a subgenre of the ballad (*Primer* 281, n. 1). The mocking poet parodies the figure in a less heroic ballad. Hence, the cycle of Pedro the Cruel gives rise to ballads on Don Bueso or Boyso (*Llanto* 207). The widely diffused “Romance de don Bueso” set to music by Lorca (*Obras* 1: 1131-32), on the hero who seeks a mistress and

finds a lost sister, uses the hexasyllabic *romancillo* form; and Lorca's "Romance con lagunas," later titled, "Burla de don Pedro a caballo," employs a flexible *romancillo* pattern (*Llanto* 260). Traces of the Don Pedro cycle accompany the parody of "Romance de don Bueso" in Lorca's ballad, referring to and mocking numerous works. The last of these is Gerardo Diego's "Don Luis a caballo" (1927), a parody, during the Luis de Góngora tercentenary, of Lorca's "Arbolé, arbolé" and of various gypsy ballads circulating among his friends prior to the publication of *Romancero gitano* (2). Therefore, "Burla de don Pedro a caballo" is the parody of a parody with Lorca himself as its object. Mirrors within mirrors can set up puns within puns as the *Volksgeist* passes from one ballad to another until becoming submerged in the dust of a Lorca self-critique.

The punning "Romance con lagunas" later known as "Burla de don Pedro a caballo," dexterously plays on the two meanings of *laguna*, literally, a body of stagnant water and, figuratively, a void, a lacuna (*Primer* 280, n 1). In oral transmission, according to Durán, changes in verse stem from memory lapses and produce new versions of ballads with each singing. Empty spaces ("huecos") fill up when memory fails, adding or subtracting lines from the original (*Romancero general* 1: XXV) To Alfredo García-Casas, who heard Lorca early read and comment on the "Romance de lagunas," the poet expressed a mysterious aspiration to give form to the lacuna, to "hacer plástica la laguna, es decir, el lugar donde se sumergen las cosas, en este caso las palabras" (qtd. in *Llanto* 207 n). Lorca recognized that the cycle of Pedro the Cruel contained *lagunas* in both senses. The first quatrain of the "Romance del Rey Pedro el Cruel" takes the word "laguna" in its literal sense: "Por los campos de Jerez / a caza va don Pedro; en llegando a una laguna, / allí quiso ver un vuelo" (*Romancero general* 2: 38). As Roberta A. Quance explains, "In two versions of a hunting ballad about Pedro el Cruel, [...] the hero encounters a series of terrible omens when he arrives at a lagoon and sends his falcon after a heron. First the falcon falls dead at his feet. Then he sees [...] a barefoot shepherd" (80), the omen and embodiment of the king's fearful demise. The King Pedro legend sung by Granadan children offered multiple versions, whose plurality generated textual lacunae, aesthetic mysteries. Lorca's "Romance con lagunas" has three lacunae, each followed by free verse and each touching on a different problem. The reader must fill in the gaps as in a palimpsest. The first enigma concerns the cause of Don Pedro's unexplained grief; the second, the general possibility of his salvation; and the third, the question of his self-immortalization through art. After the indication of each lacuna comes a couplet positioning the words of the poem underneath the surface of the lagoon. Following the first two lacunae appears the couplet, "Bajo el agua / siguen las palabras" (*Obras* 1: 436, 437, ll. 13-14, 38-39), as if the solutions to the problems posed are to be found in sequence beneath the verbal surface. After the third and final lacuna appear the two lines, "Bajo el agua / están las palabras" (*Obras* 1: 437, ll. 64-65), suggesting the finality of the underwater answer to the question of immortality.

The imagery following the first lacuna hints at the hallucinatory object of Don Pedro's grief. On the lagoon bank a child sees the moon reflected in the water, enabling him to fantasize the equality of the reflected circle to the celestial one, and he equates both to musical cymbals, which he commands the night to play (*Obras* 1: 436-47, ll. 15-23). Viewing absence as presence is child's play, and the quixotic equalization may account for D. Pedro's mysterious tears. A melancholic, he resembles with his quest and awkward

mount the Knight of the Mournful Countenance, yearning for an absent Dulcinea. He approaches the world with erotic awareness of his personal insufficiency (an awareness perhaps related to the poet's homosexuality in a disapproving universe). Never able to achieve satisfaction, his life itself amounts to a lacuna, a privation. Images following the second lacuna of the ballad insinuate that his melancholy may well generate guitar music: "Sueño concreto y sin norte / de madera de guitarra" (*Obras* 1: 437, ll. 44-45). His disorientation, lack of "norte," augurs failure. Like the evil omen of King Pedro's dead falcon, birds amidst flames circle above the lagoon's "hairdo" ("peinado") of water lilies. Waterside onlookers realize better than Lorca's Don Pedro the deficiency defining his existence (*Obras* 1: 437, ll. 40-45). Metaphors succeeding the third and last lacuna give proof of his shortcoming. The words of his art remain underwater like loam derived from voices lost in the past. History differs from art. The concept of a historical ballad can potentially prove contradictory. Most ironically, Lorca's Don Pedro lies forgotten and dead atop the frigid flower of his poetry, as a sorry playmate of frogs in what was once an epic lagoon in the cycle of Pedro the Cruel (*Obras* 1: 438, ll. 64-69).

