

EXPLORING MUSICAL NARRATIVE IN FOUR SONGS FROM
MANUEL DE FALLA'S *SIETE CANCIONES POPULARES ESPAÑOLAS*

by

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(Under the Direction of James Kim and Emily Gertsch)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents a narrative analysis of four movements of Manuel de Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, employing Byron Almén's narratological method as the primary analytical framework. Understanding the narrative of a musical work is helpful for performers, as it allows them to express the music with a deeper understanding. Currently, there are no published narrative analyses of *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, and I hope that my analyses will provide performers and teachers with new ideas that they can integrate into their interpretation, performance, and teaching.

INDEX WORDS: Manuel de Falla, *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, musical narrative

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B.M. Columbus State University, 1999

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2025

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May 2025

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Gladys Perez and Miguel Holguin-Veras.

Mom, your love for academic pursuits and strong will made me resilient and gave me the strength to achieve this degree. Dad, your passion for music and ability to follow your dreams have been a constant source of inspiration. I miss you so much and hope you are proud of me.

To my sister Gina, who has been present at every step, thank you so much for your love and support.

To my cello professors, Slobodan Veljkovic, who accepted me as a cello student when I was 17 years old and dedicated hours to help me become a cellist, and to Martha Gerschefski, whose acceptance as your student was a dream come true—I am forever grateful. To Dr. Moises Molina, who helped me become a better cellist and went above and beyond as a professor and a friend. To my childhood piano professors, Ivan Dominguez and Lillian Brugal, who were more than teachers, they were and still are parental figures.

To my children, Miguel, Hermes, Ernesto, and Gisela, who have lovingly endured my long hours at UGA and the challenges of having a mom who balances work and study.

Finally, to my beloved husband Hermes, who supported me in every way during these four years. I could not have asked for a more loving and supportive partner—you complete me!

I love you all!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my professors at UGA. To Dr. David Starkweather, for accepting me into the program and helping me maneuver through my health challenges. To Dr. Naomi Graber, your class was my first after years away from the classroom, and it reawakened my passion for learning. To Dr. Peter Jutras and Dr. Grace Huang, for welcoming me into the Piano Pedagogy program. To Ms. Kathleen Powell in the graduate office, for providing invaluable support during tough times. To Dr. James Kim, for his patience and understanding. And lastly, to Dr. Emily Gertsch, I cannot express enough how grateful I am. I learned so much in your classes, and they were extremely fun. Your support was crucial to my graduation, and I will be thankful forever.

Thank you to Vilma Peguero, whose unwavering support has made it possible for me to pursue my studies in the USA. Her dedication and encouragement since my childhood have been invaluable. And to Jose Santana, my former student, who has been a tremendous help with my classes throughout this process. Their kindness and assistance have been instrumental in my journey, and I am eternally grateful for their contributions.

A special thanks to the medical team that kept me going: Dr. Amena M. Imtiaz neurologist, Areigna Preston, and the team of physical therapists at Duluth Physio and Duluth Chiropractor. You carried me through this degree and guided me to the finish line.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of my earliest recital memories involves playing the cello transcription of *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* (Seven Popular Spanish Songs) by Manuel de Falla. Each song is unique in form and meaning and has been transcribed for several instruments. This dissertation presents a narrative analysis of four movements of Manuel de Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, employing Byron Almén's narratological method as the primary analytical framework. The legacy of Manuel de Falla lives on through his compositions, which are still performed globally. Falla accomplished something remarkable by blending Spanish folk music, particularly from Andalusia, with classical forms. This unique style continues to be admired and studied by musicians and scholars alike.

Manuel de Falla

Manuel María de los Dolores Falla y Matheu (November 23, 1876 – November 14, 1946) was born in Cádiz, Spain, and is considered one of the most distinguished Spanish composers of the 20th century. The following biographical information of the composer is drawn from his main biographer, James Pahissa.¹ Not much is known about his early life, other than that he took piano lessons from his mother until the family moved to Madrid. In Madrid, he studied composition with Felipe Pedrell, who inspired him to research 16th-century Spanish music, folk music, and zarzuela.

¹ Jaime Pahissa, *Manuel de Falla: His Life and Works*, trans. Jean Wagstaff (London: Museum Press, 1954), 8.

This research led Falla to fall in love with the musical styles of Spain, and he dedicated the rest of his life to composing and educating the world about his native music through his use of Andalusian flamenco melodic rhythms, imitating the effects of the guitar in the accompaniment of solos, and incorporating Cante Jondo melodies.² During those years, under the guidance of Pedrell, he composed *La Vida es Breve* (A Brief Life) in 1905, a year in which he won two prizes: one as a pianist and the other for *La Vida es Breve*.³

In 1907, Falla moved to Paris, where he met the most prominent composers of the period. Among these were Claude Debussy, Paul Dukas, and Maurice Ravel. Although Falla was actively involved in the musical world in the City of Lights, this was not his most prolific period.⁴ His best-known works composed in Paris were his first piano pieces and art songs. Maurice Ravel's influence on Falla's work can be seen in the compositions he created after his return to Madrid in 1914.⁵ Right before his departure from Paris in 1914, Falla composed *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* a work that, according to Pahissa, was the "most popular set of Spanish songs ever written."⁶

According to José Pérez Alonso, the esteem and gratitude that Falla had for Debussy are evident in many of his writings and music. Falla noted that Debussy experienced live Spanish music from cantaores (singers), tocaores (musicians), and bailaores (dancers) at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, rather than from theoretical books. This live experience allowed Debussy to precisely evoke the spirit of Spanish music without ever having visited Spain.⁷

² Ibid.

³ Michael Christoforidis, "Behind the Music: Manuel de Falla's Spanish Dances," *New World Symphony News* (December 5, 2022,) <https://www.nws.edu/news/2022/behind-the-music-manuel-de-fallas-spanish-dances/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Linton E. Powell, *A History of Spanish Piano Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p.158.

⁶ Pahissa, *Manuel de Falla: His Life and Works*, pp. 76-77.

⁷ Pérez Alonso, Rubén. "Manuel De Falla's Siete Canciones Populares Españolas (1914): Study and Transcription for Horn and Piano." *University Of North Texas*, 2021, pp. 8-9.

In her 1995 dissertation, Elizabeth Seitz examines the importance of Falla's seven years in Paris on the development of his mature compositional style.⁸ Seitz asserts that Falla's absorption of the styles of the French impressionists, most notably Ravel and Debussy, influenced his Parisian works, including *Pièces espagnoles*, *Trois mélodies*, and *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*.⁹ Seitz asserts that these three pieces illustrate how Falla's mature style illustrates the juxtaposition of popular and folk styles from his native Spain with the more advanced harmonic and orchestration techniques of the French impressionists.¹⁰

Falla's stay in Paris (1907-1914) was of vital importance to his recognition as an international composer. Paris, during this time, was the cultural capital of Europe, and Falla reinforced his relationship with fellow Spaniards settled in Paris such as composer Isaac Albéniz and piano virtuoso Ricardo Viñes. Falla wrote *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* at the end of this period in Paris (1914), but the premiere took place in Madrid a year later. Premieres of Falla's works in the French capital included his *Cuatro Piezas Españolas* and *Trois melodies* (1910). *Vida Breve*, composed ten years before, was premiered officially in 1914 in Paris at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique, preceded by a previous performance in Nice in 1913. Falla's return to Spain in 1914 was conditioned by the beginning of World War I and the composer's frail economic standing.¹¹

Falla returned to Madrid in 1914, where he reached his compositional maturity. He wrote the ballet *El Amor Brujo* (Love, the Magician) in 1915, which embodies Andalusian folk music. In 1916, he composed *Noches en los Jardines de España* (Nights in the Gardens of Spain), a work

⁸ Elizabeth Anne Seitz, *Manuel de Falla's Years in Paris, 1907-1914* (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1995), 13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹¹ Pérez Alonso, Rubén. "Manuel De Falla's Siete Canciones Populares Españolas (1914): Study and Transcription for Horn and Piano." *University Of North Texas*, 2021, pp. 8–9.

for piano and orchestra structured as a suite in three movements that evokes the Andalusian atmosphere, along with the exoticism inherent in the Moorish invasions of Spain. This work was later rescored for the now-famous ballet *El Sombrero de Tres Picos* (The Three-Cornered Hat) in 1919.¹²

Falla moved to Granada in 1921, and he lived there until 1939. During this period, he composed several works under the influence of Igor Stravinsky in a neoclassical style. The most prominent of these compositions was the harpsichord concerto written in 1926.¹³ Falla left Spain after the assassination of his best friend Federico Garcia Lorca and after the rise to power of the dictator Franco, and he lived in Argentina until his death in 1946.¹⁴

Siete Canciones Populares Españolas

Written at the end of his stay in Paris in 1914, *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* is undoubtedly Falla's most famous set of Spanish songs for soprano and piano. It has been transcribed for violin, cello, French horn, harp, viola, and various chamber ensembles. According to Pahissa, this set of songs was first commissioned by Madame Ida Godebska from Málaga, who worked at the Opéra Comique in Paris.¹⁵ Falla refused to allow the composition to be presented in the Parisian theater, as he considered it an inappropriate venue for his work. According to Christoforidis, this was because Falla saw this song cycle as a high form of art song, which is why he withheld them from the soprano who commissioned them; he feared they would be performed

¹² Hess, C. (2001). Falla (y Matheu), Manuel de. *Grove Music Online*. Retrieved 15 Nov. 2024, from <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000009266>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hess, C. A., *Sacred passions: the life and music of Manuel de Falla* (Oxford University Press 2009), p. 213.

