

Flamenco in audiovisual media. Causes of this new symbiosis and its impact on the construction of flamenco's identity today.

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Abstract

From the beginnings of the media, flamenco has used language and structures to forge a new identity. Furthermore, the power of audiovisual media (TV, cinema, radio, Internet) has brought the flamenco of Andalusia to appear almost anywhere in the world. This study will attempt to analyze the origins of the relationship between flamenco and audiovisual media, how it developed and the current state, how language media has transformed the imaginary flamenco and how has been perceived since it has been used by the media. This work attempts to address from a musicological perspective flamenco analysis given in the media, the visual language and their correspondence with the musical. We will analyze the construction of a new flamenco discourse and a treatment of the visual and spaces of the flamenco genre, demonstrating the influence of the audiovisual in the construction of musical identity.

Keywords: Flamenco, audiovisual media, identity, cinema, television.

Audiovisual media has helped shape the musical identity and aesthetics of flamenco. Using the language and symbols of the audiovisual media, flamenco has gained a new shape, extrapolated outside their place of origin through the mass media and new communication channels (Escudero Díaz 2010: 119). As an example, programs broadcast by Spanish National Television (TVE) of flamenco content during the seventies influenced the creation of a new discourse on this genre, serving to support the theoretical power of flamencology since the mid-fifties governed studies and research on flamenco, which coincided with the "stage of flamenco art appreciation" (Washabaugh 2005: 161). However, the binomial flamenco-media has had little impact on

research. On the contrary, there are theories about the relationship between music and image, although most of them have focused between cinema and music. Because of the importance and presence of music in these media, he feels Musicology heightened interest in this world, being evidenced by the increasing number of publications and conferences on this subject. As Joan-Elies Adell says “no traditional art has been so affected, both in nature and its means of creation and dissemination, the emergence of new mass media and technologies for recording, broadcast and sound synthesis as music “(Adell 2004: 100)¹. Due to the ubiquity of music today, as claimed Jaume Radigales and Teresa Fraile Prieto "it is important to develop new frameworks to study music, because it can be understood and studied from the contexts that produce it" (Radigales and Fraile Prieto 2006: 100). In this context, there are theories about the relationship between music and image, although most of them have been focused on the relationship between cinema and music. Despite the importance and presence of music in these media, musicology has not been interested (until a few years ago, thankfully) in this world, judging it as a minor issue. In the case of flamenco, musicology still has a score to settle with popular music and urban popular music. Although flamenco is included in the field of ethnomusicology, its presence in musicological studies is still small. To this we can add to the importance of context, in others words, the market, industry and the society they are present in both flamenco and the media. Studies approaching from areas such as sociology or communication Studies complement the contributions from the musicology can be made. What cannot be doubted is that the evolution of visual culture has been made possible by the development of new technologies. Today there are many manners for the enjoyment of flamenco in all its forms (audio, visual, interactive, etc.) Those have been enhanced by their presence in the media. An analysis of the history and formation of the image of flamenco through the media, will help us understand its current status.

¹ Original text: “ningún arte tradicional se ha visto tan afectado, tanto en su naturaleza como en sus medios de creación y difusión, por la aparición de los nuevos medios masivos de comunicación y las tecnologías de grabación, de retransmisión y de síntesis sonora como el de la música”. Henceforth, we use the translation but noting the reference of the original text.

The issue of identity is undoubtedly one of the most complex that can be treated in the study of certain audio-visual products. In the case of flamenco, that identity is related to nationalism, by the linking of cultural identity with folk art -Spanish and flamenco- (Steingress 1998: 23). Flemish identity may relate to the "national spirit" with the "Andalusian feeling" or the "disembodied reason", and within each of these adjectives are implicit special interests. You can see flamenco as a tourist attraction, but it needs a support from the media: this is the aim of the media. It is apparent in numerous films twentieth century how stereotypes abounded: castanets, revelry, guitars, etc. being the reflection of Spanish culture. Most TV shows that during those years gave Spanish National Television (TVE), one way or another an identity by showing a type of flamenco: the gypsies, family reunions, that of singer and guitarist, etc. Despite trying to show through a flamenco documentary "realistic" or a pure performance to the latest productions are ignored other flamenco from the seventies and eighties began to have force: the flamenco-fusion or New Flamenco, for example. As for the film, Andalusian picturesque was a keynote recurring throughout the films of these years. Some authors have studied the relationship between cinema and national identity. As Teresa Fraile says:

The cinema, in particular, has served to build and strengthen the national consciousness from the beginning: it is both shaping and reflecting identities because it facilitates construction of the cultural imaginary and its consolidation. By choosing a few items and the exclusion of others forms a defined knowledge of the realities coming: One of the clearest examples in our history is the use of cinema as a means of propaganda of the Franco regime. By this we mean the historical film, patriotic, but also a kind of movie where popular music occupied an important place for its connotations, as was the film of the couplet "(Fraile Prieto 2009: 373).

The cultural manifestations of the "folk art" were considered "true", "original" and "archaic", which is why in our case flamenco is considered to in terms of ethnic stereotype attributes of the Andalusian and Spanish society. This has given rise to various discourses and constructs "ethnic" since according to Felipe Pedrell that feeds the idea that "music can be a true expression of the idiosyncrasies of a people "(Martí i Pérez 1998: 127): flamenco will be considered a telltale sign of Andalusian heritage. With these assumptions, the identification of flamenco (ethnicity) with the state (politics) is the next grade.

Furthermore, with regard to cultural policy, ministers Franco insisted on creating a single national identity through the representation of Spain as a unified set of cultural diversity (Washabaugh 2005: 44). Hence the use of folklore and the media (in this case the public television) as instruments and tools to carry out the call nacionalflamenquismo (ibidem: 45).

Flamenco and audiovisual media are concepts that have been treated from almost all disciplines. However, relationships between flamenco and audiovisual media have led to the formation of different identities and stereotypes depending on the mass media: film, television, internet, etc. Studies of film music are becoming more numerous and reflect the interest of musicologists to this type of new construction and that implies many parameters needed to study. On the other hand, television is also being devoted to studies of music used, but due to the broad type of content on offer (news, contests, documentaries.) there is still much to be done (and analyzed).

These elements must be studied in more detail, since concepts such as identity, ethnicity and gypsies are the result of the symbiosis between culture and society and require a re-vision through the audiovisual prism. TV programs like *Rito y geografía del cante* (TVE 1971) can be a great object of study for such questions. This kind of production fomented creation a Flemish identity, and through the media, were distributed in other countries like the U.S. or France, for example. In short, the flamenco and the audiovisual media have been used to create a Spanish cultural identity and have been used as advertised or tourist attraction.

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Author's biography

Musicologist and Master in *Spanish Music* for University of Salamanca. His research focuses on flamenco in the audiovisual media and the issues related to it: history, identity, evolution, etc. He has published several papers related to this subject. He is working on his PhD thesis *Flamenco in the audiovisual media. Analysis and evolutionary study of the musical identity of flamenco in TVE (1963-1993)* in the University of Extremadura.