The deflation of the hero occurs early in narrative passages of the ballad mostly written in hexasyllables. Lorca's ballad seems to parody the traditional *romancillo* "Don Bueso," itself a parody of the King Pedro tradition: the monarch goes hunting, a noble pastime, while Don Bueso merely hunts a mistress in Moorish-held territory. Rescuing a maiden there, he sees her weep as they pass through lands she recognizes as her birthplace: "Qué llantos hacía. / ¡Ay prados! ¡Ay prados! / ¡prados de mi vida" (*Obras* 1: 1132). Lorca's ballad, however, transfers the weeping from maiden to knight: "¡Ay, cómo lloraba / el caballero!" (*Obras* 1: 436, ll. 3-4). In "Don Bueso," the cause for lamenting is external; in Lorca, internal, for the knight senses he does not live in tune with the world. The contrast betrays self-chiding. The source of questioning about the weeping switches from lofty knight to faceless neighbors. Behind their windows, they might as well be asking the wind for all the information they obtain: "Todas las ventanas / preguntan al viento, / por el llanto oscuro / del caballero" (*Obras* 1: 436, ll. 9-12).

The only hint about his enigmatic trouble concerns the nature of his quest and the condition of his mount. Don Bueso goes to Moorish-held lands "a buscar amiga" (*Obras* 1: 1131); Lorca's Don Pedro, with more prosaic needs, sets out "en la busca / del pan y del beso" (*Obras* 1: 436, ll. 7-8). However, the mount of Lorca's Don Pedro both favors and thwarts his quest: his horse, while agile, lacks discipline. Don Pedro travels "montado en un ágil / caballo sin freno" (*Obras* 1: 436, ll. 5-6). D. J. Viera affirms, "Generalmente el caballo en la obra de Lorca representa una fuerza vital, un instinto libidinal, una exigencia incontrolable y el símbolo fálico tradicional" (81). Lorca, a passionate reader of Plato (García Lorca, 1981), surely knows the famous myth of the *Phaedrus* (246 e-247 b), attributing to the chariots of the gods well-matched horses obedient to the reins (247 b 2), able to proceed heavenward toward universals. Contrariwise, the ill-natured horse nature weighs the chariot down. Earthward goes the charioteer (or human soul) whose horse is not well trained, is deficient (247 b 5-6). Don Pedro cries from feeling unbalanced and incomplete, *manqué* in Quance's words (81). His life feels earthbound, lowly.

The second part of the narrative inquires whether he can achieve salvation. When he arrives at a distant city situated among cedars—the biblical cedars of Lebanon—the text

asks whether the city is Bethlehem (a place of birth for Don Pedro as it had been for Jesus). Positive signs appear like the fresh scent of mint and rosemary, and the gleam of rooftops and clouds, illumined by heaven. Next come indications of Don Pedro's demise. He passes through broken arches, symbols of the gateways to death (*Llanto* 178, n 19-22). Two women and an old man come to meet him with funerary candles, his mourners. With the question of his final destination still in the air, the poplar trees, symbols of nature, deny the possibility of his salvation: "dicen: No" ("Veremos," *Obras* 1: 437, l. 36). He has earned neither bread nor a kiss. On the other hand, the nightingale, symbol of artistic talent, assumes a wait-and-see posture: "Veremos" (*Obras* 1: 437, ll. 24-37).

The third part of the narrative reaches a conclusive answer on the question of immortality. Just as Pedro the Cruel's falcon fell dead at his feet as a sign of evil awaiting him, so, in Lorca, Don Pedro's "somber" horse lies inexplicably dead. If that dismal animal symbolizes his vital force, then he has acquired awareness of impotence. The city he has reached goes up in flames, as if Bethlehem, existential birth, had eluded him. Since nature intervenes in his life, the afternoon, a lost sheep, bleats the secret of his pain throughout the sky. His horse, now metamorphosed into a creature of fantasy, a unicorn, breaks its horn against crystal, an action possibly signifying the impotence of his imagination. The unicorn is one of absence, the absence of a beloved in the universe. A man, presumably Don Pedro himself, moves inland in tears, disoriented, powerless to find his guiding star to the north, or even the sailor lover situated to the south (cf. *Sahuquillo* 105-9). At the end of the narrative, Don Pedro dwells at the bottom of the lagoon, submerged, earthbound forever, victim to his own existential insufficiency (*Obras* 1: 438, ll. 46-63, 68-69).

When Lorca inserted "Don Pedro a caballo" in *Primer romancero gitano*, he sensed that the poem shared much in common with the other seventeen ballads. The imparting of Andalusianism to a Castilian theme like the legend of Pedro the Cruel meant implicitly endowing the hero with traits of the Andalusian *Volksgeist*. The three problems posed in the ballad, though at first applied by the poet to himself, later receive gypsy connotations. First, Don Pedro's objectless lament coincides with the pain of *cante jondo* (*Obras* 3: 209) and the *pena negra* which Lorca deems the "raíz del pueblo andaluz" (*Obras* 3: 344), the root of its collective character. Second, the insoluble question of life after death contributes to black pain: the lyrics of *cante jondo* pose a deep emotional problem whose only resolution is death, "la pregunta de las preguntas," a finale without solution (*Obras* 3: 206). Of black pain in *Romancero gitano*, Lorca has remarked, "Es un amor agudo a nada, con una seguridad de que la muerte (preocupación perenne de Andalucía) está respirando detrás de la puerta" (*Obras* 3: 344). In *Romancero gitano*, the gypsy hero Antoñito el Camborio creates art by tossing lemons from someone else's tree into water and changing it to gold. The art becomes lemonade for the delectation of the Civil Guards who arrest Antoñito (*Obras* 1: 417-8), while the artist succumbs to family members furious about his non-resistance to their traditional enemies, his uniformed captors (*Obras* 1: 420).