¹⁵ Pahissa, *Manuel de Falla*, pp. 76-77.

in a setting that was not prestigious enough for art song.¹⁶ *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* differs from late nineteenth-century Spanish arrangements of Cantos populares by being more sensitive to the rhythms and tones of the melodies and using advanced harmonies. It also relates to the nineteenth-century canción andaluza, but this style and its French imitation, the Espagnolade, are more evident in Falla's "Seguidille" from *Trois mélodies* (1909-1910). Unlike the *Cantos populares* and *Canciones Andaluzas*, which were mainly performed in salons in Spain and France, Falla saw *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* as art songs and tried to keep the cycle away from those circles.¹⁷

Siete Canciones Populares Españolas brings together the existing traditions of the Spanish repertoire to create something new and original, showcasing an artistic value never before seen in Spanish music.¹⁸ A defining aspect of Falla's romanticism is his profound interest in spiritual and mystical subjects. He was known for his strong religious convictions and fascination with spiritual phenomena, which is evident in his work *El Amor Brujo*, which deals with themes of sorcery and ghosts.

Siete Canciones Populares Españolas is the result of the inspiration of Falla on the popular music of his country. Jaime Pahissa wrote the following in the composer's biography, with the approval of Manuel Da Falla:

... sometimes the melody was purely folklore in character, at other times less so and sometimes wholly original. For example, the first song, 'El paño Moruno', is the same as the well-known popular air. The melody of 'Asturiana' is also taken from the popular one, but the interesting accompaniment gives it a new guise. There is also a good deal of folklore

¹⁶ Christoforidis, Michael. "Manuel de Falla's siete canciones populares españolas: The composer's personal library, Folksong models and the creative process." *Anuario Musical*, no. 55, 24 Jan. 2019, pp. 16, <https://doi.org/10.3989/anuariomusical.2000.i55.231>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cristina Urchueguía Schölzel, "Aspectos Compositivos en las Siete Canciones Populares Españolas 1914/15" *Anuario Musical* 51 (1996): 177-201.

in ‘*Seguidilla Murciana*’; but most of the ‘*Jota*’ is Falla’s own, merely based on the popular model. The ‘*Nana*’ is an Andalusian cradle song—the first music he had ever heard from his mother’s lips before he was old enough to think... In the ‘*Polo*’ there is also a great deal which is original.¹⁹

Siete Canciones Populares Españolas is important not only because Falla is one of the most significant composers in Spain, but also because he distinguished between authentic Spanish music and music written in the Spanish style. In other words, merely reproducing melodies and rhythms is insufficient to capture the true spirit of Spain. Falla noted that this distinction applied not only to Spanish composers but also to those from other countries.²⁰

This composition marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of Falla’s musical style, driven in part by his renewed focus on folksong and its settings. This work likely spurred Falla’s deeper and more direct exploration of Spanish folklore in the years that followed. The unique stylization of Spanish music in *Polo*, *Jota*, and *Nana* significantly influenced Falla’s later works: *El Amor Brujo* (1914-15), *El Sombrero De Tres Picos* (1916-19), and *Fantasia Baetica* (1919). While these pieces still incorporate some folk elements from printed collections, they represent an original and powerful synthesis of predominantly southern Spanish folklore within a contemporary musical framework.²¹

According to Falla, the rhythmic or melodic accompaniment is as important as the song itself. Inspiration, therefore, is to be found directly in the people, and those who do not see it so will only achieve a more or less ingenious imitation of what they originally set out to do.²²

¹⁹ Pahissa, Manuel de Falla, pp. 77-78.

²⁰ Pahissa, *Manuel de Falla: His Life and Works*, 88.

²¹ Christoforidis, Michael. “Manuel de Falla’s *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*: The composer’s personal library, Folksong models and the creative process.” *Anuario Musical*, no. 55, 24 Jan. 2019, pp. 213–235.

²² Falla, M. de. (1979). *On music and musicians*. London: Marion Boyars 31-32.

Falla made a point to incorporate elements that reflect the rich cultural heritage of Spain. By understanding these Spanish rhythmic patterns and their cultural significance, performers can bring an authentic and spirited interpretation to the piece. Falla believed that in popular music, spirit is more important than the lyrics:

In all honesty, I think that in popular song, the spirit is more important than the letter. The essential features of these songs are rhythm, tonality, and melodic intervals. The people themselves prove this by their infinite variations on the purely melodic lines of the songs.²³

The seven song titles from *Siete Canciones populares Españolas* are:

El paño moruno: A song from Murcia

Seguidilla murciana: A dance song with a quick triple time

Asturiana: A sad lament from the Asturias region of Spain

Jota: A popular dance form with a dramatic rhythmic introduction

Nana: A brief Andalusian lullaby

Canción: A song about a betrayed lover who finds strength to bury his feelings

Polo: An Andalusian melody with violent guitar-like strumming

While the original version for voice and piano has seven songs as seen above, the cello version has only six songs, leaving out *Seguidilla Murciana* because it is not idiomatic to the instrument. The six movements included in the cello version are also reordered as follows: *El paño moruno*, *Nana*, *Canción*, *Polo*, *Asturiana*, *Jota*.

²³ Falla, M. de. (1979). *On music and musicians*. London: Marion Boyars 31-32.

Methodology

In this paper I will explore four of Manuel de Falla's songs using the narrative theory of Byron Almén.²⁴ Almén proposes a methodology to analyze musical narrative from the perspective of literature, semiotics, cultural, historiographical, musicological and theoretical points of view. He supports his theory by organizing the basic elements of musical narrative with an extensive analytical model that can be used in a wide range of musical examples and styles. His theory supports archetypes that reflect the strategies of the narrative that allows an open interpretation based on the cultural background of the audience.

Almén's theory incorporates Robert Hatten's concept of markedness to distinguish between musical elements that are transgressive and those that uphold the order-imposing hierarchy. Hatten defines markedness as the asymmetrical valuation of an opposition, where marked entities are exceptions with greater specificity of meaning compared to the normative unmarked entities.²⁵ In music, marked entities are associated with transgression, while unmarked entities correspond to order. Additionally, Almén emphasizes that rank assigns value to distinctive features within a cultural unit, determining the significance of a musical event in relation to other events.²⁶ To determine the archetypes this theory relies on the oppositional elements in music, such as texture, colors, keys, register, tempo, motives and themes.

²⁴ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2008).

²⁵ Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 291.

²⁶ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2008), 49.

Markedness	Rank
Markedness is the asymmetrical valuation of an opposition.	Rank assigns relative value to the distinctive features in a cultural unit.
Equivalent to determining what the narrative transgression is.	Equivalent to determining the value of a musical event in relation to other musical events.
Transvaluation	
Transvaluation is the rising and falling tension created by the markedness and rank relations that articulates the narrative trajectory.	

Table 1.1 Markedness, Rank, and Transvaluation²⁷

Almén's approach to narrative analysis involves identifying the hierarchical relationships of oppositions within a piece and tracing their evolution to create a narrative trajectory. Initially, the analyst must identify the marked elements (the "unusual" aspects) in the music, which fall into the "transgression" category. Conversely, unmarked elements (the "normal" aspects) fall into the "order" category. The analyst then traces the transvaluation, the rising and falling tension created by these oppositions (order vs. transgression), to assign one of the four possible archetypes.²⁸

One aspect of this type of analysis that might be confusing is the difference between the four archetypes. To better understand them, it is important to observe where the listener's sympathy lies. For example, in a romance archetype in which order is victorious of transgression, the listener's sympathies lie with order. In a comic archetype where transgression is victorious over order, the listener's sympathy lies with transgression. However, in a tragic archetype the listener's sympathies lie with transgression, which is defeated by an oppressive order-imposing

²⁷ Ibid., 47-54.

²⁸ Ibid., 51.

hierarchy. Likewise, in an ironic archetype, the listener’s sympathies lie with order, which is defeated by an undesired transgression. Table 1.2 below summarizes the four narrative archetypes.

Romance	the <i>victory of an order-imposing hierarchy</i> over its transgression (<i>victory + order</i>)
Tragedy	the <i>defeat of a transgression</i> by an order-imposing hierarchy (<i>defeat + transgression</i>)
Irony	the <i>defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy</i> by a transgression (<i>defeat + order</i>)
Comedy	the <i>victory of a transgression</i> over an order-imposing hierarchy (<i>victory + transgression</i>)

Table 1.2 The Four Narrative Archetypes²⁹

The first archetype, romance, will be illustrated by *El Paño Moruno*. Next, I will examine irony, where order is defeated by transgression, represented by the song *Nana*. The third archetype I will examine is comedy, which is characterized by the victory of transgression over order, and this will be represented in my analysis by the song *Polo*. The fourth archetype I will explore is tragedy, in which transgression is ultimately defeated by order, represented by the song *Asturiana*. Additionally, my analysis will delve into the cultural aspects behind these movements and the various musical symbols that convey their significance.

Purpose

Using Almén’s theory of musical narrative, I will analyze four of the seven movements of Falla’s *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* to reveal each of the narrative archetypes: romance, irony, comedy, and tragedy. Understanding the narrative of a musical work is helpful for

²⁹ Ibid., 66.

performers, as it allows them to express the music with a deeper cultural significance. Currently, there are no published narrative analyses of *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, and I hope that my analyses provide performers and teachers with new ideas that they can integrate into their interpretation, performance, and teaching. By understanding how these movements may be interpreted as musical narratives, performers can interpret the music more authentically, capturing nuances and emotions that can help to create an effective performance of the work. This approach not only enhances the performance but also helps to connect the audience more deeply with the music.

