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FLAMENCO PURO: PURSUING TRUTH IN FLAMENCO AND LOOKING AT MY WORK IN REGARD TO FLAMENCO HISTORY

Marisol Encinias

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**“FLAMENCO PURO:
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LOOKING AT MY WORK IN REGARD TO
FLAMENCO HISTORY”**

BY

MARISOL ENCINIAS

B.A., Spanish and Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 2008

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Dance

The University of New Mexico
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memories of my grandmother Clarita García de Aranda Allison, my first flamenco teacher, and Cristobal Donaldo Albino Encinias, my father the engineer and artist who is with me always.

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Finally, thank you to the Lord who I hope to glorify with my work, and who makes all things possible.

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ABSTRACT

In flamenco there exists a conversation revolving around ideas of authenticity and purity. This dialogue advances a claim that there is “true” flamenco. From this discussion I extract for my research the idea of truth in flamenco, as opposed to true flamenco. This idea of truth moves away from the traditional purity dialogue. Stemming away from the insistence upon a single ideal of correctness, this pursuit focuses instead on searching for genuine comprehension in the art, this comprehension affords clarity and truth.

The concept of truth has been present in my mind as an artist for several years. I constantly seek to find a truthful and genuine voice in my creative journey. Though pursuing truth as an artist involves gaining awareness and skill in the technical, choreographic, and musical aesthetics that are central to flamenco, it also involves becoming familiar with flamenco in a broader way, by studying its history and culture.

In this paper I describe how I and other flamenco artists pursue truth, purity, and authenticity in flamenco. I look at how researchers pursue truth by demystifying the origins and development of flamenco; and I look at people and events that shaped modern manifestations of flamenco dance, especially those that inspire my work. I finish by describing my work currently and placing my work within the history of flamenco.

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Introduction

In the world of flamenco there has existed a long-standing conversation that revolves around ideas of legitimacy, authenticity, and purity. These ideas helped to advance a claim that there was a “real” or “true” flamenco. Subsequently, this assertion implied that there was also a fake flamenco. The standard for real flamenco was derived historically from the musical, choreographic, and cultural values and aesthetics of the performers combined with the tastes and expectations of the people for whom they performed.¹ As original and primary practitioners of the art, *Andaluces* (Andalusians) or *Gitanos-Andaluces* (Andalusian Gypsies) were pivotal in establishing these standards in conjunction with their audiences. Authority to do flamenco was habitually administered to people based on their racial affiliation to one of these two groups, or based on acceptance and adherence to the set standards. Attempting to perform flamenco that was “true” or “pure” became problematic for anyone not affiliated with those specific racial groups, as well for those who did not adhere to the specified standards.

Historically, purism in flamenco intensified as the practitioners of flamenco gradually changed, both demographically and individually, over time. Purism grew in significance at the beginning of the twentieth century as flamenco began to be presented around the world and performed by non-traditional practitioners, anyone not *Andaluz* or *Gitano-Andaluz*.² Change in individual practitioners occurred as they were influenced by other ideas and cultures, and as techniques and values evolved.

¹ Aspects of this conversation are from Toelken, Barre, *Dynamics of Folklore*, 34.

² This statement is supported by Washabaugh, William, *Flamenco: Passion, Politics, and Popular Culture*, 34.

As original and primary practitioners instrumental in creating flamenco *Andaluces* and *Gitanos-Andaluces* took ownership of the art. Flamenco became emblematic of them as a collective. Flamenco provided these historically marginalized groups admiration and respect. *Gitanos-Andaluces* (Andalusian Gypsies) particularly became admired for their skill as artists. Flamenco also provided economically disfavored artists a means by which to live. Fear of losing ownership as the form evolved and as other practitioners performed the art enflamed the purism dialogue.

Traditional practitioners and *aficionados* of flamenco continually warned of its potential demise due to outside influences and unbridled innovations that threatened the art. Many portrayed flamenco as an endangered species, a fossil in need of isolation and protection. Conversations of purism and authenticity revolved around the idea that flamenco had not changed and should not change; a standard of “tradition” had to be maintained.

Ideals of purism were also placed on flamenco from “outside” the art.³ Throughout its history, flamenco was a symbol of exoticism; its history and existence may well be tied to its commercialization as a romantic object or ideal. Romantic visions of an exotic Andalusia thrived on stages around the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;⁴ and some of the first documented accounts of flamenco come from European travelers in search of Andalusian Gypsy dance, music, and culture. These and other more modern audiences helped to shape the tradition of flamenco and proliferated the tendency to distinguish between what were pure and impure manifestations of the art.

³ See Hayes, Michelle H. *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance*, 40-41.

⁴ See Vaux, de F. F. *Mil Anos De Historia De Los Gitanos*, 152

Antiquated notions of what was pure and authentic in the art had a powerful role in flamenco's development. A dark shroud of absolutisms related to purism and authenticity was cast over the art and many who did flamenco felt the need to validate their work in relation to these ideals. Though the grip of these ideals has loosened slightly in this day and age, most people involved in the art are still aware of their presence and power. Many in flamenco continue to talk about their work in reference to these ideas.

From traditional discussions of purism, legitimacy, and authenticity in flamenco I have extracted for my research the idea of truth in flamenco. This idea of truth takes off from the traditional discussion; it stems away from the insistence upon an ideal of purity or correctness, and it moves on from the idea that there is one form of true flamenco that strictly adheres to this doctrine. In so doing, it grants authority to those not in accordance with what is accepted or authoritatively established as the true or right flamenco.

The pursuit of truth in flamenco involves lifting the old shroud of absolutisms to illuminate the art as it truly is, or has become. Hopefully this illumination will permit us to see purity and authenticity in another way. This pursuit of truth in flamenco focuses on genuine comprehension of the art. This comprehension involves, but is not limited to, learning flamenco history, scrutinizing the technical, aesthetic, and cultural nuances that are essential to the form, becoming aware of how named *flamencos* talk about the art, and looking at how artists in the field approach understanding and artistic growth. This comprehension affords clarity and truth.

The pursuit of truth in flamenco is personal for me as a non-traditional flamenco artist. As a flamenco dancer who lives and works in the United States I have long been

aware of the issue of purity in flamenco, and I have realized the implication of these issues in my own work. My pursuit of truth in flamenco has given me freedom as an artist and allowed me to create a philosophy that guides my work. This pursuit has also helped me to develop a clear and unique artistic voice.

This paper will discuss the topic of truth in flamenco in the following way. Chapter one will describe my background as a flamenco dancer as well as my pursuit of “true” flamenco as a young dancer. The chapter will describe how other flamenco artists talk about ideas of truth and purity. Additionally, the chapter will discuss problems that can arise in the pursuit of purity and authenticity.

Chapter two provides a short history of flamenco. The chapter looks at recent assertions on the origins of flamenco and describes how flamenco is investigated in this day and age. It provides a description of the cultural traditions that led up to flamenco; and finally, it closes with a depiction of flamenco as the distinct form we recognize today.

Chapter three looks at periods, people, and places important in the development of flamenco, specifically in relation to the development of flamenco dance in the public arena. This chapter provides a timeline that highlights key trends, events, and people that shaped modern manifestations of the art.

The fourth and final chapter looks at my current work in flamenco and discusses how I see the pursuit of truth evidenced by my dancing and teaching. The chapter closes with a discussion of where I see my work in the history of flamenco and how I see myself as a person who is shaping future manifestations of the form.

Much of my research for this work was conducted in Spanish. Inclusions of my research in the essay are provided in their original language. All translations are my own. I have tried to the best of my ability to remain faithful to the intention of the original Spanish text, but I am aware that the translations may be difficult to read. The translations are meant to be as literal as possible in order to relay the intention of the speaker. Lastly, in the work I will italicize the word flamenco (*flamenco*) to indicate someone who does flamenco or is a part of that culture.