Moreover, "Don Pedro a caballo" bears a close relationship to the other two historical ballads. The three stem from a plurality of folkloric and learned sources, with a multiple venue as proof of their proximity to the spirit of the people. While critics have perceived this multiplicity in "Don Pedro a caballo," they have not in "Martirio de Santa Olalla."



Yet Lorca stresses as much by enigmatically stating that Olalla's "Mérida es andaluza como por otra parte lo es Tetuán" (*Obras* 3: 346). In short, many areas share the same balladic themes, compatible with the Andalusian ethos. Patron saint of more than 300 towns in Spain, Eulalia has lent her name to eighty more (Camisón). In Catalonia, thanks to his friend Salvador Dalí, Lorca in 1925 first visited Barcelona (Gibson 167), of which Saint Eulalia is co-patron along with Our Lady of Mercy. Lorca might have borrowed for his Andalusian gypsy Olalla elements not only from the Roman poet Prudentius (348-413?) writing on Saint Eulalia of Mérida, as critics have observed (*Primer* 201), but also from the Bishop of Barcelona Quiricus (d. 680) with his hymn on Saint Eulalia of Barcelona. Since Dalí in Lorca's company viewed the martyr Saint Sebastian, patron saint of Cadaquès, as a symbol of detached aestheticism (Gibson 167), Lorca made his own Eulalia a similar symbol. The balladic triptych on Saint Eulalia would concern the mystery of aesthetic creativity at the core of the Andalusian cultural spirit and would form part of a larger triptych on the same theme, with the autobiographical ballad on Don Pedro in the center and the one on Tamar and Amnon at the other end.

Within the larger threefold organization, Lorca structures "Martirio de Santa Olalla" as a smaller triptych (Scobie 296). The first part offers a historical background, "Panorama de Mérida," contrasting the leering Romans and Olalla, a gypsy version of Eulalia, moaning for redemption in *cante jondo* resonances. The central part, "El martirio," paints her tortures in terms compatible with Dalí's esthetics of "Holy Objectivity" (cf. Southworth 134-35).<sup>5</sup> The third part, "Infierno y gloria," views her judgment and apotheosis from an aesthetic distance, with crucifixion in the first half and possible resurrection in the second. She shares with Lorca's Don Pedro the Andalusian root sentiment of personal insufficiency. Around her, anti-Christian, pagan Roman roosters crow about their own personal power, the potency of their gods, and the weakness of the Christian God: "De cuando en cuando sonaban / blasfemias de cresta roja" (*Obras* 1: 433, ll. 13-14), like the Roman praetor challenged by Eulalia in Prudentius' hymn (Bodelón García 36-37, ll. 64, 99-100). Yet Lorca's Olalla chooses to moan ("gemir") for redemption, as in *Romans* 8: 22-30, where Saint Paul reminds Roman Christians, "Toda la creación gime a una, y a una está con dolores de parto" (*Sagrada Biblia* 1172). The moan paraphrases in Andalusian fashion Prudentius' characterization of Eulalia as yearning for heaven, that is, of extending herself toward the soil of her Father above: ("[T]endere se patris ad solium," Bodelón García 36-37, ll. 17-18). In this "gypsy" anthology her ballad originally bore the title, "Martirio de la gitana Santa Olalla de Mérida" (*Llanto* 201, n.). Accordingly, her moaning breaks goblets, like the screams of *cante jondo* singer Silverio Franconetti (*Llanto* 202, n. 15-16).

As in "Don Pedro a caballo" with unbridled horse, untamed passion prevails in Olalla's Mérida. To portray a "confusa / pasión de crines y espadas" (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 47-48), the "Panorama de Mérida" shows widespread indifference to a horse running amok among old soldiers of the city Emerita Augusta, originally founded to house Roman veterans or emeriti (*Primer* 272, n. 4). "Por la calle brinca y corre / caballo de larga cola, / mientras juegan o dormitan / viejos soldados de Roma" (*Obras* 1: 433, ll. 1-2). In an earlier era the animal might have served as a war instrument, but not in Eulalia's time: The Roman Empire is decaying, as reflected even in local flora. Minerva, part of the sacred trinity of gods of the Roman state, shares many attributes with the Greek Athena, among them the

sphere of warfare and the olive tree (Bell 84; Crosbie 78, n. 8). Hence, to describe a hill lined with menacingly leafless olive trees, the speaker asserts, “Medio monte de Minervas / abre sus brazos sin hojas” (*Obras* 1: 433, ll. 5-6). Minerva’s lifeless trees in Mérida symbolize sterile warfare, because, in persecuting the Christians, Rome turns her army against her own citizenry. Throughout *Romancero gitano* Lorca deplures internal strife (“Romance de la guardia civil española,” “Reyerta,” “Muerte de Antoñito el Camborio”).