CHAPTER 2

EL PAÑO MORUNO: A ROMANCE NARRATIVE

The first of the seven songs, *El Paño Moruno* (The Moorish Handkerchief), originating from Murcia, which is one of Spain's seventeen Autonomous Communities, is a Spanish dance-song written in quick triple time. Murcia was one of the cities overtaken by the Moors during their invasion of Spain in 711, marking a historical period that distinctly shaped the Iberian Peninsula with new religion, language, and culture. Hispania became part of the caliphate of Damascus, the capital of the Muslim world.

Falla used a Murciana song called *El Paño* as a basis for *El Paño Moruno*, retaining its original melody and lyrics, and he elevated it with a piano arrangement featuring the *punteado* style (where a guitarist plucks notes individually), short staccato notes, and *rasgueado* (rapid strumming of strings typical of flamenco). The text is written in a lyrical quatrain style that represents a Spanish style called *arte menor, o quebrado* (minor art, broken), which is used in nearly all of the seven songs. It is comprised of two lines with eight syllabus each.³⁰ Spanish music is known for its evocative, vivid, passionate, and colorful style, influenced by Spain's unique geographical position and its history of absorbing musical traditions from Middle Eastern, Romani, Jewish, and African cultures. The story of *Paño Moruno* is quite simple: a shop reduced the price of a piece of cloth, or handkerchief, because it had a stain.

³⁰ Clarke, Dorothy Clotelle. "Redondilla and copla de Arte Menor." *Hispanic Review*, vol. 9, no. 4, Oct. 1941, pp. 489–493.

Original Text in Spanish	Lyrics
Al paño fino en la tienda	On the fine cloth in the store
Una mancha le cayo	a stain has fallen.
Por menos precio se vende	It sells at a lesser price,
Por que perdió su valor	because it has lost its value.
Ay!	Ay!

Table 2.1 Text Translation of *El Paño Moruno*

The structure of the piece is A, A', and coda; the song is in B minor with D major also emphasized in the A' sections.

A		A'		Coda
a	a'	a	a'	
mm. 1-37	mm. 38-60	mm. 61-89	mm. 90-112	mm. 113-228
B minor	B minor/D major	B minor	D major	B minor

Table 2.2 Form of *El Paño Moruno*

My analysis of *El Paño Moruno* will attempt to demonstrate how Falla's musical gestures convey a hidden message about the purity expectations of Romani women (*gitanas*) and the consequences of not adhering to community customs. Using Almén's method of narrative analysis, this song fits into the Romance narrative archetype, which signifies the victory of a desired order over an undesired transgression. I examine the tensions between the piano and solo parts, identifying marked and unmarked elements. The solo part takes precedence over the piano, making the unmarked elements those of the soloist, while the marked elements belong to the piano. I

uncover two characters in the story: the piano represents the townspeople judging and murmuring, and the solo cello part represents the young, beautiful *gitana* who is ashamed and lamenting her current state.

<u>Romance Archetype:</u> The victory of a desired order over an undesired transgression	
<u>Order-Imposing Hierarchy:</u> Unmarked Elements Represented by the Cello	<u>Transgression:</u> Marked Elements Represented by the Piano
Somber	Humorous
Legato	Staccato
Split-third chord	Regular major or minor chord
Lament	Spanish dance
B minor	B major
Descending 3-note scale	Frenetic piano gestures

Table 2.3 Order vs. Transgression in *El Paño Moruno*

The piano part begins with left-hand staccato figures marked pianissimo (*pp*) (see figure 2.1). Falla later used this same bass line in his famous composition *El Sombrero de Tres Picos*. This staccato bass contrasts sharply with a stabbing natural harmonic A in the cello part. The harmonic's eerie, almost hollow sound intensifies as the piano part ascends with gestures in triplets and a dominant functioning F-sharp major chord that is repeated for three measures. A final descending gesture with the same F-sharp major dominant chord, but this time featuring a split third (the chord contains both A and A-sharp), which signifies fatalism—a bad omen (see figure

2.2). The staccato left hand never stops, constantly reminding us of the woman's perceived failure and impurity, echoing the relentless gossip of her community.

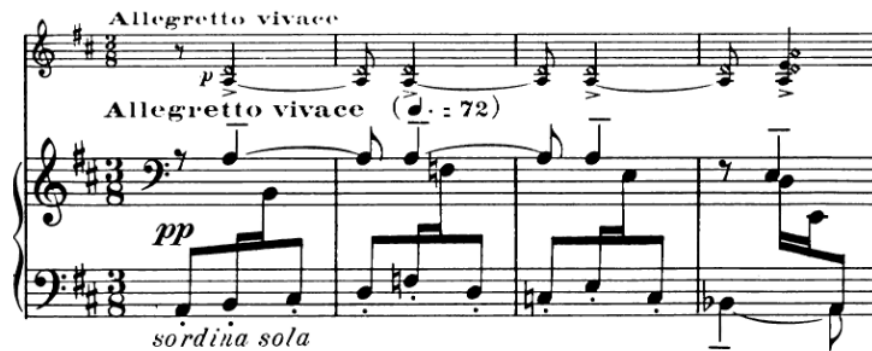


Figure 2.1 *El Paño Moruno*, measures 1-4

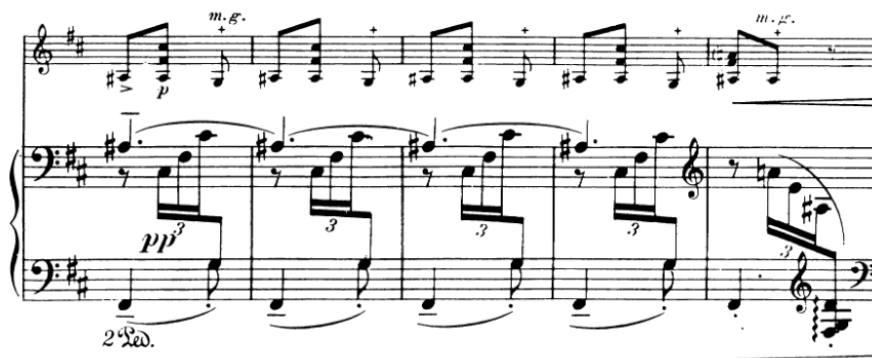


Figure 2.2 *El Paño Moruno*, measure 74

After the introduction, the melody enters with the cello part narrating the trivial story of a fine handkerchief in the store. However, the dramatic and somber nature of the melody suggests a deeper narrative. Each phrase ends with a descending gesture, reminiscent of *El cante jondo* (see figure 2.3). *El cante jondo* is a profound style of song derived from Andalusian prisoners, embodying a form of flamenco singing that signifies an intense expression of feelings on stage. It

is an interpretation grounded in lament, resulting in a powerful manifestation of emotions, where the deepest sentiments of flamenco singers are brought to the forefront.

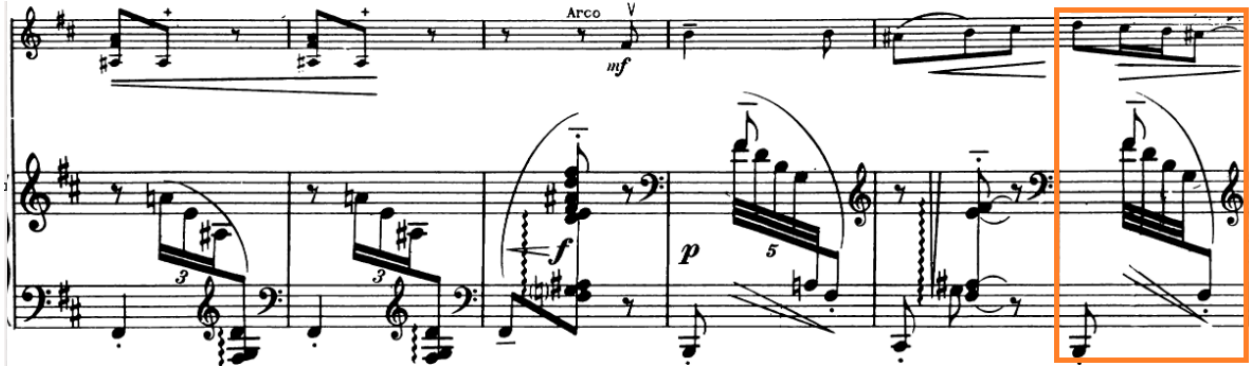


Figure 2.3 *El Paño Moruno*, measure 25

The first A section is written in B minor and the entire section represents a sad, desperate woman, imploring forgiveness and lamenting past decisions. At the end of section A, the phrase ends in lament, reinforced by a dominant split third chord accompanying the word ‘value’ (see figure 2.4). In my opinion, this is the most significant transgression in the work, recurring each time the word ‘value’ is used. The solo plays an A natural, while the piano part plays an F-sharp major chord. This chord creates tension and frustration, resolving at the end of the lament with an ‘Ay,’ a word Spanish speakers use to express pain, sorrow, surprise, or fear.



Figure 2.4 *El Paño Moruno*, measure 112

The A' section starts in the relative major, D major, and the subject is somewhat brighter; the use of this key makes sense as D major is emblematic of triumph, calls of war, and victory-rejoicing. It stays in D major for 8 measures where the word value is never mentioned, it is light and uncomplicated. This key doesn't last long, and reality comes back with the dark key of B minor, and we are reminded of the sad reality and the lack of worth of the piece of cloth.