Chapter One: “Pursuing Truth”

“True Flamenco And Going To Spain”

In 1959, American flamenco enthusiast and guitarist Donn E. Pohren, from Minneapolis, Minnesota, travelled to Spain in order to conduct research for a book. His goal in writing this book was to “...inform the English-speaking world of the true flamenco.”⁵ The dedication of this publication, entitled *The Art of Flamenco* (1962), reads, “To the true flamencos, a rare breed in danger of extinction.” This was a return trip to Spain for Pohren who had travelled there previously studying, performing, and teaching flamenco guitar under the name of Daniel Maravilla.

I was in college in the early nineties when I read Pohren’s book. I took it with me on my trip to Spain in the fall of 1990. I went to Spain as part of an exchange program between the University of New Mexico and the Universidad de Granada, but my real reason for going was to study and be around flamenco. I like countless other Americans motivated by his writing was off to find “true” flamenco, to encounter what flamenco historian José María Velázquez-Gastelu called a mythical “lost paradise, the *Shangri-La* of a musical world hidden since ancient times, the land of promise, the *El Dorado* of dreams.”⁶

I grew up dancing flamenco in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My grandmother, Clarita García, had a Spanish dance school at her home on the corner of Edith and

⁵ Pohren, Donn E. *The Art of Flamenco*, found on the inside fold of the book cover in the author’s biography.

⁶ Velázquez-Gastelu, José María. “The Mirror of a Distant Land,” *Flamenco Project: Una Ventana a La Visión Extranjera*, 1960-1985, 64. Velázquez-Gastelu is describing Moron de la Frontera in this passage, a region in Andalucía famous for flamenco. This area and its *Gitano* culture became a utopic destination for foreigners like Donn Pohren and those he inspired. Here Velázquez-Gastelu describes how Americans wandered to Spain, in search of this fairytale land, in search of a product, and despite good intentions, they would exploit, as the Spanish had done several centuries before in the Americas.

Candelaria road. My mother and her siblings danced from the time they were very young, and my mother's brother, Donald, played flamenco guitar. After having studied and been around flamenco all of my life, I was on my way to further my studies in Spain and see what flamenco was like there. I wondered how flamenco in Spain would be different from the flamenco I knew.

I remember arriving in Madrid and asking the taxi-driver from the airport to take me to *El Amor de Dios* (God's Love).⁷ *El Amor de Dios* was a renowned flamenco and Spanish dance school located in Madrid. The driver laughed at my expense, making fun of how I had asked him to take me to God's love. He obviously was not familiar with the celebrated studio. I told him it was a flamenco school; he still did not seem impressed or interested. I learned quickly that not everyone in Spain was a flamenco enthusiast. He finally took me to *El Amor de Dios* and I watched some classes in the small, run down establishment. I remember being nervous and a little scared. The people who worked in the school were abrupt and not extremely helpful. They were accustomed to and maybe a little tired of dealing with foreigners like me. Foreigners were everywhere.

Shortly after, I travelled to Granada, where I was supposed to go to the University. I did report to the University, though I did not go to class often. I spent most of my time in Granada trying to find flamenco. I hung out in the *Albacín* and frequented clubs in the *Sacromonte*.⁸⁹ I rented a *piso* (an apartment) in the *Cartuja*, an area where

⁷ It was given its name because of its original location on the Calle Amor de Dios. The school was established in 1953 as a rehearsal studio for the company of Antonio. The school has since changed locations but continues to be a premier school of dance in Madrid.

⁸ An old windy and picturesque neighborhood of Granada, located adjacent to the Alhambra.

⁹ The Sacromonte is a neighborhood in Granada situated on the top of a hill, just up from the Alhambra. This area was inhabited historically and is still inhabited today by many *Gitanos*. The *cuevas* of the Sacromonte are popular tourist stops where flamenco shows take place daily. Flamenco classes are conducted in some of these *cuevas* by day.

many *Gitanos* lived and went to a few performances. I saw a young Javier Barón dance in a crazy locale called *Jardines Neptuno*. The owner of this establishment was a former dancer who regularly presented flamenco. The inside of the place was decorated with artificial vines and other fake foliage and different colored lights were cast around the space; the place was strange and surreal but it was where flamenco happened. I took a few dance classes with Mariquilla, but felt awkward, my tall blonde friend and myself stood out in the crowd because the majority of her students were children.¹⁰ Eventually I started taking classes with a Japanese woman who lived in the *Sacromonte* named Eiko. She was a good dancer and teacher who seemed to be respected by *flamencos* in Granada. She taught a number of foreigners, but it felt odd to be studying flamenco in Spain with a Japanese woman. Eiko scolded me often about my technique, but I did not pay much attention; I did not understand what she was trying to tell me on many levels.

I travelled to Sevilla a few times to take classes and see shows. I went to the Manolo Marín flamenco school.¹¹ His classes were packed with a number of foreigners again, though sometimes it was hard to tell who was a foreigner or not, many of them did a good job of disguising themselves as locals. I was not allowed to take the class I wanted to at his school. I had to start in a lower level and in these classes he often did not teach himself; his students ran them. I attended one night a performance that was to kick off *La Bienal de Flamenco* in Sevilla.¹² This performance took place in an outdoor venue

¹⁰ Mariquilla is a dancer from Granada. She has had an established flamenco academy in Granada for decades.

¹¹ Manolo Dominguez Marín, born in 1936 is a dancer, choreographer and teacher from Sevilla

¹² La Bienal de Flamenco Sevilla is a bi-annual flamenco festival, initiated in 1980. It is the largest flamenco festival of its kind, transpiring over the course of a month, and is one of the oldest that is still in existence.

in the old *Barrio de Triana*.¹³ This particular performance showcased *extranjeros* (foreigners). I knew the dancer performing in the show, San Franciscan Monica Bermudez. Bermudez had studied in Sevilla for many years. She, like many others, would alternate between studying in Sevilla and performing and teaching in the United States. She performed well in the *Bienal* and I remember feeling encouraged by what I saw her accomplish in that setting. Bermudez had performed in the *Bienal*, even if it was in an evening of *extranjeros*.

A friend of mine named Emilia who also studied flamenco in Albuquerque was in Sevilla at the same time. She met, upon arriving in Sevilla, a dancer named Andrés Marín and introduced him to me.¹⁴ Marín warned us not to give money to the flamenco teachers in the city. He said everyone would claim to be able to teach us flamenco, but assured us that his father was really the person to study with. According to Marín, his father was the best dancer/teacher around.

My friend Emilia and Andrés ended up getting married. I have not seen her since, but did hear from her husband that she is doing well, assisting him in his work as an artist and raising their children.¹⁵ Ironically, although she lives in Spain, she no longer dances.

I came back to the United States after three months in Spain, right before Christmas. It was expensive to live there and not something my family could afford at the time. My experiences in Spain stayed with me, particularly those experiences that seemed odd. In thinking about my time there, some things seemed a bit circus-like,

¹³ A picturesque neighborhood of Sevilla known historically as a birth place of flamenco and home to many *Gitanos*

¹⁴ Andrés Marín is a prominent flamenco dancer today who is presented in the world's top flamenco festivals.

¹⁵ Andrés has come to Albuquerque, NM a couple of times to perform in its annual flamenco festival. When in Albuquerque, I have asked him for his wife.

surreal, or at least not what I expected. I was struck by how foreigners were everywhere, looking for real flamenco, but surrounded by each other. The art of flamenco was a product or service that was marketed and sold. I kept looking for authenticity, though I'm not sure that I ever found it. I might have been looking in the wrong places or perhaps, as a foreigner; I did not have access to those places. I also might have been looking for an ideal that really did not exist. There was flamenco in Spain, but it was not the image of "true" flamenco that I had imagined.