In the central panel of Olalla’s poetic triptych, depicting the martyrdom proper, Olalla sublimates her pain into aesthetic experience. Lorca’s friend Dalí had converted Saint Sebastian into an embodiment of the “Holy Objectivity to which he felt contemporary art should aspire. The saint’s passivity, serenity, and detachment as his flesh is pierced by arrows [...] were the very qualities the painter aspired to express in his own life and work, as he explained to Federico” (Gibson 167). As an Andalusian variant on the Saint Sebastian theme, Olalla takes an active artistic stance towards her pain: “Flora desnuda se sube / por escalerillas de agua” (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 23-24). Alternative versions cited by Christian de Paepe from Lorca’s manuscript enable us to identify Flora, Roman goddess of flowers and spring, with twelve or thirteen-year-old Olalla in the springtime of her life as she undergoes martyrdom.<sup>6</sup> She removes herself from her earthly situation by scaling mysterious waters. The hint of gardens (“Flora”) with irrigating fountains may contain mystical symbolism borrowed from Lorca’s play producer Gregorio Martínez Sierra’s travel book, *Granada (guía emocional)*, equating the Generalife to “una escalinata de jardines que leva (sic!) á un mirador, —grados de la contemplación cada vez más perfecta, que llevan á la visión última de la serenidad espiritual” (135-36). Like Lorca’s gypsy from “Canción del gitano apaleado,” who transmutes a beating into art, even when calling for water—“Agua con peces y barcos. / Agua, agua, agua, agua” (*Obras* 1: 229)—Lorca’s Olalla metamorphoses pain into beauty. She resembles Lorca’s *cante jondo* artists of centuries later. Different aspects of her torture point to this artistic metamorphosis. Of Saint Sebastian, Dalí writes in painterly terms, “En certes regions del cos, les venes aparexien a la superficie amb llur blau intens de tempesta del Patinir, i descrivien corbes d’una dolorosa voluptuositat damunt el rosa coral de la pell” (53). Lorca’s reference to the flower goddess colors her veins green, and the allusion to mystic waters brings those vessels to the surface in a spout: “Un chorro de venas verdes / le brota de la garganta” (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 27-28). Lorca, sadistically fascinated like Dalí with amputated hands (Gibson 179), and probably alluding to the decapitation threatened against Saint Eulalia of Mérida (Bodelón García 38, l. 116), gracefully notes Olalla’s steadfastness in her faith, regardless of her pain: “Por el suelo, ya sin norma, / brincan sus manos cortadas / que aun pueden cruzarse en tenue / oración decapitada” (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 31-34).

The torture which Lorca stresses most is the removal of Olalla’s breasts. To embellish this hideous punishment, the Granadan poet remakes an image of Saint Teresa. When espousing the human soul, according to the saint, the Lord places that soul in His dwelling, the seventh and loftiest in the soul, “Porque así como la tiene en el cielo, deve tener en el alma una estancia donde sólo Su Majestad mora, y digamos, *otro cielo*” (*Obras* 1: 439, with my emphasis). Olalla’s maimed torso acquires a Teresian heavenliness: “Por los rojos agujeros / donde sus pechos estaban / se ven cielos diminutos / y arroyos de leche blanca” (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 35-38). The streams of milk recall the moaning for redemption with birth-pangs. Not only the Christian theme, but also a pagan motif

undergoes variation: “Mil arbolillos de sangre / le cubren toda la espalda / y oponen húmedos troncos / al bisturí de las llamas” (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 39-42). Since Olalla resembles Flora, presiding over springtime vegetation, her body has sprouted saplings to counter with their trunks the destructive surgery of her torturers’ fire. The worst torture Olalla endures drives home her helplessness in the cosmos. In “Sant Sebastià,” Dalí excoriates his foes, the “putrefacts” or philistines in esthetic culture (54); and in Lorca’s poem these “putrefacts,” disguised as yellowed, sere Roman centurions with gray skin, easily reach heaven, while poor Olalla has had to struggle to the same end (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 43-46).

The final part of the triptych, “Infierno y gloria,” presents her crucifixion and problematic salvation from a saint’s perspective of pure art, cleansed of sentimentality. Latinate concision prevails. Articles are omitted: “Noche tirante reluce”; “Nieve partida comienza”; “Ángeles y serafines” (*Obras* 1: 434, ll. 51, 55, 63, 73). Brief, one-line sentences abound, each full of symbolic substance. Quiricus’ Eulalia of Barcelona endured crucifixion, yet snow miraculously preserved her modesty: “In cruce suspenditur; / Corpus illic ad honorem / Nix polorum protegit” (Bodelón García 28, ll. 26-28). In Lorca’s dream vision, Olalla’s white body, dead on the cross, becomes wavy snow in repose: “Nieve ondulada reposa” (*Obras* 1: 435, l. 51). The speaker calls the cross a tree—“Olalla pende del árbol” (*Obras* 1: 435, l. 52; “Olalla muerta en el árbol” (*Obras* 1: 435, l. 56; “Olalla blanca en el árbol” (*Obras* 1: 435, l. 64)—perhaps to echo the old cherry tree trunk to which Dalí’s Saint Sebastian was bound. Moreover, critics observe the play of black and white, as in a charcoal drawing or one made with India ink to portray the martyr’s death as a distant artwork (*Primer* 278, n. 51). Her nude body, made of charcoal, smudges (“tizna”) the frozen air (*Primer* 278, ll. 53-54). The night is tense (“tirante”) with expectation as Olalla undergoes judgment. Urban scribes slowly prepare to record her legend: “Tinteros de las ciudades / vuelcan la tinta despacio” (*Primer* 278, ll. 57-58). According to local Barcelonese lore, devout Christians (“viri religiosi”) lower her from the cross, unnoticed by her guards, and enshroud her with pure balms (Renallus §255, 390). Lorca replaces the pious with tailor’s black mannequins—like the “maniquís” in Dalí’s essay on Saint Sebastian (54)—covering the white snow in long lines of mourning (*Obras* 1: 435, ll. 59-62). The mannequins are pictorial props to maintain the black and white of the poet’s sketch. Lorca attributes no religious meaning to the snowfall, rare in Barcelona and deemed miraculous by the devout Quiricus to cover the martyr’s nakedness (Bodelón García 28). In the black and white of Dalí’s dream vision of Saint Sebastian, the word “níquel” signifies metallic gray (Dalí 52). “Níquel” reappears in Lorca and applies to gatherers of Olalla’s relics, who form “escuadras de níquel,” armies of gray nickel robots, uniting the sharp points of her ribcage (*Obras* 1: 435, ll. 65-66).