Understanding the cultural background is crucial, particularly in the Romani community, where there is a strong link between worth and virginity. Marriage is the only acceptable way for a woman to lose her virginity. In other words, a woman should marry the man who first has intercourse with her, or the man for whom she is deflowered at the wedding ceremony, where proof of her virginity is provided and displayed. A woman known to have lost her virginity outside of marriage is no longer considered a *moza* (single lady) unless her partner acknowledges his responsibility, and they live together. Otherwise, she loses the respect of the Gitano community and becomes an object of scorn. The history of the Romani community is more complex than that of traveling beggars; they were an essential part of the development of modern Spanish culture.

While researching these customs, I realized that the split third chord might also signify double standards. Although these expectations are deeply ingrained in Romani life, Spain has moved away from this way of thinking. From Manuel de Falla's perspective, this might have been a way to highlight that these expectations only pertain to women, while men are free to have multiple sexual partners without facing community scorn.

The coda begins with the same material as section A, but only for seven measures. After that, the solo part plays a stabbing note—an 'AY' in the lyrics—sustained for four measures. Then, the *cante jondo* style returns with a descending three-note scale (see figure 2.5),

expressing acceptance of one's fate and giving up on the possibility of redemption. Meanwhile, the transgressive piano part plays two measures of an unearned Picardy third, creating the illusion of a happy ending, which then fades away as it lets go of the major third. These gestures, along with the return to B minor, the lament in the cello part, the descending three-note scale that reflects the 'cante jondo' singing style, and the somber mood, fulfill the archetype of Romance as the characteristics of the order-imposing hierarchy dominate the end of the song.

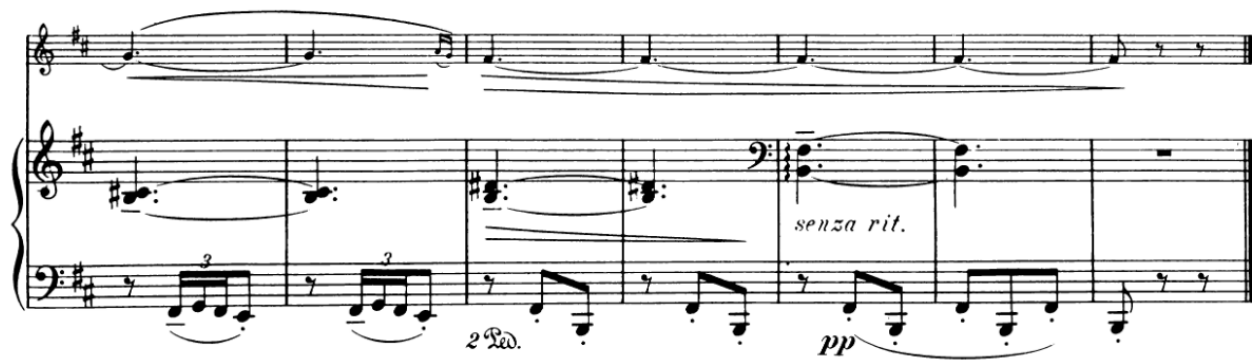


Figure 2.5 *El Paño Moruno*, measures 122-127

CHAPTER 3

NANA: AN IRONIC NARRATIVE

The second song in the cello arrangement of this set of songs is *Nana*, a lullaby from Andalusia that, according to his biographer Pahissa, Manuel de Falla first heard as a child sang by his mother.³¹ Pahissa observes that the *Nana* lullaby in *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* stands out from other Spanish lullabies due to the vocal music of Andalusia's unique Eastern influence. In contrast, its instrumental dance music shares similarities with North African traditions. The lyrics display sweetness and tenderness; at the same time, the music conveys a sense of melancholy. The sensuous melismatic gestures at the ends of phrases are unmistakably Spanish in style.³²

Original Text in Spanish	Lyrics
Duérmete, niño, duerme,	Go to sleep, child, sleep,
Duerme, mi alma,	Sleep, my soul,
Duérmete, lucerito	Go to sleep, little star
De la mañana.	Of the morning.
Nanita, nana,	Lulla-lullaby,
Nanita, nana.	Lulla-lullaby,
Duérmete, lucerito	Sleep, little star
De la mañana.	of the morning.

Table 3.1 Text Translation of *Nana*

³¹ Pahissa, Manuel de Falla, 78.

³² Ibid.

The structure of the piece is A (m. 1-19) A' (m. 20-37) form. The voice version of this song has only one verse, but in the cello version Falla repeated the verse an octave higher, which raises the tension and sense of sorrow and pain.

A	A'
mm. 1–19	mm. 20–37

Table 3.2 Form of *Nana*

This movement will reveal an ironic narrative archetype, in which the desired characteristics of order are defeated by undesired transgression. In this song, the transgressive elements are E Phrygian, pleading rising lines, metrical dissonance, and a move to a higher register. Order, on the other hand, is represented by elements of E major, descending 4-note scale figures, metrical consonance, and a lower range (see table 3.3).

<u>Ironic Archetype:</u>	
A desired order-imposing hierarchy is defeated by an undesired transgression	
<u>Order-Imposing Hierarchy:</u> Unmarked Elements Represented by the Piano	<u>Transgression:</u> Marked Elements Represented by the Cello
E Major	E Phrygian
Descending 4-Note Figure (Cante jondo style)	Pleading Rising Lines (C-D-E)
Metrical Consonance	Metrical Dissonance
Singable Lower Melody Range	Higher Register

Table 3.3 Order vs. Transgression in *Nana*

The piano part maps onto the idea of a whispering mother trying to soothe her baby, and the cello melody maps onto the idea of a fussy baby who refuses to fall asleep. The piano part features a rhythmic ostinato figure that is a descending 4-note melody using a *cante jondo* singing style with a syncopated accompaniment over a tonic E pedal point, mimicking the gentle rocking of a cradle and creating a lullaby atmosphere (see figure 3.1). The cello, with its irregular rhythmic patterns and use of triplets, creates a metrical dissonance against the piano's steady ostinato figure. The cello line is written in the E Phrygian mode, and this tonality evokes a reflective, mournful, and often intense or dramatic atmosphere. The Phrygian mode in the cello is juxtaposed against repetitive G-sharps in the piano that give the sense of E major against E Phrygian. Despite this, the sound of the song overall is distinctly Phrygian. The absence of a traditional classical cadence complicates key identification.

Figure 3.1 *Nana*, measures 1-4

According to Nicholas Shea in his article “Descending Bass Schemata and Negative Emotion in Western Song” in the *Empirical Musicology Review*, a descending bass line coordinated with sad lyrics is often described as evoking the “lament” topic—a signal to listeners

that grief is being conveyed.³³ Humans have a similar pattern of pitch declination that occurs as air pressure is lost, which suggests there may be a cognitive-ecological association between descending bass lines and negative emotion more broadly. This study reexamines the relationship between descending bass lines and sadness in songs with lyrics.³⁴

The melody line persistently rises (within a limited intervallic range), attempting to escape the calm, soothing, and somewhat melancholic descending line of the piano in a melismatic manner (see figure 3.2). The ascending lines of the melody generate a sense of forward momentum and tension, perhaps reflecting the fussing attempts of a child who refuses to sleep.



Figure 3.2 *Nana*, measures 17-24

³³ Shea, Nicholas. “Descending bass schemata and negative emotion in western song.” *Empirical Musicology Review*, vol. 14, no. 3–4, 6 July 2020, pp. 167–181.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

The opposition of the piano's descending motion and the cello's rising motion, along with the metrical dissonance between the piano's constant ostinato and the cello's irregular triplet rhythms generates tension. This disrupts the listener's sense of the meter, creating a feeling of unease, akin to an eerie lullaby.

While tracing the tensions between the 3-note descending scale and the pleading rising lines calling the child, we observe how the composer tries to inject this lullaby movement with anxiety instead of a sense of calm. The constant presence of metric dissonance is another indicator of the transgression controlling the narrative. Although the harmonic elements convey tenderness, the anxiety-induced metric dissonance serves as a reminder of the lack of peace and ease in this lullaby.

In the original voice and piano arrangement, the voice line adds melismas at the end of each phrase, emphasizing the Spanish musical idiom. The composer indicates 'mormorato' for the voice, meaning a whisper, followed by a diminuendo a few bars later. The song starts pianissimo (*pp*) and ends even softer (*ppp*). The second time, there's a small crescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*), but it quickly softens, soothing the child to sleep while the mother bears her own fears.

In the final four measures of the song, the order imposing hierarchy represented by the piano part is eventually defeated as the cello melody rises to its highest point in m. 40 and then falls to a dramatic Phrygian cadence from F to E in m. 42 (see figure 3.3) signifying the defeat of order by an undesired transgression in this ironic narrative archetype.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Nana" from measures 40 to 44. The score is written for a single melodic line and a piano accompaniment. The melodic line is in treble clef and begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked "restez". This is followed by a quarter note, then a half note marked "IV^e C.". The melodic line continues with a triplet of eighth notes, a quarter note, and a half note marked "V m". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef and consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. The tempo marking "gradualmente" is placed above the piano part, and "poco rit." is placed above the melodic line in the fourth measure. The dynamic marking "ppp" is placed above the piano part in the fourth measure. The score concludes with a double bar line in the fifth measure.