I continued to dance in Albuquerque for a few years before taking a leave of absence from dancing for several more. Even during the years that I did not dance I danced when I would come home to Albuquerque.¹⁶ My mother and brother were both dancers, teachers and performers, and dancing was a large part of what we did at home.

Eventually I moved back to Albuquerque and started dancing full-time. When I started dancing seriously, I soon saw that it was all or nothing. I could not dance and do anything else at the same time. I started spending a good deal of time in the studio. Dancing and flamenco became an obsession, this time more than ever. My sense of security as an artist increased as I danced more, it felt more real. Still I was aware of the issue of purity and authenticity in dancing flamenco, reminded of it in the conversations and matters that came up doing the art. I wondered every now and then if what I was producing as a dancer was authentic; and if not, what would make it so and how could I be sure it was?

“Si No Siguiera Contando Una Verdad Mía, No Podría Bailar Más...”

One day while searching the Internet for flamenco clips and materials, I came upon an interview with flamenco dance visionary Israel Galván (1973-). In the interview,

¹⁶ I lived in northern Mexico for nearly nine years.

Galván states “*Si no siguiera contando una verdad mía, no podría bailar más*” (if I did not continue to speak my truth, I would no longer be able to dance).¹⁷ Within the context of the interview his statement was logical; Galván was justifying his unorthodox interpretation of flamenco, but as I reflected on this quote, his words continued to resonate. In this case, Israel Galván, the so-called “*bicho raro*” (rare creature), was turning the tables on the age-old flamenco dialogue.¹⁸ The revolutionary was speaking about truth and authenticity and using this argument in his defense. Galván was questioning the flamenco *status quo*.

Interestingly, truth for Galván did not lie in flamenco being always the same. Truth in flamenco could and probably should be and look different for different people. Galván was saying in the interview he needed to be able to do something because it interested or challenged him regardless of whether it was old, new or different.

Galván explains these ideas further in a separate interview conducted in May of 2011, “*La tradición es muy importante. Si no hay tradición, se pierde todo. Intento llevar la tradición mía, cada vez más*” (Tradition is very important. If there is no tradition, all is lost. I try to bring in my own tradition, more and more). Galván continues by stating, “*Creo que lo puro sí es tradición y estética y energía flamenca. Un flamenco llama a un taxi o a un camarero de otra manera que otra persona? Esa tradición es la que no hay*

¹⁷ Calado, Silvia. “Si No Siguiera Contando Una Verdad Mía, No Podría Bailar Más: Entrevista con Israel Galván.” *Flamenco-World.com: La Web del Flamenco*. Flamenco-World, October 2006. Web. 20 October 2009.

¹⁸ Maesso, Juan Antonio. “Un Bicho Raro...” *El País*. 20 April 2007. Dance critic for *El País*, Juan Antonio Maesso, writes in his review titled “Un Bicho Raro...” “qué quieren que les diga, me gusta verlo bailar. Sencillamente porque no es previsible. En el flamenco, y habla un simple espectador, casi todo está escrito. Sin embargo a Israel, el insecto de La metamorfosis,...lo quiera o no lo quiera, siempre le sale algo nuevo” (what do you want me to say, I like to see him dance; simply because he is not predictable. In flamenco, speaking as a mere spectator, almost everything is predetermined. Yet somehow from Israel, that metamorphic insect...like him or not, something new always comes out)

que perder” (I think purity is tradition and aesthetic and “flamenco energy.” Does a *flamenco* call a cab or a waiter in a different way than someone else? That is the tradition that should not be lost).^{19 20} Galván is saying that our humanity is the tradition that should not be lost. The human elements we share, the things that make us similar are pure. Purity in flamenco does not lie in convention. According to Galván, purity in flamenco lies in humanness combined with aesthetic and an energy that is particularly flamenco. Galván goes on to say, “*Si te fijas en toda la evolución del baile, para mí los bailaores más impuros son Farruco y Carmen Amaya porque rompieron con lo que había. ¿Quién había bailado antes como Farruco? Nadie. Lo rompió todo. ¿Y ahora es puro? No...*” (“If you look at the whole evolution of the dance, for me the most impure dancers are Farruco and Carmen Amaya because they broke away from what existed up to there. Who had danced before like Farruco? No one. He broke everything. And now he is pure? No...”).²¹ Galván claims Farruco and Amaya were “*impuros*” (impure). This is unheard of in the world of flamenco. It could be considered sacrilegious. Farruco and Amaya are idolized pillars of the art especially recognized for their purity. He argues that if purity revolves around being the same then these two artists were really impure because they were totally different, what they did as dancers had never been seen before. Here, Galván reverses the argument again; points out the contradiction and uses it to make his point.²²

¹⁹ Calado, Silvia. "Israel Galván, Bailaor, Entrevista: Ahora Estoy Más Pendiente De Lo Espiritual Que De Lo Físico" *Flamenco - world.com / La web del flamenco / The flamenco website*. Flamenco-world.com, 13 May 2011.

²⁰ A *flamenco* is a person who does flamenco. Historically, a *flamenco* was a Gypsy from Andalucía. The terms *flamenco* and *Gitano* are often used synonymously. Today the scope of *flamencos* has broadened to include practitioners of the art from outside its original group.

²¹ Calado, Silvia. "Israel Galván, Bailaor, Entrevista: Ahora Estoy Más Pendiente De Lo Espiritual Que De Lo Físico" *Flamenco - world.com / La web del flamenco / The flamenco website*. Flamenco-world.com, 13 May 2011.

²² Farruco and Carmen Amaya were both *Gitanos*, recognized for their outstanding ability, but

Israel Galván as a person is emblematic of everything that would normally be flamenco. He is a Spaniard from Sevilla, the geographical heart of flamenco, the son of dancers and a *Gitano* on his mother's side of the family, but Galván makes artistic choices that make him different. This difference causes many to question the purity and authenticity of his dancing. A performance review of Israel Galván titled "*Belleza Fuera de lo Común*" (Uncommon Beauty) by dance critic Ángel Álvarez Caballero states "*Poco de lo que asoma a este escenario puede juzgarse según los cánones ya conocidos del baile flamenco*" (little of what appeared on stage can be judged within the known canons of flamenco)²³ Ángel Álvarez Caballero states that his work is different but also uncommonly beautiful. Although there are some who dislike or resent Galván and his work, many see Galván as a luminary, a hero who endures rejection for an opportunity to voice other possibilities and embrace difference.

Before leaving the topic of Israel Galván, his flamenco, and how he sees the concepts of truth and purity, I want to mention one more comment he made in another interview. Here he states, "*Pero lo que yo hago, subrayo, es flamenco. Flamenco poco ortodoxo, un poco raro y delirante si quieres. Pero flamenco*" (But what I do, stressed and underlined, is flamenco. Flamenco that is a little unorthodox, a little weird and crazy if you want, but flamenco). Galván insists that he is a flamenco dancer. Some say now and then that what he does is not flamenco, some liken his work to modern dance but

also singled-out for their purity as artists. Both of these artists used their persona and history to buildup their image as legendary status. Carmen Amaya was hailed the "Queen of the Gypsies." Farruco says of himself, "Soy un Gitano verdadero, de los más puros. He perpetuado mi raza y guardo con tesón nuestras costumbres. Tengo el orgullo de haber casado a mis cinco hijas con Gitanos, en cinco Bodas de Gloria..." (I am a true gypsy, one of the purest. I perpetuated my race and keep our customs tenaciously. I have the pride of having my five daughters married to Gypsies in five Bodas de Gloria...) (Álvarez, *El Baile Flamenco* 330).

²³ Caballero, Ángel Álvarez. "Belleza Fuera de lo Común." *El País* 14 January 2007.

Galván maintains this is not true. Galván is a flamenco dancer who probes, questions, and makes people think about flamenco, but he is a flamenco dancer nonetheless. This self-proclaimed flamenco purist opens the doors for others who are different and provides another way to look at tradition, purity and truth.