After the black, white, and nickel sketch of Olalla’s judgment or “infierno,” her probable salvation (“gloria”) opens floodlights of dazzling white and bright colors. Not joy, but merely artistic effects of her apotheosis come to the forefront. With restraint, Lorca presents symbols of Olalla’s salvation like the Eucharistic cup, as if she were seated at the table of the Lord. An image of the Holy Chalice shines above skies scorched by martyr’s flames, while nature sings of her spiritual liberation. Lorca invokes old Spanish ballad tradition to capture the joyful reaction of nature. In “El prisionero,” the captive wistfully observed the freedom of other creatures: “Por el mes era de mayo / Cuando hace la

calor, / Cuando canta la calandria, / Y responde el ruiseñor” (*Romancero general* 2: 449). In the case of Eulalia, mythically perceived as the goddess Flora, it is as if springtime had returned amidst winter. Song emerges from the throats of the brook and from nightingales:

Una Custodia reluce  
sobre los cielos quemados,  
entre gargantas de arroyo  
y ruiseñores en ramos. (*Obras* 1: 435, ll. 67-70)

The alliteration of initial r-, seen in “El prisionero” and applied to the nightingale, returns here too. The calandra lark’s song cedes to the song of the brook.

In the final quatrain on Olalla’s glorification, Lorca could be combining the finales of Prudentius and Quiricus. At the end of the hymn to Eulalia of Mérida, Prudentius describes the play of lights and many colors in the mosaics adorning the tomb of the martyr (Bodelón García 42, l. 198 and n. 28). Quiricus narrates how she leaps with gladness (“Gestiet,” Bodelón García 29, l. 38) and rises skyward with rejoicing (“Gaudis adtollitur,” Bodelón García 29, l. 40). Lorca, like a master of color cinema before its invention, writes:

¡Saltan vidrios de colores!  
Olalla blanca en lo blanco.  
Ángeles y serafines  
dicen: Santo, Santo, Santo. (Bodelón García 29, ll. 71-74)

The leap attributed by Quiricus to Eulalia is transferred by the more detached Lorca to church windows suddenly emerging. Olalla’s whiteness fades into the blankness of the mystery of the Afterlife. The final two lines of the poem envelop her sainthood in folkloric formulas congenial to the Andalusian *Volksggeist*. The line “Ángeles y serafines,” though apparently redundant, nonetheless appears in a Trisagion sung by the García Lorca family (Otros 26). Daniel Devoto has traced the final line to religious *coplas*: “Los sacerdotes en misa / dicen: —Santo, santo, santo. / Los ángeles en el cielo / repiten el mismo canto” (145). The ending of Lorca’s ballad, therefore, serves as a stamp of approval of the Andalusian cultural spirit to Lorca’s synthesis of borrowings from Prudentius and Quiricus, filtered through Dalí.

The final historical ballad, “Thamar y Amnón,” like the preceding two, displays plural venue as evidence of contact with the spirit of the people. “El poeta se ha basado en buena medida en la tradición oral granadina, según ha demostrado (...) M. Alvar” (*Llanto* 212, n). Lorca’s brother Francisco had recorded a ballad on the theme in the Sacromonte. While Lorca went with Menéndez Pidal in his 1920 visit to the Albaicín in search of balladic folklore, they heard the gypsies sing of “Altamares” [Tamar] (Guillén 56), and the poet refers to this experience in his lecture-recital of *Romancero gitano*. To justify the biblical theme in terms of the Andalusian *Volksggeist*, Lorca, in the same lecture-recital, characterizes the ballad as “gitano-judío, como era Joselito, el Gallo, y son las gentes que pueblan los montes de Granada y algún pueblo del interior cordobés” (*Obras*

3: 346; cf 3, 317). Denizens of the Granadan hills and of the interior of Cordoba province bring to their recitation of the ballad on Tamar and Amnon something of the land in which they live.