Figure 3.3 *Nana*, measures 40-44

CHAPTER 4

POLO: A COMIC NARRATIVE

The fourth song in the cello arrangement of this set of songs, *Polo*, is a vibrant and joyful piece from the Romani tradition of flamenco and *cante jondo*. *Cante jondo*, an Andalusian flamenco style, is typically highly emotional and dramatic. It originated among prisoners in the late nineteenth century and was later adopted by the Romani people, who infused it with even more expressiveness and ornamentation. The rapidly repeated notes in the accompaniment evoke the *zapateado*, a Spanish dance characterized by lively flamenco rhythms and the stamping of the dancers' shoes. Unlike the other songs, the melody is not repeated but varies from one section to another, though it is naturally built around the same material. Its length is irregular, avoiding patterns both within the phrases and between sections. The melody, along with the *melisma* at the end of each phrase or semi-phrase, and the final *melisma* in the coda, contributes to its unique structure. See table 4.1 for a text translation of *Polo*.

Original Text in Spanish	Lyrics
¡Ay! Guardo una pena en mi pecho que a nadie se la diré.	Ay! I have an ache in my heart of which I can tell no one.
¡Malhaya el amor, malhaya y quien me lo dió a entender!	A curse on love, and a curse on the one who made me feel it!
¡Ay!	Ay!

Table 4.1 Text Translation of *Polo*

According to Almén’s method of narrative analysis, this song fits into the comedy narrative strategy, which signifies the victory of a desired transgression over an undesired order. I examined the tensions between the piano and cello parts, identifying marked (transgression) and unmarked (order) elements. The solo part takes precedence over the piano, making the marked transgressive elements those of the soloist, while the unmarked elements of order belong to the piano. My analysis uncovers two feelings of a single character in the story: the cello solo part represents a hurt lover with a strong desire for revenge against an unfaithful lover, while the piano represents the character’s feelings of anger, pain, and unrelenting frustration. The word "Ay" in Spanish is used to express pain and surprise. Moreover, the entire text conveys secrecy; no one knows the main character is in pain due to a forbidden and unfaithful love.

<u>Comic Archetype:</u>	
The victory of a desired transgression over an undesired order	
<u>Order-Imposing Hierarchy:</u> Unmarked Elements Represented by the Piano	<u>Transgression:</u> Marked Elements Represented by the Cello
A minor	E Phrygian
Driven, energetic piano rhythmic patterns	Angry cello melodic lines
Guitar-like rhythmic patter	Canto jondo figures
Sudden large changes in range	Small range
Staccato articulation	Legato articulation
G-natural	G-sharp
Metrical dissonance (hemiola, feeling of duple in a notated triple meter)	Metrical consonance (notated downbeat emphasized)

Table 4.2 Order vs. Transgression in *Polo*

The song starts with the piano part in an angry rhythmic pattern that is repeated sometimes with a slight variation, throughout the piece (see figure 4.1). This rhythmic pattern gives song unity. The eight-measure rhythmic pattern in m. 1-8 repeats four times throughout the introduction and dominates the piece. The cello comes in with a painful Ay!

The first section is divided into two parts: the piano introduction and the melody. The piano part is written in regular patterns (see figure 4.1) and even numbers, while the melodic units in the cello parts are irregular (see figure 4.2), in other words the phrases in the piano interludes and preludes follow a regular pattern of eight measures, but the cello melody has irregular phrase lengths.



Figure 4.1 *Polo*, piano, measures 1-4



Figure 4.2 *Polo*, cello, measures 32-52

Contrary to the other songs, there is no backstory for *Polo*. As mentioned, the lyrics reflect secrecy and pain from an unfaithful lover—a pain that cannot be shared with anyone, a forbidden

love. This reflects our main character, the cello carrying the melody, feeling out of control and expressing pain impulsively, hence the irregularity of the melodic material. The piano part, representing anger and pain, is constant and regular, yet unyielding.

The cello's melody range is no larger than a sixth which is a characteristic of *cante jondo*: a melismatic melody within a small intervallic range signifies the mental and emotional state of the main character, who is obsessed with painful feelings and has no one to confide in (see figure 4.3). In contrast, the piano part has a wide range and moves between octaves, representing an emotional upheaval of wild wrath that cannot be shared with anyone. This embodies the main character's internal and silent fury.



Figure 4.3 *Polo*, measures 53-82

Each character in this song (cello and piano) is represented by opposite articulations. The piano plays staccato, while the cello part is legato and sounds like it is pleading. This characteristic helps the listener understand the emotional aspect of the song. According to Nathan R. Carr, Kirk N. Olsen, and William Forde Thompson in their book *The Perceptual and Emotional Consequences of Articulation in Music*, two experiments investigated the perceptual and emotional consequences of note articulation in music by examining how participants perceived the separation

of notes in a musical phrase.³⁵ Legato melodies were rated as more cohesive and were perceived as emotionally calmer and sadder than staccato melodies. In contrast, staccato melodies were perceived as having greater tension and energy. The second experiment explored whether articulation is associated with humor and fear in music, and whether the impact of articulation depends on the major vs. minor mode. For both modes, legato melodies were perceived as scarier than staccato melodies, while staccato melodies were seen as more amusing and surprising. The effect of articulation on perceived happiness and sadness depended on the mode: staccato enhanced perceived happiness in minor melodies, while legato enhanced perceived sadness in minor melodies. In other words, they found that happy, fearful, and angry emotions were typically performed with staccato articulation, whereas sad and tender emotions were mostly performed with legato articulation. Adding the staccato tension to a melody composed in the minor mode may darken the mood and evoke emotions such as fear and agitation therefore the piano is the internal expression of anger.³⁶

The piano part is written in A Aeolian mode, which is often used to express feelings of melancholy or sadness. Music in the Aeolian mode typically conveys introspection. The melody is written in E Phrygian mode, signifying lament and darkness, with sighs accompanied by few tears. Different modes evoke different emotions. For example, the Aeolian mode often conveys melancholy or sadness, while the Phrygian mode can evoke a sense of lament and darkness. In a narrative analysis of music, mode changes can symbolize shifts in mood or character. For example, a shift from a minor mode to a major mode might represent a transition from sorrow to joy and in the last eight measures of the song, the piano part shifts to E major and ends that way.³⁷ The result

³⁵ Carr, Nathan R., et al. "The perceptual and emotional consequences of articulation in music." *Music Perception*, vol. 40, no. 3, 1 Feb. 2023, pp. 202–219.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

is not a happy ending as one might expect in a major key, but rather a loud expression of anger and anguish. In the end, in this comic archetype, desired transgression takes over and is victorious over undesired order, expressing the acceptance of the main character's fate (see figure 4.4).

IV^o C. V
pesante
f
a Tempo, ma più mosso
f (*col canto*)
cresc. *molto*
ff
8ª bª

Figure 4.4 *Polo*, measures 80-90

CHAPTER 5

ASTURIANA: A TRAGIC NARRATIVE

In this chapter I provide a narrative reading of the fifth movement of the cello arrangement of this set of songs, *Asturiana*, as a tragic narrative archetype. This movement is a simple melody from Asturias, a province in northern Spain. The instrument that represents this region is the gaita or bagpipe. Usually used in folk music, the gaita signifies a “whistle flute.” The bag of the bagpipe can hold air, enabling the player to maintain a continuous sound. This feature of the bagpipe is alluded to through the continuous pedal point in the accompaniment throughout the piece.³⁸ Rhythmically, *Asturiana* is simpler than the other songs presented in this dissertation. The composer’s use of longer note values helps maintain the sadness of the piece. The use of the soft pedal unifies the tone color and keeps a somber atmosphere and brings out Falla’s intention of imitating the bagpipe throughout the movement. Falla uses a pedal note in the accompaniment which supports the entire introduction.

The story of *Asturiana* is straightforward. A lonely main character finds solace in confiding in a pine tree. Seeing the person’s pain, the tree weeps, crying out of empathy. The text in very simple words tells the story of the interaction between the tree and the lead character. The pine is very green, which at first seems like an odd detail to include, but green represents the peaceful quality of the piece. According to Carol Kimball in her book *A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, the green pine tree means sexual desire according to an ancient Spanish symbol.³⁹

³⁸ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Wisconsin: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006), 504.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 503.

Original Text in Spanish	Lyrics
Por ver si me consolaba, Arrime a un pino verde, Por verme llorar, lloraba, Y el pino como era verde!	In the seek of some comfort, I leaned against a green pine, It wept for my weeping, and how green was that pine!

Table 5.1 Text Translation of *Asturiana*

This song fits into the tragedy archetype, which is the defeat of a desired transgression by an oppressive order-imposing hierarchy. The transgressive elements, which are unmarked, are represented by the cello part, while the elements of the oppressive order, which are marked, are represented by the piano part. The cello's transgression is characterized by F harmonic minor with an emphasis on E-naturals, by a striving rising melodic gesture that encompasses a major 6th, and by slow-moving rhythmic durations that are primarily quarter notes. The piano's order-imposing hierarchy is characterized by F natural minor with an emphasis on E-flat, a lament bass gesture (F-E-flat-D-flat-C) that encompasses a falling 4th, and obsessive 16th-note octave figures in the right hand. The short melodic range in the cello signifies the simplicity of the pain of our main character, while the left hand of the piano's pedal notes represents the silent presence of the pine tree. The right hand of the piano, playing octaves in sixteen notes, embodies the anxiety of the listener's empathy; it shows an understanding of the loneliness and pain of the cello's character and contributes to the silent grief of the song.

<u>Tragic Archetype:</u> The defeat of a desired transgression by an undesired order	
<u>Order-Imposing Hierarchy:</u> Unmarked Elements Represented by the Piano	<u>Transgression:</u> Marked Elements Represented by the Cello
F natural minor (E-flat)	F harmonic minor (E-natural)
Lament bass (F-E-flat-D-flat-C)	Striving rising melodic lines
Obsessive constant sixteenth-note 8va figures	Quarter-note melodic figures

Table 5.2 Order vs. Transgression in *Asturiana*

This song is in F minor and is structured in two parts A, which includes measures 1-18, and A' which encompasses measures 19-38. Like the other songs, the cello version plays the second verse an octave higher, which has a dramatic effect in the melody.