“Problems In Pursuing Truth And Forgetting”

Pursuing truth in flamenco can be problematic. Feeling authentic and real as an artist in a culturally aligned art form like flamenco can be especially precarious when you are not a member of that culture. Practitioners of flamenco including foreigners (*guiris*) and non-gypsies (*payos*) approach this pursuit in many ways, the most common of which would be through hard work and diligence.²⁴ Sometimes, however, truth and purity are pursued in complex and seemingly contradictory ways.

Many, such as Donn Pohren alias Daniel Maravilla or Antonio Esteves Ródenas alias Antonio Gades (1936-2004), assume other names and by extension, other identities.²⁵ A number of people, particularly those who do not look typically flamenco (like *Gitanos*, stereotypically dark and bohemian looking), change their appearance by darkening their hair, tanning their skin, and/or dressing and speaking *agitanao* (with Spanish Gypsy style).²⁶ Again, as with Pohren who passed away in Spain in 2007, many decide to move to Spain indefinitely, in order to live, learn and be near flamenco. Others afford themselves authority by inventing pasts that make their ties to the art stronger or

²⁴ *Guiri* is a colloquial Spanish and Catalan name used in Spain applied to foreigners. A Payo for a term used by *Gitanos* from Andalucía for a person who does not belong to their race.

²⁵ Antonio Gades was a celebrated Spanish dancer whose impressive career spanned over four decades from the 1950s through to near the end of the century. Gades helped to popularize flamenco on the international stage.

²⁶ *Agitanao* can refer to something with Gypsy flair. The term is used in reference to foreigners who become enamored with flamenco or Gitano culture and take on a Gypsy identity. To speak in this manner would mean to assume a Gypsy or Andalusian intonation or pronunciation and/or dialect when speaking.

more real. The result of all of these devices provides a semblance of security though in the end this type of security or authority may be short-lived and inconsequential.

Eiko Takahashi, the Japanese flamenco dancer I mentioned earlier (who teaches to this day in Granada), moved to Spain in 1983 to study flamenco. A performance review of a show she presented in her adopted hometown of Granada in 2011 states, “*Decir que Eiko es una histórica del flamenco granadino no es mentir. Por años, tiempo invertido en esta tierra e ilusión en formación flamenco, merece esa calificación*” (To say that Eiko is historic to Granada flamenco is not lying. For the years, the time spent in this place and dedication to flamenco training, she deserves that credit).²⁷ Eiko’s performance review goes on to describe her greatest attribute as a dancer according to the critic along with a short description of the show she presented. The title of her show was “*Eiko y Sus Cerecitas de Japon*” (Eiko and Her Little Cherries From Japan) taking place at the *Auditorio La Chumbera-Enrique Morente* on May 7, 2011.²⁸

*“De hecho creo que **su amor por el baile es la mejor arma que tiene [Eiko] a la hora de subirse a un escenario. Pero esta ocasión era especial, ya que con motivo de sus treinta años en España, decidió presentar a lo mejor de su primera hornada de alumnas a modo de fiestas de fin de curso. Seis japonesas de diferentes edades y habilidades para esto del baile pero cargadas, a partes iguales, de nervios y deseos de bailar en Granada**”*

(Actually, I think **[Eiko’s] love of dance is her best weapon** when it comes time to rise up onto a stage. But this occasion was special, in celebration of her thirty years in Spain, Eiko decided to showcase her best group of students as part of her end of session festivities. Six Japanese dancers of all ages and abilities, all energized, feeling equally nervous and

²⁷ Rojas, José Manuel. "Fiesta Nipona: Crítica Flamenco José Manuel Rojas." *Baile Flamenco Eiko Takahashi*. Eiko Takahashi, 7 May 2011. Web. 28 Mar. 2012. <www.ecoflamenco.com/es.html>

²⁸ The title of her show is interesting, a title that she most likely chose herself. It summons images of little red dots, Japanese cherries, dancing flamenco on a stage in Granada being led by their matriarch, La Eiko and supported by a handful of Spanish musicians, and a mixed crowd of supporters who venture out to see the spectacle.

eager to dance in Granada [emphasis mine]).²⁹

The first line of the review, “*De hecho creo que su amor por el baile es la mejor arma que tiene a la hora de subirse a un escenario,*” casts a shadow of doubt on Eiko as an artist. The reviewer did not refer to her skill or artistry in describing her greatest weapon. Instead he stated that both her and her students’ enthusiasm and *afición* were their strengths, and what they should be commended for. Patronizing tones ring out in the commentary, patronization that cannot be avoided even after more than thirty years of dedication to the art.

Flamenco investigator and critic Alfredo Grimaldos includes in his book, *Historia Social Del Flamenco* (2010), a chapter titled “*AGITANAO.*”^{30 31} The chapter consists of short biographies created from personal interviews conducted by the author of a handful of foreigners who moved to Spain to do flamenco in different capacities. Donn Pohren is among those described. The chapter also includes a description of flamenco’s power to allure, influence and even “trap” foreigners who happen to come into contact with it.

*Sus peculiares claves internas y la fuerza comunicativa que lo caracteriza han conseguido **atrapar**, a lo largo de los últimos siglos, a numerosos artistas nacidos lejos de la Península Ibérica. Pintores, fotógrafos, músicos y novelistas, además de todo tipo de viajeros y turistas, se han quedado irreversiblemente prendados de la magia propia del cante, el toque y el baile, tras conocer algunas de **sus manifestaciones mas genuinas.***

(The unique internal qualities and communicative power that define [flamenco] have allowed it to **trap**, over the last centuries, many artists born far from the Iberian Peninsula. Painters, photographers, musicians

²⁹ Rojas, José Manuel. "Fiesta Nipona: Crítica Flamenco José Manuel Rojas." *Baile Flamenco Eiko Takahashi*. Eiko Takahashi, 7 May 2011. Web. 28 Mar. 2012. <www.ecoflamenco.com/es.html>

³⁰ Alfredo Grimaldos is licensed in Information Sciences, and works as a journalist who focuses on the investigation and critique of flamenco. His book is comprised of many rare and interesting interviews of flamenco artists conducted by the author over several decades.

³¹ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 167-182.

and novelists, as well as travelers and tourists, have fallen irreversibly in love with the magic of the song itself, the music and dance, after encountering some of its **most genuine manifestations** [emphasis mine]).³²

I emphasize the word “*atrapar*” because it offers a romantic yet somewhat belittling image of foreigners as unknowing people ensnared by the irresistible power of flamenco; in this image the foreigners are innocent, in some way weak, while the flamenco and those who perform the “*manifestaciones más genuinas*” are strong. The phrase “...*tras conocer algunas de sus manifestaciones más genuinas*” also stands out due to its affirmation that the most pure manifestations have the power to allure. This then questions what are these pure manifestations and is this assertion historically reliable.

A particularly interesting, if not entertaining, part of the “*AGITANAO*” chapter deals with a man nicknamed “El Pollito,” an American who “*se aflamencó en el Sacromonte granadino*” (was flamenco-ized in the Sacromonte of Granada). “El Pollito” is originally Johnny Lane from San José, California. Grimaldo describes “El Pollito” as “*Sin duda, el artista flamenco norteamericano que ha tenido más capacidad para olvidar la entonación de su lengua natal y sustituirla por los aromas fonéticos del caló*” (Undoubtedly, the North American flamenco artist who has had the most capacity to **forget** the intonation of his native tongue and **replace** it with the **phonetic aromas** of *caló* [emphasis mine]).^{33 34} “El Pollito” is commended by the author for his ability to

³² Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 167.