Unlike its folkloric precedents Lorca's version of the biblical narrative follows "Don Pedro a caballo" in poeticizing the mystery of creativity while accenting the enigmatic note. A strange hierarchy emerges of creators and creatures, including a cruel Jehovah-figure, the implied author; King David, who sings his praises while flouting his laws; and the children of David, Thamar and Amnón, as talented in the arts as their father, yet as prey to their erotic passions as he. The first part introduces the fiction of a Davidic Israel, merciless yet beautiful, with evil premonitions as in "Don Pedro a caballo" and with an enigmatic creator. Moreover, the psalmist David governs a pastoral kingdom, marred with wars that raise doubts about the justification of his creativity. In the second part, the singing of melodious but frigid Thamar arouses Amnón's lust, while in the third his erotic overtures make use of impressive tropes, worthy of Don Juan, to seduce her. In the fourth, he translates body language into plastic art as he violates her. In the fifth, she engages in a symbolic gypsy wedding ceremony, metaphorically legitimizing her deflowering. In the sixth part, while an enraged Amnón flees, King David suspends his psalm-making and, implicitly, his praise of the creator. Hence, all six parts concern aesthetic experience while questioning the web of creation.

Many elements of the ballad touch upon the folk ethos. Because of the mythical component in *Romancero gitano*, even workaday elements present in the anthology become, in the poet's words, "misterioso e indescifable, como el alma misma de Andalucía" (*Obras* 3: 342). The myth of the mystery of spring amidst winter came forth, we saw, in "Martirio de Santa Olalla"; and the myth of the mystery of eroticism overleaping taboos like incest prevails in "Thamar y Amnón." This poem begins with the moon spinning in the sky, foreshadowing evil (*Obras* 1: 439: l. 1). That heavenly body overlooks waterless land, symbolizing sexual frustration in Lorca's mature theater (*Obras* 2: 717-18, 1043, 1055). The first part of this six-part ballad, like the opening of "Martirio de Santa Olalla," paints the landscape in ominous terms. Summertime sows "rumores de tigre y llama" (*Obras* 1: 439, l. 4), which critics interpret as a thunderstorm (*Llanto* 213, n. 3-4). However, the mythical substratum of the image points to a deeper interpretation: some mysterious hand, belonging to a hidden deity (the implied author), is planting seeds of ferocity (*tigre*) and hot passion (*llama*).

The biblical setting establishes the mystery of creativity at a cultural level. Above rooftops sound "nervios de metal," symbolizing harp music (cf. *Obras* 1: 959). David's psalms resound with harmonious praise of the Lord. The poetic voice paints an apparently peaceful pastoral country: "Aire rizado venía / con los balidos de lana" (*Obras* 1: 439; ll. 7-8). However, the airy ovine imagery contrasts with the thunderous tiger in the sky, calling into question the genuineness and piety of David's art: he has acted as a tiger among his enemies and even among his subjects towards their beautiful wives. The nation, more dominated by ferocity, has not prospered under its kings. The ground offers to view a surface full of scars. Searing sunlight cauterizes wounds on the battle-scarred earth (*Obras* 1: 439, ll. 9-12). The psalmist who plucks the harp with one hand brandishes

the sword with the other. Between the lines of Lorca's ballad hovers a mystery: Can the sacred art of a sower of discord find justification?

The second part of "Thamar y Amnón" questions the quality of creativity within King David's family. Thamar enjoys a musical gift like her father, but lives dreamily aloof. Amnón, though eloquent like his father, has inherited the king's bestial penchant for trampling social norms to satisfy erotic longings. Thamar moves her half-brother to sexual passion with her music, the way that, in another gypsy myth, Lorca's heroine Preciosa aroused the wind with dancing and tambourine-playing (*Obras* 1: 395). Just as *cante jondo* imitates "el canto de las aves" (*Obras* 3: 200), so Thamar dreamily sings, "pájaros en su garganta" (*Obras* 1: 439, ll. 13-14). The loveless, dreamy detachment of her art takes accompaniment by "panderos fríos" and "cítaras enlunadas" (*Obras* 3: 439, ll. 15-16). The instruments, characterizing the virginity she cherishes (*Llanto* 213), makes her akin to Preciosa, Lorca's gypsy virgin playing her "luna de pergamino" (*Obras* 1: 395, l. 1). However, music affirming chasteness may actually jeopardize that purity and raise the question of its own justification.

Lorca knows that the image of Cupid's arrow in Amnón's body forms part of Spanish folklore. The version of Tamar and Amnón present in Durán's *Romancero general* holds a noteworthy allusion to Cupid: "Por los ojos de la hermana / Flechado el hermano está" (1: §452, 299). As a result, Lorca accumulates a series of phallic symbols which eventually culminate in the rape. The poetic voice compares Thamar's naked body to an "agudo norte de palma" (*Obras* 1: 395, l. 18), with the palm tree a phallic symbol. Amnón observes her from a tower, a similar symbol, while the foam of sea-born Venus ("espuma") girds his loins and passionate shuddering ("oscilaciones") agitates his manly beard (*Obras* 1: 395, ll. 25-28). As Thamar stretches her naked body out on the terrace, Cupid's arrow ("flecha") meets its mark between the teeth of the observer Amnón (*Obras* 1: 395, ll. 29-32), his appetite whetted for her body. A related series of metaphors concerns the blindness of love, mythologically attributed to the lovegod. Sexuality blinds him to social considerations and drives him, as in the Bible, to the brink of illness. An allusion to blind, winged Cupid, projected onto Amnón's chamber, magnifies his lovesickness: "Toda la alcoba sufría, / con sus ojos llenos de alas" (*Obras* 1: 440, ll. 39-40). Love's blindness underlies the following quatrain, with its reference to the hardness of the moon, portrayed as well in "Romance de la luna luna" (*Obras* 1: 393, l. 8):

Amnón estaba mirando  
la luna redonda y baja,  
y vio en la luna los pechos  
durísimos de su hermana. (*Obras* 1: 440, ll. 33-36)

Arcane forces enslave Amnón to his passion. The poetic voice presents him as a prisoner not only to the moon's maddening influence, but also to the sway of the land. In mid-afternoon, as he languishes in bed, the heat produces such thirst, that forced silence gushes like well water compressed into jars (*Obras* 1: 440, l. 45). In a primitive, mythical country where the tiger roams, mossy tree-trunks conceal a singing cobra (*Obras* 1: 440, l. 48), voice of prohibited temptation (*Llanto* 214, n. 47-48). The song of the serpent is a

striking metaphor for Amnón's sensual body language, and raises the question of its justification in this world-order.