A	A'
mm. 1–18	mm. 19–38

Table 5.3 Form of *Asturiana*

The song is framed by the piano, as each verse begins with a brief introduction; therefore, the order-imposing hierarchy is at a high rank value at the beginning of each A section. The piano part is centered on F natural minor. The left hand plays a lyrical, sweet, and *cantabile* melody while the right hand has alternating obsessive sixteenth-note octaves throughout the song that creates a “weeping” pattern to convey the melancholy effect.⁴⁰ The descending lament motion in

⁴⁰ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Wisconsin: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2006), p. 504.

the piano in measures 6-7 of a perfect fourth (F-E-flat-D-flat-C) indicates the character's grief each time it is introduced (see figure 5.1).⁴¹

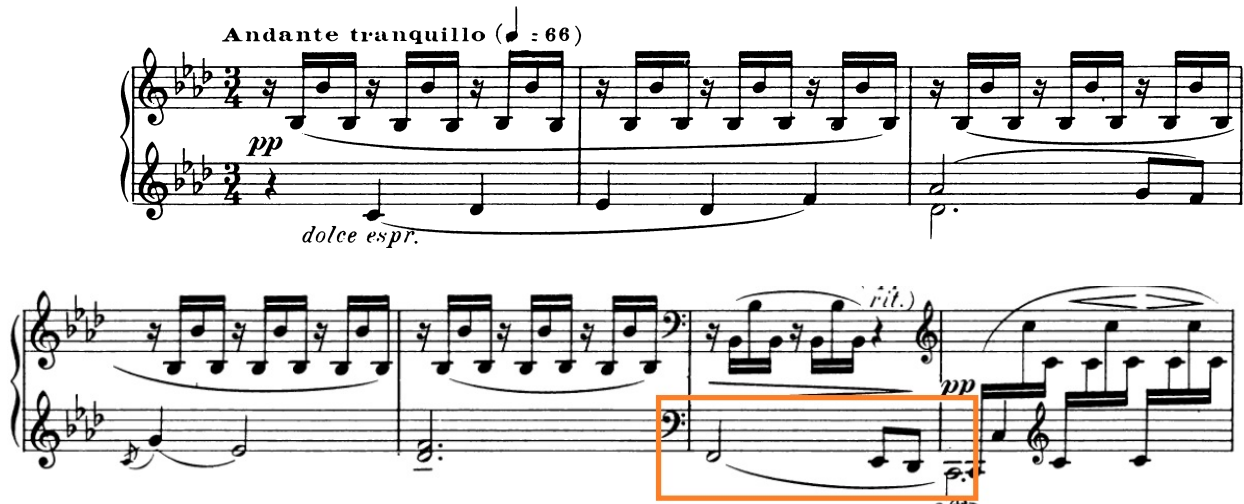


Figure 5.1 *Asturiana*, piano, measures 1-7

When the cello's transgression enters in m. 8, the rank value of transgression is raised. While Falla wrote the cello melody using a small range of a major sixth from E-natural up to C (see figure 5.2), the melody's striving rising gesture indicates the main character's struggle to break free from the sorrow, struggles, and tension embodied in the piano part (see figure 5.1). The swells in dynamic markings help to embody the attempt to break free. In the A' section, the cello's melody moves an octave higher, making it more dramatic and increasing the sense that transgression is trying to break through the oppressive order.

⁴¹ Ibid.



Figure 5.2 *Asturiana*, cello, measures 1-12

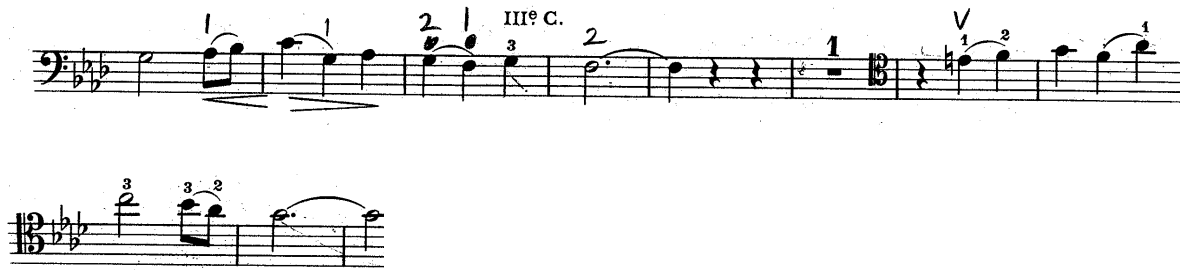


Figure 5.3 *Asturiana*, cello, measures 15-25

In the last seven bars of the song, the cello and piano reverse roles (see Figure 5.4). The cello takes on the piano's F-natural minor melody from the piano's introduction and ends the song with the lament falling 4th gesture (F-E-flat-D-flat-C). This raises the rank value of order at the end of the song. The piano keeps the obsessive sixteenth-note octaves, but now plays the lament bass in unison the cello, signifying a tragic outcome. The piano's E-natural octaves in the last three bars are one last attempt of transgression to break free, but it is not successful in this tragic narrative.

IV^e C. V

p

morendo *(poco rit.)*

(appena rit.)

Tempo *pp morendo (poco rit.)*

Figure 5.4 *Asturiana*, measures 32-38

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I explored the interactions between musical elements in one of the most popular Spanish pieces for cello, *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* by Manuel De Falla. Using Byron Almén's theory of narrative analysis, I revealed a narrative reading of four movements that can help with interpretation, performance, and teaching. By identifying pivotal moments, I observed conflicting elements and assigned distinct characters to each theme, influencing my musical performance. This analysis helped me to recognize different characters in the music which reflect elements of order and transgression, how they interact with each other, and the resulting narrative archetype that results from those interactions. This approach goes beyond reading the notes, guiding performers to understand the cultural background and a narrative reading of each song.

El Paño Moruno represents the romance archetype, where order is victorious over an undesired transgression. In this song, there are two characters: a beautiful woman (the cello melody, which maps onto order, and the gossiping townspeople (the piano part), which map onto transgression. The transgression is depicted by the staccato in the piano, introducing a sarcastic character that contrasts and undermines the cello's somber lament. The cello represents our heroine, who is ashamed of her past actions. While transgression in the piano part attempts to break through at the end with an unearned Picardy third, the heroine's characteristics of order are victorious in the end, resulting in a romance archetype.

Nana reveals an ironic narrative archetype, where the elements of order are defeated by an undesired transgression. In this song, transgression is a child who refuses to sleep, represented by the cello's melody in E Phrygian with its pleading rising lines, metrical dissonance, and higher register. Conversely, order is the mother soothing her child with a lullaby, represented by E major, descending calming 4-note scale figures, metrical consonance, and a lower range. In the final four measures, the order imposed by the piano part's lullaby is ultimately defeated, as the crying child's cello melody rises to its highest point in measure 40, and then falls to a dramatic Phrygian cadence, signifying the defeat of order by an undesired transgression.

Polo fits into the comic narrative archetype, signifying the victory of a desired transgression over order. I examined the tensions between the piano and cello parts, identifying marked transgressive elements (cello) and unmarked elements of order (piano). The cello's transgression represents a hurt lover seeking revenge against an unfaithful lover, while the piano's order represents the character's anger, pain, and frustration. The entire text conveys secrecy, as no one knows the main character is in pain due to a forbidden and unfaithful love. The two characters are the cello, who carries the melody, feeling out of control and expressing pain impulsively, which is reflected in the irregularity of the melodic material. In contrast, the piano part represents anger and pain, maintaining a constant and regular, yet adamant presence. At the end of the song the cello's transgression takes over, accepting the fate of the main character.

Asturiana fits into the tragic archetype, where a desired transgression is defeated by an oppressive order-imposing hierarchy. The marked transgressive elements are represented by the cello part, while the unmarked elements of oppressive order are represented by the piano part. The short melodic range of the cello signifies the simplicity of the main character's pain, while the left hand of the piano's pedal notes represents the silent presence of the pine tree. The right hand of

the piano, playing octaves in sixteenth notes, embodies the listener's anxiety, highlighting the loneliness and pain of the cello's character and contributing to the song's silent grief. In the last seven bars of the song the cello adopts the piano's F-natural minor melody from the introduction and ends the song with the lament falling 4th gesture, which raises the rank value of order at the end. The piano maintains the obsessive sixteenth-note octaves along with the lament bass in unison with the cello, signifying a tragic outcome.

Falla believed that in popular music, spirit is more important than the letter. By combining narrative analysis with a deep understanding of Spanish style and its cultural significance, performers can bring an authentic and spirited interpretation to the piece. Likewise, by understanding how these movements may be interpreted as musical narratives, performers can interpret the music more authentically, capturing nuances and emotions that can help to create an effective performance of the work. This approach not only enhances the performance but also connects the audience more deeply with the music.

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APPENDIX A
LECTURE RECITAL SCRIPT

Introduction

One of my earliest recital memories involves playing the cello transcription of *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* (Seven Popular Spanish Songs) by Manuel de Falla. Each song is unique in form and meaning and has been transcribed for several instruments. This dissertation presents a narrative analysis of four movements of Manuel de Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, employing Byron Almén's narratological method as the primary analytical framework. The legacy of Manuel de Falla lives on through his compositions, which are still performed globally. Falla accomplished something remarkable by blending Spanish folk music, particularly from Andalusia, with classical forms. This unique style continues to be admired and studied by musicians and scholars alike.