³³ *Caló* literally is ‘speech’ or ‘slang’. It originally defined the Spanish gypsy dialect. This term is also the name of a dialect used by some Hispanics (Mexican Americans- Chicanos) particularly from New Mexico. This dialect is a combination of Hispanicized English and Anglicized Spanish, similar to the *caló* of *Gitanos*.

³⁴ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 270.

“forget” his native intonation and “substitute” it for the “*aromas fonéticos*” of the Gypsy language. “El Pollito” forgets and substitutes things in the pursuit of becoming real.

In the interview with Grimaldo, “El Pollito” describes working in Spain where “*Al principio, al ser tan rubio, llamaba mucho la atención...en el tablao querían que me tiñese para dar mejor imagen, y tuve que pintarme el pelo y las cejas de negro, con un bote de Kanfort, pero después, en plena actuación, el tinte se derritió con el calor de los focos, empezaron a caerme chorretones por la cara y aquello fue un desastre*” (In the Beginning, being fair skinned, attracted a lot of attention ... in the *tablao* they wanted me to dye my hair, to give a better image, and I had to dye my hair and eyebrows black, with a can of Kanfort, but then in middle of my act, the dye started to melt from the heat of the lights, huge streams began to fall over my face and it was a disaster).^{35 36} In the amusing story described, “El Pollito” ends up looking ridiculous in his attempt to make himself appear more flamenco. I assert that the author’s inclusion of stories such as these demonstrates not only the existence of this behavior among foreigners striving to be real, but it also demonstrates a feeling held by many *flamencos* that foreigners are naïve and mostly incapable of being real or authentic in flamenco. Authenticity and authority are not commonly granted to foreigners doing flamenco.

Performance studies offers interesting insight into the situations and topic described in this section. Performance theory scholar Diana Taylor claims, performance (all types of performance from that performed in everyday life to that performed on a

³⁵ A *tablao* is a stage or establishment dedicated to flamenco performance. It is unique for its relatively small size. A *cuadro flamenco* consisting typically of a singer, dancer, guitarist and palmero (hand-clapper) performs in this space.

³⁶ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 271.

stage) is a "...system of learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge."³⁷ She asserts, "Performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity..."³⁸ These identities created in performance, both on stage and in everyday life become real especially to the performers. Joseph Roach, a professor of English and scholar who studies performance, also deals with concepts of "memory" and "forgetting" in his work.³⁹ Roach argues that performances, what he calls "performances of memory," also enact forgetting. Roach asserts that performances of memory and performances of identity often connect idealized or invented pasts to manipulated futures. This connection is made when something is forgotten. The act of forgetting is apparent in these performances of flamenco. In flamenco, a collective "amnesia" as Roach would call it, is often found amongst groups of *Gitanos*, *payos* and *guiris* alike. I would like to add that this is a common occurrence in performance, not unique to flamenco.

Antonio Gades, flamenco dance legend, complained about the common tendency to forget teachers in flamenco, to ignore or erase from memory the fact that someone was responsible for teaching you what you know. "*A cada uno de nosotros nos cogía un maestro y nos enseñaba lo que ellos sabían... hoy en día se habla poco de los maestros, y cuando alguien alcanza el éxito, parece como si fuese lo mas natural del mundo*" (Each one of us was taken in by a teacher and taught what they knew ... today there is little talk of teachers, and when someone achieves success, it seems like the most natural thing in

³⁷ Taylor, Diana, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 16.

³⁸ Taylor, Diana, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 2.

³⁹ Roach, Joseph, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, 122.

the world that it came out of nowhere).⁴⁰ The great Farruco (1935-1997) claimed he learned to dance from horses and in his mother's womb, "*Imaginate a aquella gitana con el lio, los caminos, las canastas y yo por dentro...*" (Imagine that Gypsy woman with a mess on her hands, the road, the baskets, and me inside...).⁴¹ This is certainly a romantic image of Farruco dancing in his mother's belly before anyone could teach him. Vicente Escudero (1888-1980), the celebrated dancer from the *Opera Flamenco* period of the early twentieth century claimed he learned to dance from watching cats and the leaves on trees; he also apparently did not owe his training to anybody.⁴² To proclaim to be "autodidacto" (self-taught) is common in flamenco. This trait goes well with the mystery and sense of timelessness that shrouds the art. The act of claiming to be self-taught also augments ownership and authority to artists. The artist is not indebted to a teacher but is solely responsible for his work; he or she themselves is the authority.

The famed singer and renowned anthologist Antonio Mairena (1909-1983) is idolized in the world of music and flamenco for a musical compilation he assembled and recorded in the 1950s and 60s, *Antología del Cante Flamenco y Cante Gitano*. Captured in the work are a number of the most central figures of the *cante*. This work is important for its historical attributes and the diversity of content evidenced in its rare music and poetry. Despite Mairena's tremendous contribution, he is often criticized this day and age for his act of "forgetting." Flamenco historian José Manuel Gamboa is one of several who criticizes and refutes Mairena's creation of "an artificial distinction" made between flamenco and Gypsy-Andalusian song, *cante flamenco* and *cante Gitano-Andaluz*.

⁴⁰ "Antonio Gades; Página Web Oficial. "Portales de Contenidos Latinos," *Portal Latino, Musica y Cultura, Culturales, Musicales*.

⁴¹ Álvarez, Caballero A., *El Baile Flamenco*, 330.

⁴² Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 196.

Modern investigation of flamenco *cante* insists that no such distinction can credibly be made; doing so would involve forgetting the past and inventing memory. This act of forgetting provided the *Gitano-Andaluz* (Andalusian Gypsy) sole ownership of a particular branch of flamenco music, providing the *Gitano-Andaluz* additional authority as artists of *flamencos*.

José Manuel Gamboa is the author of the CD liner notes titled “On How To Survive In The Stormy Water Of ‘Flamencoid’ Speculation: Upon The Art Of Demystifying.”⁴³ These liner notes, created in 2001, precede the original notes included in Mairena’s collection and accompany all modern releases of the CD. It seems Gamboa’s addition to the CD is intended to “right” the “wrong” of forgetting committed by Mairena. These notes acknowledge the other side of the argument. The distinction of these two types of *cante* is the premise of Mairena’s work. With this work, Mariena claimed to be “*Poniendo las cosas en su sitio*” (Putting things in their place).⁴⁴ Surely, Mairena believed his assertions, as do many people to this day. Mairena may have gotten it wrong in some instances, but in others he got it very right. This is admitted by his greatest critic, José Manuel Gamboa, who describes the value of Mairena’s contribution to flamenco as a singer and even as a historian. His act of forgetting does not cancel out the entirety of his work.

There is also “forgetting” in my own history as a dancer. I spent my youth believing I had an authentic tie to flamenco because my family has Spanish origins. There may be truth to the fact that people of Hispanic heritage are drawn to

⁴³Gamboa, José Manuel and Pedro Calvo. CD Booklet. “On How To Survive In The Stormy Water Of ‘Flamencoid’ Speculation: Upon The Art Of Demystifying.” *Antología del Cante Flamenco y Cante Gitano*, 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

manifestations of that culture, but my understanding of the situation became more extreme.

My grandmother on my mother's side, Clarita Garcia, would say she was Spanish (this of course is not uncommon in New Mexico, especially amongst people of my grandmother's generation).⁴⁵ My great-grandmother Juanita was adopted. This adoption created a hole in our family history, a place from which to "forget". The memory of being Spanish grew for me from this place. I do not remember specifically my grandmother Clarita telling me that her mother Juanita was a Gypsy, but that is what I came to understand. That was the story or memory that grew in my mind. As I got older, I started to wonder. How did she get here? How would that happen? The claim began to seem improbable, but the claim granted my family and me authority.