Amnón's seduction of Thamar displays the theatrics of a Don Juan, an inspired product of the Andalusian collective spirit operating in Seville (cf *Obras* 1: 181). According to the ballad in Durán's *Romancero general*, "Grandes males finge Amnón / Por amores de Tamar" (1: §425, 299). Lorca's Thamar elegantly pantomimes respect for the feigned sufferer through her silence: "Thamar entró silenciosa" (*Obras* 1: 440, l. 53). The adjective *silenciosa* contrasts with the past participle of the verb *silenciar* in the following line to show that Amnón has purposely arranged the absence of sound in his chamber: "[E]n la alcoba silenciada" (*Obras* 1: 440, l. 54). Having set the stage, he allows Thamar to enter his bedchamber bathed in shades of blue with the sun half-blocked out, "color de vena y Danubio, / turbia de huellas lejanas" (*Obras* 1: 440, ll. 55-56). Following the physiologically precise vein color, the Danube, anachronistic in a Bible tale, suggests the musical commonplace of Strauss's *Blue Danube*. The waltz, denoting color, also connotes pseudo-sentimentality (cf. *Obras* 1: 535-36; 537-38). Lorca's humor at Amnón's expense admits a bedroom floor soiled with footprints of faraway waltzers—"huellas lejanas"—perhaps feminine victims of previous conquests.

The rhetoric of Amnón's courtship shows the skillful workings of the *Volksggeist*. Durán's *Romancero general* (1: §452, 299) displays the tradition of Amnón's enchantment with his half-sister's eyes, which have smitten him with Cupid's arrow. Hence Lorca's Amnón, brilliantly varying the commonplace of love's blindness, asks Thamar to dazzle him, to erase his eyes, with her unblinking gaze, lovely as dawn: "Thamar, bórrame los ojos / con tu fija madrugada" (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 57-58). Guided by his natural passion, Amnón aspires to adorn Thamar's person with his own, as he adorns his speech with alluring imagery: "Mis hilos de sangre tejen / volantes sobre tu falda" (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 59-60). She, however, rejects his art. His kisses sting and annoy like "avispas y viente-cillos / en doble enjambre de flautas" (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 63-64), wind instruments not unlike the "dulce gaita ausente" played by the lascivious wind to woo Preciosa (*Obras* 1: 396, l. 24). Amnón responds with a metaphor similar to one in "La casada infiel," on a similarly taboo love: "Sus muslos se me escaparon / como peces sorprendidos" (*Obras* 1: 407, ll. 32-33). If fish symbolize sexual vitality, Amnón remarks on Thamar's: "Thamar, en tus pechos altos / hay dos peces que me llaman" (*Obras* 1: 441, l. 65). In her fingertips he senses roses, bouquets to reward his groping hands (*Obras* 1: l. 66).

The fourth part of the ballad prepares a metaphorical artwork masking while embellishing the incest. Since horses can symbolize male sexuality, as in "Don Pedro a caballo," the whinnying of the king's hundred horses in the palace patio euphemizes the mustering of Amnón's virility for the conquest (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 69-70). Lorca converts Thamar's blond beauty into a cubist portrait—"Sol en cubos" (*Obras* 1: 441, l. 71)—as she resists "la delgadez de la parra," with the vine symbolizing Dionysian pleasure and the slenderness referring to Amnón's frame, wasted with erotic yearning (2 *Samuel* 13, 2; *Llanto* 213, n. 25). Warm corals—"Corales tibios" (*Obras* 1: 441 ll. 75-76)—or the hot, hard pinkness of Amnón's sexuality, execute a work of art: "Dibujan arroyos en rubio mapa," where the map belongs to blond Thamar (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 75-76). Is this sketch justified as a beautiful work of nature? The mystery of creativity returns again.