Manuel de Falla

[Slide] Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) was a renowned Spanish composer from Cádiz. He studied under Felipe Pedrell in Madrid, who inspired him to explore Spanish folk music and zarzuela. Falla's compositions, such as "La Vida es Breve," blend Andalusian flamenco with classical forms, making his work unique and influential. His legacy endures through his globally performed compositions.

In 1907, Manuel de Falla moved to Paris and met prominent composers like Claude Debussy, Paul Dukas, and Maurice Ravel. Although not his most prolific period, he composed notable piano pieces and art songs.

Elizabeth Seitz's 1995 dissertation highlights the impact of Manuel de Falla's seven years in Paris on his mature style. Influenced by French impressionists like Ravel and Debussy, Falla's works from this period, including "Pièces espagnoles," "Trois mélodies," and "Siete Canciones Populares Españolas," blend Spanish folk styles with advanced harmonic techniques. His time in Paris (1907-1914) was crucial for his international recognition. Falla returned to Madrid in 1914, where he composed "El Amor Brujo," showcasing Andalusian folk music.

In 1916, Manuel de Falla composed "Noches en los Jardines de España," a suite for piano and orchestra evoking Andalusian and Moorish influences. This work was later adapted for the ballet "El Sombrero de Tres Picos" in 1919. Falla moved to Granada in 1921, where he composed neoclassical works influenced by Igor Stravinsky, including a harpsichord concerto in 1926. After the assassination of his friend Federico Garcia Lorca and the rise of Franco, Falla left Spain and lived in Argentina until his death in 1946.

[Slide] "Siete Canciones Populares Españolas," composed in 1914, is Manuel de Falla's most famous set of Spanish songs for soprano and piano. It has been transcribed for various instruments and ensembles. Initially commissioned by Madame Ida Godebska, Falla refused to present it at the Opéra Comique in Paris, considering it an inappropriate venue. He viewed the song cycle as high art, distinct from late 19th-century Spanish arrangements, with advanced harmonies and sensitivity to rhythms and tones. Unlike the Cantos populares and Canciones Andaluzas, Falla aimed to elevate these songs beyond salon performances.

This work blends traditional Spanish music with new, original elements, showcasing unprecedented artistic value. A key aspect of Falla's Romanticism is his interest in spiritual and mystical themes, evident in his work "El Amor Brujo," which explores sorcery and ghosts.

This work marked a pivotal moment in Falla's style, leading to a deeper exploration of Spanish folklore. The unique stylization in "Polo," "Jota," and "Nana" influenced his later works like "El amor brujo," "El Sombrero De Tres Picos," and "Fantasia Baetica." Falla emphasized the importance of rhythmic and melodic accompaniment, drawing inspiration directly from the people. He believed that in popular music, the spirit is more important than the lyrics.

[Slide] The seven songs in "Siete Canciones Populares Españolas" are:

1. **El paño moruno:** A song from Murcia.
2. **Seguidilla murciana:** A dance song in quick triple time.
3. **Asturiana:** A sad lament from Asturias.
4. **Jota:** A popular dance with a dramatic rhythmic introduction.
5. **Nana:** A brief Andalusian lullaby.
6. **Canción:** A song about a betrayed lover finding strength.
7. **Polo:** An Andalusian melody with violent guitar-like strumming.

The cello version includes only six songs, excluding "Seguidilla murciana" due to its unsuitability for the instrument. The included songs mainly originate from southern Spain, with "Nana," "Canción," and "Polo" from Andalusia, and "El paño moruno" from Murcia.

Methodology

[Slide] In this lecture recital, I will explore four of Manuel de Falla's songs using Byron Almén's narrative theory. Almén's methodology analyzes musical narrative through literature, semiotics, cultural, historiographical, musicological, and theoretical perspectives. His extensive analytical model organizes the basic elements of musical narrative, allowing for open interpretation based on the audience's cultural background.

[Slide] Almén's theory incorporates Robert Hatten's concept of markedness, distinguishing between transgressive musical elements and those upholding order. Marked entities are exceptions with greater specificity of meaning, while unmarked entities are normative. In music, marked entities are associated with transgression, and unmarked entities correspond to order. Almén also emphasizes that rank assigns value to distinctive features within a cultural unit, determining the significance of a musical event in relation to others. This theory relies on oppositional elements in music, such as texture, colors, keys, register, tempo, motives, and themes.

[Slide] Almén's narrative analysis involves identifying hierarchical oppositions in music and tracing their evolution to create a narrative trajectory. Analysts identify marked (unusual) elements as "transgression" and unmarked (normal) elements as "order." [Slide]The tension between these oppositions helps assign one of four archetypes:

1. **Romance:** Order triumphs over transgression, with listener sympathy for order.
2. **Comedy:** Transgression triumphs over order, with listener sympathy for transgression.
3. **Tragedy:** Transgression is defeated by order, with listener sympathy for transgression.
4. **Irony:** Order is defeated by transgression, with listener sympathy for order.

Understanding where the listener's sympathy lies helps differentiate these archetypes.

[Slide] I will illustrate the four archetypes using the following songs from *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*:

1. **Romance:** "El Paño Moruno" (Order triumphs over transgression)
2. **Tragedy:** "Asturiana" (Transgression is defeated by order)
3. **Irony:** "Nana" (Order is defeated by transgression)
4. **Comedy:** "Polo" (Transgression triumphs over order)

[Slide] My analysis will also explore the cultural aspects and musical symbols that convey the significance of these movements. Understanding the narrative of a musical work helps performers express the music with deeper cultural significance. Currently, there are no published narrative analyses of this work. My analyses aim to provide performers and cello teachers with new ideas for interpretation, performance, and teaching. By interpreting these movements as musical narratives, performers can capture nuances and emotions, enhancing their performance and connecting more deeply with the audience.

El Paño Moruno - A Romance Narrative

[Slide] "El Paño Moruno" (The Moorish Handkerchief) is the first of the seven songs in "Siete Canciones Populares Españolas." Originating from Murcia, this Spanish dance-song is written in quick triple time. Murcia, overtaken by the Moors in 711, experienced significant cultural changes, influencing its music.

Falla based "El Paño Moruno" on a Murciana song called "El Paño," retaining its original melody and lyrics. He enhanced it with a piano arrangement featuring the *punteado* style (individual plucking of notes), short staccato notes, and *rasgueado* (rapid strumming typical of flamenco).

[Slide] The text follows a lyrical quatrain style, common in Spanish music, with two lines of eight syllables each. Spanish music is known for its evocative, vivid, passionate, and colorful style, influenced by its diverse cultural history. The story of "El Paño Moruno" is simple: a shop reduces the price of a piece of cloth because it has a stain.

This analysis of "El Paño Moruno" will demonstrate how Falla's musical gestures convey a hidden message about the purity expectations of Roma women (*gitanas*) and the consequences of not adhering to community customs. Using Almén's narrative analysis, this song fits into the

Romance narrative strategy, signifying the victory of a desired order over an undesired transgression.

[Slide] I will examine the tensions between the piano and solo parts, identifying marked and unmarked elements. The solo part takes precedence, making the unmarked elements those of the soloist, while the marked elements belong to the piano. In Almén's context, the piano represents the townspeople judging and murmuring, while the solo represents the beautiful young gitana who is ashamed and lamenting her current state.

[Slide] The piano part begins with a left-hand staccato in pianissimo (pp), a bass line Falla later used in "El Sombrero de Tres Picos." This staccato bass contrasts with a stabbing natural harmonic A in the cello part, creating an eerie, hollow sound. **[Play Example]** The piano ascends with triplet gestures and a dominant F# major chord repeated for three measures. A final descending gesture with the same F# dominant chord, featuring a split third, signifies fatalism—a bad omen. The relentless staccato left hand echoes the community's gossip, constantly reminding the woman's perceived failure and impurity.

[Slide] After the introduction, the cello melody narrates the story of a fine handkerchief in the store. However, the dramatic and somber nature of the melody suggests a deeper narrative. Each phrase ends with a descending gesture, reminiscent of "El cante jondo" or deep song from Spain. "El cante jondo" is a profound style of flamenco singing derived from Andalusian prisoners, embodying intense expressions of feelings and powerful manifestations of emotions, bringing the deepest sentiments of flamenco singers to the forefront. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] The first stanza is in B minor, symbolizing submission to divine will. This A section portrays a sad, desperate woman seeking forgiveness and lamenting her past. The phrase ends in lament, with a dominant split third chord on the word "value," marking a significant transgression.

The solo plays an A natural, while the piano plays an F# major chord, creating tension and frustration. This resolves with an "Ay," expressing pain, sorrow, surprise, or fear in Spanish. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] A' starts in D major, symbolizing triumph and victory, and stays light and uncomplicated for eight measures. However, it soon returns to B minor, reminding us of the sad reality and the lack of worth of the cloth. Understanding the cultural background is crucial, especially in the Romani community, where worth is linked to virginity. Marriage is the only acceptable way for a woman to lose her virginity. If a woman loses her virginity outside of marriage, she loses respect in the Gitano community unless her partner acknowledges his responsibility.

[Slide] The split third in the music might signify double standards, highlighting that these expectations pertain only to women, while men face no such scorn. The coda begins with material from section A, but only for seven measures. The solo part then plays a sustained note—an "AY" in the lyrics—followed by a descending three-note scale, expressing acceptance of fate. The piano part plays an unearned Picardy third, creating an illusion of a happy ending, which fades away. These gestures, along with the return to B minor, the lament in the cello part, and the somber mood, fulfill the Romance archetype as the unmarked characteristics dominate the end of the song. **[Play Example] [Slide]**

Nana - An Ironic Narrative

[Slide] The second song in the suite, "Nana," is an Andalusian lullaby that Manuel de Falla first heard as a child from his mother, according to his biographer Jaime Pahissa. "Nana" stands out from other Spanish lullabies due to Andalusia's unique Eastern vocal influences, while its instrumental or dance music shares similarities with North African traditions.