My grandmother Clarita was a singer and dancer of flamenco. Her brothers, sisters, and cousins danced as well. Her eldest brother Antonio travelled in the army early in the twentieth century. In his travels, he came in contact with flamenco and other forms of "Latin" dancing, eventually marrying a woman who was a dancer while he was away from New Mexico. When they returned to New Mexico, together they opened a flamenco school on the corner of Lead and Second Street. My grandmother also danced a good deal with her cousin Nino García, a pianist and dancer who frequented the East Coast and eventually worked at the Metropolitan Opera. My grandmother herself travelled to Washington D.C. in the forties to work for the navy as a translator. She was an avid ballroom dancer and apparently lured in my grandfather, an engineer and inventor

⁴⁵ My grandmother was born in the neighborhood of *Los Candelarias* in Albuquerque. Her mother, Juanita, grew up down the road from there, in a neighborhood called *Los Duranes*, and her father, Nevarez, was a Garcia from the area of *Los Griegos* and *Los Candelarias*.

with her skill as a dancer and rare beauty. They married and moved to Albuquerque where they opened a studio, “Clarita’s School of Dance.”

My grandmother grew to become an accomplished singer and dancer, dancing flamenco in the beautiful style of her generation with her own unique twist. Her grace and skill as a dancer are an inspiration to me today. My grandmother was inspired by the likes of Carmen Amaya, Antonio and Rosario, Roberto Ximénez, Manolo Vargas, Pilar López, Bambino and Peret. She had opportunities to see some of these companies as they toured the United States, due in part to the work of the legendary impresario Sol Hurok.⁴⁶ My grandmother was also able to travel to Spain in the 1960s, when my grandfather, Donald Allison took his family on a cruise to Europe. They stayed in Spain for a month and went nightly to see fantastic flamenco in Madrid’s best *tablaos*. These experiences shaped my grandmother’s life as artist, as they did my mother’s. This is evidenced by the way in which she has presented the world’s best flamenco dancers in Albuquerque, New Mexico in a prominent international flamenco festival titled Festival Flamenco Internacional de Alburquerque for the last twenty-five years.

My grandmother’s “forgetting” was not intentional. My grandmother truly understood herself to be Spanish. How we identify ourselves in the complex societies and cultures in which we live is complicated. Myself, I like knowing I am not Spanish, at least not anymore Spanish than anyone else whose family history is somehow tied to the Spanish diaspora resulting from the Spanish conquest of the Americas; interestingly, I like knowing that I do not do flamenco because I am Spanish.

⁴⁶ Robinson, Harlow. "Sol Hurok: America's Dance Impresario" *Find Articles | News Articles, Magazine Back Issues & Reference Articles on All Topics*. Dance Magazine, 10 Nov. 1994. Web. 22 Mar. 2012.
<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1083/is_n11_v68/ai_15923029/?tag=content;col1>.

In some ways the “truth” behind the memory is inconsequential. In performances of memory I believe the performance is as important as the memory. The act of doing the performance is also real. What makes the people discussed in this chapter’s flamenco true is the act of them practicing, feeling, understanding, performing, and contributing to the art. The individuals that have done flamenco and still do flamenco create and recreate it in a continuous cycle. Surely, each person’s influence is distinct and his or her interpretation is different, but that is what makes his or her flamenco pure.

Chapter Two: “Some Flamenco History”

“On Origins...”

On the origins of flamenco, sociologist Gerhard Steingress makes the following profound statement in his book *Sobre Flamenco y Flamencología*:

Empecemos con el argumento más fuerte, el...flamenco no es un género que naciera en el ambiente hermético de unas familias gitanas de Andalucía, no es la herencia de la lejana India, y tampoco es el fruto del encuentro de los gitanos con la cultura musulmana de esa región. Tampoco es el “grito,” el “quejío” de una “raza andaluza” o de cualquier “fusión racial”: en contra de estas dudosas interpretaciones y basándonos en datos concretos y fiables podemos decir que el cante flamenco es un género artístico moderno, creado y sintetizado como respuesta a determinadas necesidades estéticas a base de algunos de los restos poéticos, musicales, y coreográficos de la anterior compleja cultura tradicional y popular en vía de desaparición a principios del siglo XIX...hay que buscar su origen sobre todo entre los artistas mismos que hicieron posible su consecutiva formación y perfección a lo largo de la historia, que comienza lentamente en la primera mitad del siglo pasado para aparecer en público de manera definitiva sólo a partir del 1850. El cante tal como lo conocemos hoy, es el producto del siglo XIX, más precisamente, de la segunda mitad, de la época del romanticismo europeo en Andalucía, de un peculiar ambiente de músicos y poetas románticos de corte popular y suburbano, o sea, de una “bohemia andaluza,” del “underground” musical sevillano del XIX, semejante en sus rasgos al de la música rock de los años sesenta de nuestro siglo.

(Let us begin with the toughest argument,... flamenco is not a genre born in the hermetic environment of Gypsy families in Andalucía, it is not a legacy of a distant India, nor is it the result of the meeting of Gypsies and Muslim culture of that region [Andalucía]. It also is not the "cry," the "quejío"⁴⁷ of the "Andalusian race" or any "racial fusion": In contrary to these dubious interpretations and based on concrete and reliable facts we can say that flamenco is a modern artistic genre, created and synthesized as a response to certain aesthetic needs built on some of the poetic, musical, and choreographic remnants of the previous complex of traditional culture en route to disappear in the early part of the nineteenth century ... we must seek its origin above all among the artists themselves who made its consecutive formation and perfection over the length of its history, beginning slowly in the first half of last century and appearing in public definitively in 1850. The song as we know it today is a product of the nineteenth century, more precisely, of its second half, the period of

⁴⁷ *Quejío* is a breaking of the voice, a kind of weep performed by a singer.

European Romanticism in Andalusia, of a peculiar atmosphere of romantic musicians and poets, of a popular and suburban assembly, or, of an "Andalusia Bohemia," the "underground" music of nineteenth century Seville, similar in traits to rock music of the sixties of this century)⁴⁸

The author's comments are revolutionary and shocking, but similarly enlightening and liberating. He asks us to put aside conventional ideas of the genre, what he calls "Flamenco Folklore;" folklore anchored in disputable myths of origin and romantic ideals pertaining to people, poetry, music and the transfer of immaterial culture.⁴⁹ Steingress asks us to extract our image of flamenco from a primordial dwelling and place it in the modern world, alongside the likes of rock music. Doing so allows us to see past the exotic nature of flamenco. We see flamenco as a cultural manifestation that is complicated but comprehensible. We can see our role in its creation as a modern art because it pulls it toward us in time and away from a far off place in history.

Anthropologist Cristina Cruces Roldán who looks at issues of gender, work and identity in her work on flamenco claims the study of flamenco "*es todavía un edificio por construir*" (is still a building to construct) especially when compared to other types of oral-music expression.⁵⁰ Roldán addresses habits in the study of flamenco that block a truly scientific investigation of the art. In describing these habits she claims, "*uno de lo más terribles tiene que ver con el hábito de pensar el flamenco como fábrica de recuerdos, como ilusión de pertenencias...*" (one of the most harmful is associated with the habit of imaging flamenco as a product of memories, as an illusion of ownership...)⁵¹

⁴⁸ Steingress, Gerhard. *Sobre Flamenco Y Flamencología: (escritos Escogidos 1988-1998)*, 47-48.

⁴⁹ Steingress, Gerhard. *Sobre Flamenco Y Flamencología: (escritos Escogidos 1988-1998)*, 225.

⁵⁰ Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 10.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The study of flamenco commonly granted ownership to one or a small group of people, alienating others from the art and perpetuating discussions of authority, authenticity and purity. Roldán claims, “*El debate contemporáneo sobre la ‘pureza’ resulta un poco anodino, por no decir ridículo...*” (The contemporary debate about the 'purity' seems a little boring, not to say ridiculous).⁵² This assertion seems ironic based on the prevalence of this discussion currently, particularly in the realm of the artists that practice the art. Among practitioners, there seem to be two discussions. One discussion involves artists talking about purity in regards to a change in aesthetics in flamenco, as seen in the previous chapter with Israel Galván, and the other as an assertion that purity and authority are tied to a race of people.