However, according to Lorca (*Obras* 1: 181), Don Juan Tenorio of legend suffers the bitterness of dissatisfaction with his conquests. Amnón's violence plunge his father's palace into consternation, and after taking his pleasure, the seducer finds Thamar's company infuriating. Screams replace the harp-music of the beginning of this ballad (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 77-78). In 2 *Samuel* 13: 19 Thamar "rasgó la amplia túnica que vestía y, puestas sobre la cabeza las manos, se fue gritando" (*Sagrada Biblia* 330). Lorca's dehumanizing metaphors accumulate onomatopoeic stops (*Qu-*, *-p-*, *p-*, *t-*, *c-*), added to the harsh double *-r-* and imitating the rasping sound of the tearing: "Qué espesura de puñales / y túnicas desgarradas" (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 79-80). Not even a symbolic gesture of gypsy society can mend Thamar's injury. Alvar (248) points out Lorca's intercalation of what we may view as a creative product of the Andalusian spirit, the gypsy *alboreá*, a secret wedding rite, where maidens surround the bride and gather up the remnants of her virginity: "Alrededor de Thamar / gritan vírgenes gitanas / y otras recogen las gotas / de su flor martirizada" (*Obras* 1: 441, ll. 85-89). The wedding never takes place. In Lorca the poetic voice depicts the unfulfilled Amnón's flight on his Andalusian mount: "Violador enfurecido, / Amnón huye con su jaca" (*Obras* 1: 442, ll. 93-94). Amnón's escape makes him a figure of an old gypsy song, Lorca's favorite *zorongo* (Gibson 309-10). This echo of folksong replaces David's harp-playing: "Y cuando los cuatro cascos / son cuatro resonancias, / David con unas tijeras / cortó las cuerdas del arpa" (*Obras* 1: 442, ll. 97-100). In the *zorongo* appear the words, "Los cascos de tu caballo / cuatro sollozos de plata" (*Obras* 2: 1175). Hence, the echoes ("resonancias") yield atavistic recognition of sung experience. David's destructive act, presumably to protest the will of a God he once praised with harp music, questions the meaning of the beauty derived from the creativity of the main characters and the implied author.

The three historical ballads, appealing to readers' atavism, operate over a vast geographic area affected by old literary traditions. All three employ foreshadowing, characterizing primitive writing. All express powerlessness vis-à-vis uncontrollable cosmic forces. All offer aesthetic responses with problematic results: in the autobiographic center of the triptych, a quixotic, guitar-playing knight's descent to the bottom of a lagoon and personal oblivion as a poet; on the left, a virginal mystic's aesthetic contemplation of her pain, elevating her at best to the threshold of heaven; and on the right, the interaction of a disparate couple—a frigid lunar maiden whose singing leads to her violation and who vainly resorts to a compensatory social fiction; and her Tenorio half-brother, whose eloquence and artistic body language momentarily gratify him, but ultimately enrage and frustrate him. Black pain, basis of the Andalusian *Volksgeist* for Lorca, prevails at the beginning and poses problems at the end. Falla has taught him the unique mystery and beauty of this pain, while Durán, based on Wolf, has enabled him to appreciate a people's history as its greatest creation.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> To simplify in-text referencing to the list of Lorca's works in the Works Cited, references to the different editions of the poet's works will appear in the following manner: *Obras completas* as *Obras*; de Paepe's edition as *Primer*; García-Posada's edition as *Llanto*; and Hernández's edition as *Otros*.

<sup>2</sup> Martín complicates that argument by unpersuasively hypothesizing that Don Pedro also stands for Don Pedro de Soto de Rojas. Yet Lorca's interest in the Gongorine Soto de Rojas dates back only to 1926, when he lectures on Góngora prior to the 1927 tricentennial (*Obras* 3: 1225-26).

<sup>3</sup> Morris, in his richly documented book *Son of Andalusia*, exploring Andalusian folk-customs and popular verse, demonstrates the "fundamental debt [Lorca's] work owes to his Andalusian identity and heritage" (6). However, the present study deals with *Volksggeist* as theory and its probable presence in helping to shape *Romancero gitano*.

<sup>4</sup> *Volksggeist* theory entered Spain numerous times and in many forms, not only during the Romantic period, but also afterwards. P. Ribas (127) compares post-Romantic philosopher G. W. F. Hegel's conception of *Volksggeist* to Unamuno's notion of *intrahistoria*. Both ideas allude to a "collective soul," conceivable as a community's sense of appreciation of the set of values and traditions produced by that community, which identifies with them. Yet *intrahistoria* looks to the past as basis of the present, while Hegel's *Volksggeist* breaks with the past, conserved in potency and energized with new spirit. Ribas (129) concludes that while a tangential relationship exists between the two notions, Unamuno had little acquaintance with Hegel's thought. E. Inman Fox's *La invención de España* studies the definition of the Spanish national character by mid-nineteenth through twentieth-century Spanish liberals, including Spanish Krausists, Regenerationists, Unamuno, Ganivet, "Azorín," Menéndez Pidal and his school of philology, Ortega y Gasset, A. Machado, the Centro de Estudios Históricos, and schools of landscape painters like Zuloaga and Regoyos. This list is not exhaustive and could extend to the post-Civil War period, when it would include works by A. Castro, the mature Laín Entralgo, J. Marías, and others.

<sup>5</sup> Lorca was very affected by Dalí's vision of Saint Sebastian's martyrdom as a symbol of "Holy Objectivity." In September 1926 Lorca asked fellow poet Jorge Guillén for a photograph of Berruguete's image of that saint for lectures he was preparing at the time on Sebastian (Southworth 134-35). Christian de Paepe situates the composition of "Martirio de Santa Olalla" around early November 1926 (37-38). Hence the saint could have symbolized an Andalusian manifestation of "Holy Objectivity."

<sup>6</sup> "Flora desnuda sonrie sonrie desnuda desnuda se aleja / evade sube / en por escalerillas de agua" (*Primer* 275, n 23-26). Lorca rejects the idea of her smiling, probably because her aloofness would link her to Dalí's Saint Sebastian. Her identification with a pagan Roman goddess shows that for Lorca Roman paganism and early Christianity in Spain were not far apart, and that Roman persecutions made little sense.

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