[Slide] The lyrics are sweet and tender, yet the music conveys a sense of melancholy. The sensuous melismatic phrases at the ends of phrases are unmistakably Spanish in style. The structure of the piece is A (m. 1-19) A' (m. 20-37). The voice version of this song has only one verse, but in the cello version Falla repeated the verse an octave higher, which raises the tension and sense of sorrow and pain.

[Slide] This movement reveals an ironic narrative archetype, where transgression is defeated by an imposing order. In "Nana," transgressive elements include E Phrygian, pleading rising lines, metrical dissonance, and a higher register. Order is represented by E major, descending 4-note scale figures, metrical consonance, and a lower range.

[Slide] The piano part represents a whispering mother soothing her baby, while the cello melody depicts a fussy baby refusing to sleep. The piano features a rhythmic ostinato with a descending 4-note melody and syncopated accompaniment over a tonic E pedal point, mimicking a cradle's gentle rocking. The cello's irregular rhythms and triplets create metrical dissonance against the piano's steady figure. The cello line in E Phrygian evokes a reflective, mournful atmosphere, juxtaposed with the piano's repetitive G-sharps suggesting E major. Despite this, the overall sound remains distinctly Phrygian, with the absence of a traditional classical cadence complicating key identification. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] A descending bass line with sad lyrics often evokes the "lament" topic, signaling grief to listeners. The melody in "Nana" persistently rises within a limited range, attempting to escape the calm, soothing, and melancholic descending piano line. The ascending melody lines generate forward momentum and tension, reflecting a child's fussing attempts to avoid sleep. **[Play Example]**

The opposition between the piano's descending motion and the cello's rising motion, along with the metrical dissonance between the piano's constant ostinato and the cello's irregular triplet rhythms, generates tension. This disrupts the listener's sense of meter, creating an eerie lullaby feeling.

Tracing the tensions between the 3-note descending scale and the pleading rising lines, we see how Falla injects anxiety into the lullaby. The constant metric dissonance indicates transgression controlling the narrative. Despite the harmonic tenderness, the anxiety-induced dissonance reminds us of the lack of peace in this lullaby.

In the original voice and piano arrangement, the voice adds melismas at the end of each phrase, emphasizing the Spanish musical idiom. The composer indicates "mormorato" for the voice, meaning a whisper, followed by a diminuendo. The song starts pianissimo (*pp*) and ends even softer (*ppp*). The second time, there's a small crescendo to mezzo-forte (*mf*), but it quickly softens, soothing the child while the mother bears her own fears.

[Slide] In the final four measures, the order-imposing hierarchy of the piano part is defeated as the cello melody rises to its highest point in measure 40 and then falls to a dramatic Phrygian cadence from F to E in measure 42, signifying the triumph of transgression over order. **[Play Example]**

Polo: A Comic Narrative

[Slide] The fourth song, *Polo*, is a vibrant and joyful piece from the Romani tradition of flamenco and cante jondo. Cante jondo, an Andalusian flamenco style, is typically highly emotional and dramatic. It originated among prisoners in the late nineteenth century and was later adopted by the Romani people, who infused it with even more expressiveness and ornamentation.

The rapidly repeated notes in the accompaniment evoke the zapateado, a Spanish dance characterized by lively flamenco rhythms and the stamping of the dancers' shoes. Unlike the other songs, the melody is not repeated but varies from one section to another, though it is naturally built around the same material. Its length is irregular, avoiding patterns both within the phrases and between sections. The melody, along with the melisma at the end of each phrase or semi-phrase, and the final melisma in the coda, contributes to its unique structure.

[Slide] According to Almén's method of narrative analysis, "Nana" fits into the comedy narrative strategy, signifying the victory of a desired transgression over order. I examined the tensions between the piano and cello parts, identifying marked and unmarked elements. The solo part takes precedence, making the marked transgressive elements those of the soloist, while the unmarked elements of order belong to the piano.

In Almén's context, I uncovered two feelings of a single character: the solo represents a hurt lover with a strong desire for revenge against an unfaithful lover, while the piano represents the character's anger, pain, and unrelenting frustration. The word "Ay" in Spanish expresses pain and surprise. The entire text conveys secrecy, as no one knows the main character is in pain due to a forbidden and unfaithful love.

The song begins with the piano playing an angry rhythmic pattern, repeated with slight variations throughout the piece, providing unity. This eight-measure pattern repeats four times in the introduction and dominates the piece. The cello enters with a painful "Ay!"

[Slide] The first section is divided into two parts: the piano introduction and the melody. The piano solos are written in regular patterns and even numbers, while the melodic units in the cello parts are irregular. The piano interludes and preludes follow a regular eight-measure pattern, but the vocal melody has irregular phrase lengths. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] Unlike the other songs, "Polo" has no backstory. The lyrics reflect secrecy and pain from an unfaithful lover forbidden love that cannot be shared. The cello, carrying the melody, expresses impulsive pain through irregular melodic material, while the piano part, representing anger and pain, remains constant and unyielding. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] The melody's range is no larger than a sixth, characteristic of cante jondo, with a melismatic melody within a short intervallic range, signifying the main character's mental and emotional state. The piano part, in contrast, has a wide range and moves between octaves, representing an internal and silent fury. **[Play Example]**

Each character in "Polo" is represented by opposite articulations: the piano plays staccato, while the cello part is legato, like pleading. This contrast helps convey the song's emotional aspects. Legato melodies are often perceived as calmer and sadder, while staccato melodies convey greater tension and energy. In "Polo," the staccato tension in the piano part, composed in a minor mode, darkens the mood and evokes emotions such as fear and agitation, representing the internal expression of anger and agitation.

The piano part is in the Aeolian mode, expressing melancholy. The melody is in E Phrygian, signifying lament and darkness. Mode changes in music can symbolize mood shifts. The piece ends in E major, not with joy, but with anger and anguish, reflecting the main character's acceptance of fate. **[Slide] [Play Example]**

Asturiana: A Tragic Narrative

[Slide] The last movement I will discuss, *Asturiana*, is analyzed as a tragic narrative. The melody, from Asturias in northern Spain, is represented by the gaita (bagpipe), known for its continuous sound, mirrored by the pedal point in the accompaniment. The piece's simplicity and longer note values maintain its sadness, while the soft pedal unifies the tone, imitating the bagpipe.

[Slide] The story is about a lonely character finding solace in a pine tree, which weeps in empathy. The green pine symbolizes peace and, according to Carol Kimball, sexual desire in ancient Spanish symbolism.

[Slide] This song fits the tragedy archetype, where a desired transgression is defeated by an oppressive hierarchy. The cello represents the transgression with F harmonic minor and rising melodic gestures, while the piano represents the oppressive order with F natural minor and a lament bass gesture. The cello's short melodic range signifies the main character's simple pain, and the piano's left-hand pedal notes represent the silent pine tree. The right-hand octaves in the piano embody the listener's empathetic anxiety, contributing to the song's silent grief.

This song is in F minor and is structured in two parts A, which includes measures 1-18, and A' which encompasses measures 19-38. Like the other songs, the cello version plays the second verse an octave higher, which has a dramatic effect in the melody.

[Slide] The song is framed by the piano, with each verse introduced by a brief introduction, highlighting the order-imposing hierarchy. The piano part, centered on F natural minor, features a lyrical left-hand melody and obsessive right-hand sixteenth-note octaves, creating a "weeping" pattern. The descending lament motion (F-Eb-Db-C) in mm. 6-7 signifies the character's grief each time it appears. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] When the cello's transgression enters in m. 8, its rank value rises. The cello melody, spanning a major sixth from E-natural to C, indicates the main character's struggle to break free from the sorrow and tension in the piano part. **[Play Example]** Dynamic swells embody this attempt. In the A' section, the cello's melody moves an octave higher, increasing the drama and the sense of transgression trying to break through the oppressive order. **[Play Example]**

[Slide] In the last seven bars, the cello and piano reverse roles. The cello adopts the piano's F-natural minor melody and ends with the lament falling 4th gesture (F-Eb-Db-C), raising the rank value of order. The piano maintains the obsessive sixteenth-note 8va but plays the lament bass in unison with the cello, signifying a tragic outcome. The piano's E-natural 8vas in the last three bars represent a final, unsuccessful attempt of transgression to break free. **[Play Example]**

Conclusion

[Slide] In this lecture recital, I explored the interactions between musical elements in *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* by Manuel De Falla. Using Byron Almén's narrative analysis theory, I revealed narrative readings of four movements to aid interpretation, performance, and teaching. **[Slide]** By identifying pivotal moments and assigning characters to themes, I recognized elements of order and transgression and their interactions, influencing my musical performance. This approach helps performers understand the cultural background of each song, going beyond just reading the notes.

Falla believed that in popular music, spirit is more important than the lyrics. By combining narrative analysis with a deep understanding of Spanish style and its cultural significance, performers can bring an authentic and spirited interpretation to the piece. Likewise, by understanding how these movements may be interpreted as musical narratives, performers can interpret the music more authentically, capturing nuances and emotions that can help to create an effective performance of the work. This approach not only enhances the performance but also connects the audience more deeply with the music. I will now perform Manuel de Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*.