The study of flamenco has evolved over time, but this change has not always been popular or accepted. Many scholars today, utilizing for the most part modern methods of examining history, society, culture and folklore, look at flamenco's role in society in a modern way in terms of its who, why, when, where, and how. They look at the individuals who “did” flamenco, “re-did” and “do” flamenco, they look at why this form developed in the manner it did and what need it filled and continues to fill in society today. When did things happen in flamenco particularly in relation to other world events? Where did flamenco happen, looking at its performance in the home, countryside, schools and stage? Finally, they look at how was flamenco done; how the art was markedly different from one period to another, how the dance was reinvented via changes in choreography and technique and how the poetry of the song has responded to changes in society.

⁵² Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 23.

All the “who, what, where, when and whys” will not be addressed in this work. To address these issues would be an aside, another discussion. My hope is that as we briefly discuss the emergence and history of flamenco and we utilize these ideas to look with depth and breadth at the art. The following concise history is intended to shed light on the topic of this work, pursuing truth in flamenco; we are pursuing truth in flamenco by utilizing the five “W”s.

“Leading Up To Flamenco”

Most scholars agree that flamenco, as a distinct form, did not emerge until the first part of the nineteenth century, but it is reasonable to believe that the complex of cultures that existed in Andalusia prior to this time period were involved with its development. “*Música Andalusí*” is a name for the music that emerged in *al-Andalus* (Moorish Iberia) between the ninth and sixteenth centuries as a sort of bridge between an ancient and new musical world.⁵³ “*Música Andalusí*” was the product of Christian liturgical music and tradition being introduced to an older musical “corpus” by Mozarabs. This corpus consisted of ancient Roman, Berber, Visigoth, Byzantine, Jewish and Arabic cultural elements.⁵⁴ Contact with Islamic, Jewish, Christian, Gypsy, and Afro-American culture influenced the *música Andalusí* in the formation of flamenco.⁵⁵

Scholar Bernard Leblon attributes an exclusively Gypsy origin to flamenco *cante*. While his assertion may be improbable it is important to emphasize the importance of a Gypsy musical aesthetic in the form.⁵⁶ Bernard Leblon states,

What exactly is this famous temperament, this strange Gypsy ‘flavor,’ immediately recognizable regardless of instrument or style? This is undoubtedly the hardest thing to

⁵³ Music from the area of *al-Andalus* (Andalucía)

⁵⁴ Cruces, Roldán C. *El Flamenco Y La Música Andalusí: Argumentos Para Un Encuentro*, 10.

⁵⁵ Afro-American influence is important specifically in the *Cantes de Ida y Vuelta*.

define, since it can take such varied forms. In instrumental music it is often a diabolical virtuosity that takes your breath away for it is never mechanical, but always animated by a sort of Dionysian trance. In slow movements, it is an exaggerated languor, the bitterest and sweetest melancholy, nostalgia at its tenderest and most cruel. In rapid passages it is a fervor, an unchaining of the senses, a paroxysm uniting a singer in Moscow and a dancer in Seville.⁵⁷

Leblon's description of "Gypsy temperament" is doubtless romantic; nevertheless, it advances the idea that Gypsy music around the world is marked by certain cultural values and conventions. Distinct emotive qualities evident in flamenco are lacking in most other Spanish dance and music forms.

Gypsies began to make their way into Spain by the middle of the fifteenth century entering probably from the north and moving south as political and societal pressures demanded.⁵⁸ Gypsies in Spain became known for their skill as musicians and dancers, and beginning in the sixteenth century they were regular participants in state and church ordained festivities.⁵⁹ Antonio Mairena advances a theory on their role in creating flamenco in the following passage:

“Al llegar a España fueron en un principio trovadores. Si observamos el romancero, nos damos cuenta de que es castellano y fronterizo, en la época de la Reconquista, los gitanos se encontraron con esa riqueza literaria y le pusieron una música. ¿Cuál era esa música? Una muy parecida a la suya ritual. Con correr el tiempo, la interpretación de esos romances adquirió una forma musical similar a la soleá ligera, lo que era en principio la soleá bailable...Es cierto que los gitanos se beneficiaron mucho del medio ambiente andaluz, pero como yo digo, no vendrían ladrando como los perros, traerían un idioma para entenderse entre ellos,

⁵⁷ Leblon, Bernard. *Gypsies and Flamenco: The Emergence of the Art of Flamenco in Andalusia*, 8.

⁵⁸ Leblon, Bernard. *Gypsies and Flamenco: The Emergence of the Art of Flamenco in Andalusia*, 14.

⁵⁹ Leblon, Bernard. *Gypsies and Flamenco: The Emergence of the Art of Flamenco in Andalusia*, 10; also see Brooks, Lynn M. *The Dances of the Processions of Seville in Spain's Golden Age*.

unas músicas, una forma de comunicación. Todo eso lo aportaron al cante gitano-andaluz y al flamenco.”

(On arriving in Spain they were first troubadours. If we look at the *Romancero* [ballads] we see they are Castilian and from the borderlands, at the time of the Reconquista the gypsies came in contact with this literary treasure and put music to it. What was this music? One similar to the one used in ritual. As time went by, the interpretation of the *romances* acquired a similar musical form to that of the simple *soleá*, which was the predecessor of the danceable *soleá*... It is true that the Gypsies benefited much from the Andalusian environment [in the formation of flamenco], but as I say, they did not arrive barking like dogs, they brought with them a language to understand each other, some music, a form of communication. All these things they contributed to Gypsy-Andalusian Song and flamenco).^{60 61}

Important in Mairena's assertion is the idea that Gypsies as practitioners were instrumental in melding together the distinct material and immaterial objects that would eventually evolve into flamenco.

The majority of Gypsy dance repertory probably consisted of popular dances such as the *pavana*, *gallarda* and *folias*. These popular dances dominated performances done in schools, salons and at court since the sixteenth century. The population at large performed these dances, nevertheless Gypsies were known as exceptionally skilled performers of these dances.

The history of dance in Spain prior to the nineteenth century was rich. Historically, Spanish dance retained its distinct style. Dancers and choreographers were aware of trends in other places, but they did not follow these trends indiscriminately.

⁶⁰ from an interview with Antonio Mairena quoted in Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 118.

⁶¹ The *soleá* is considered the predecessor of a large part of the other song forms in flamenco and is recognized along with the *siguiriyas* for their distinct Gypsy character

Choosing to retain certain qualities while rejecting others, they transformed what they saw as interesting or useful into a stylistic synthesis that remained very Spanish.⁶²

The *chacona* and *zarabanda* were early popular dances that had African and Gypsy characteristics. These dances were mentioned in the work of Cervantes and Quevedo in the sixteenth century. In 1583, Spanish moralist Father Juan de Mariana denounced the *zarabanda* and *chacona* for *meneos* of the hips that he judged “sufficient to enflame even quite well behaved people.”⁶³ ⁶⁴ The *chacona* was known for its rapid, noisy footwork and use of bells and castanets. It was eventually danced in other European countries to typify Spanish style. The *chacona* and *zarabanda* are examples of *bailes dishonesto* that were altered and used in respectable society. *Fandangos* and *seguidillas* were popular dances that emerged in the early seventeenth century. These dance forms served as a foundation for flamenco dance.

Testimony written between 1746 and 1750 about Gypsy dance is found in the *Libro de la Gitanería de Triana*. Again, these dances predate flamenco but their description demonstrates their nature and presence in the public arena:

"Para la danzas son las gitanas muy dispuestas y en las Casas de Landín, el pandero de cascabeles suena en fiestas por cualquier pretexto que en esto no admiten ruegos. Una nieta de Balthasar Montes, el Gitano más Viejo de Triana, va obsequiada a las casas principales de Sevilla a representar sus bailes y la acompañan con guitarra y con tamboril dos hombres y otro le canta cuando baila y se inicia el dicho canto con un largo aliento a lo que llaman quexa de Galera porque un forzado gitano las daba cuando iba al remo y de este pasó a otros barcos y de estos a otras galeras...Es tal la fama de la nieta de Balthasar Montes que el año pasado de '46 fue invitada a bailar en una fiesta que dio el Regente de la

⁶² Aspects of this conversation come from Brooks, Lynn M, and Navarro J. Esquivel. *The Art of Dancing in Seventeenth-Century Spain: Juan De Esquivel Navarro and His World*.

⁶³ *Meneos* were “disorderly” breaks of the body, movements attributed to Gypsy dancing

⁶⁴ Ramos, *La danza en México: visiones de cinco siglos I Ensayos históricos y analíticos*,

Real Audiencia, Don Jacinto Márquez, al que no impidió su cargo tan principal tener de invitados a los gitanos y las Señoras quisieron verla bailar el Manguindoi por lo atrevida que es la danza y autorizada por el Regente a súplicas de las Señoras, la bailó, recibiendo obsequios de los presentes".

(For dancing the Gypsy girls are ready and in the Houses of Landin, a tambourine with bells rings at parties for any pretext, for this they need not be implored. A granddaughter of Balthasar Montes, the oldest Gypsy in Triana, goes to the major houses of Seville to present her dances and is accompanied by two men on guitar and drum and one sings while she dances. The song starts with a long exhalation what they call Lament of the Galley⁶⁵ because an imprisoned Gypsy produced them when rowing and this habit was passed on to other boats and from there to other ships ... Such is the reputation of the granddaughter of Balthasar Montes that last year in '46 she was invited to dance at a party given by the Regent of the Audiencia, Don Jacinto Márquez, who did not let his post as chief impede him from inviting the Gypsies...the ladies wanted to see her dance the Manguindoi dance because of its daring nature and it was authorized by the Regent due to the pleas of the ladies...she danced the dance, receiving gifts from those present...).⁶⁶

“Flamenco As A Distinct Form”

Well into the nineteenth century, flamenco crystalized into a unique, codified and well-documented artistic genre. This crystallization was the result of a mixing of practices, techniques and musical forms, layered and combined in changing atmospheres.⁶⁷

Much of the written history on flamenco focuses on its presence in the public arena; in fact, many argue that it is in this arena that flamenco was defined, claiming that flamenco as a modern art is directly and inseparably tied to its “value.”⁶⁸ Economic market demands called historically for the appearance of what Steingress named a

⁶⁵ Because of an edict issued in 1560 by King Phillip II of Spain most *galeotes*, slaves condemned to row the ships, were Gypsies or Moors, undesired members of Spanish society.

⁶⁶ Alba y Dieguez, J. (El Bachiller Revoltoso) *Libro De La Gitanería De Triana* Alba y Diéguez, 1995:21

⁶⁷ Aspects of conversation from Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*. 23-24

⁶⁸ Steingress, Gerhard. *Sobre Flamenco Y Flamencología: (escritos Escogidos 1988-1998)*, 48.

“*proletariado artístico*” (artist proletariat), this proletariat being indispensable in creating and recreating the art in relation to the need and desire for it in society.⁶⁹

In looking at flamenco in the public arena, researchers have in large part ignored the presence of flamenco “off” the stage or “outside” the studio; this is a place where flamenco has inarguably existed and one that needs to be mentioned. Flamencologist⁷⁰ and musicologist Norberto Cortés calls it “*la otra cara, quizá más desconocida y casi ‘hermética,’ la que nutre a la del flamenco público, el flamenco espectáculo*” (the other side, perhaps the more unknown and tightly enclosed, the one that feeds the public flamenco, the flamenco spectacle).⁷¹ Estela Zatanía is one of the few researchers investigating or discussing this “type” of flamenco currently. Her work, *Flamencos De Gañanía: Una Mirada Al Flamenco En Los Cortijos Históricos Del Bajo Guadalquivir*, focuses on flamenco in the lives of laborers, particularly farmhands who worked in the fields of lower Andalucía.⁷² The participants interviewed by Zatanía for the book were born between 1922 and 1950. These participants did flamenco as a part of everyday life, in times of work and relaxation. In conducting research for the book Zatanía states, “*Fue una sorpresa la afirmación de algunos de los entrevistados que lo se cantaba en los cortijos no fue contemplado, ni muchísimo menos, como arte porque fue algo que ellos hacían como parte de la vida cotidiana...*” (It was a surprise the claim by some respondents that what was sung in the farmhouses was not considered, in the least bit, art

⁶⁹ Steingress, Gerhard. *Sobre Flamenco Y Flamencología: (escritos Escogidos 1988-1998)*, 32.

⁷⁰ A flamencologist or *flamencólogo* is someone who researches and produces flamencología. Many today consider it a “pseudoscience” incapable of looking at the form in a truly scientific way because of its insistence on convoluting facts with myth.

⁷¹ Quoted in Zatanía, Estela. *Flamencos De Gañanía: Una Mirada Al Flamenco En Los Cortijos Históricos Del Bajo Guadalquivir*, 19.

⁷² These farmhands seemed to work primarily in the production of olives, grapes and wheat.

because it was something they did as part of everyday life).⁷³ Cristina Cruces Roldán calls this flamenco “*flamenco del uso*” (flamenco for use) as opposed to “*flamenco de cambio*” (flamenco for exchange).⁷⁴

These two sectors of flamenco are believed to have influenced each other equally. Some *flamencos* even moved between the two places, doing flamenco in both worlds. *Flamenco de uso* was a part of the lives of workers (particularly miners, fishermen, field-hands and blacksmiths) and families coming from mostly underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds. It is important to note, however, that not everyone who participated in the *flamenco de uso* sector was *Gitano*, many were non-*Gitanos* living in primarily disadvantaged areas of Andalucía.

The celebrated singer Tío Borríco de Jerez (1910-1983) was an artist who worked in flamenco’s most prominent public settings as well as in the fields. “*Yo lo mismo estaba una temporá de artista que iba después al campo con mi pare (padre)...*” (Just as I was an artist for a period I would then go after to the fields with my father...).⁷⁵

It is important to mention that the flamenco professionals, the working artists, also came mostly from the disfavored social classes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Flamenco de Cambio* provided many a means to make a living. Paco de Lucía (1947-) described his family’s history as flamenco artists in an interview in 1974:

Mi padre era tocaor en Algeciras. De guitarra vivimos todos. ¿qué podía hacer, si mi padre y mis hermanos se pasaban el día con la guitarra?

⁷³ Zañana, Estela. *Flamencos De Gañanía: Una Mirada Al Flamenco En Los Cortijos Históricos Del Bajo Guadalquivir*, 20.

⁷⁴ Cruces, Roldán C “Flamenco de Uso y Flamenco de Cambio: Una Reflexión Antropológico-Social Sobre las Desviaciones y la Reapropiación del Folklore Andaluz.” *El Caso de los Cantos Mineros, Comunidad y Sociedad*.

⁷⁵ From an interview with Tío Borríco de Jerez quoted in Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 96.

Además, había que comer. Había que hacer algo, y sin estudios y con el miedo de acabar muriéndote de hambre, la única salida era la guitarra. Claro había la posibilidad de convertirte en un buen albañil o un buen mecánico y quedarte allí, en el pueblo, toda la vida. Pero yo no lo habría aguantado. Habría acabado siendo contrabandista... Mi padre era el tocao en las fiestas del señorito. Tocaba en el cabaret, y cuando el señorito se sentía a gusto con las putillas, se llevaba a mi padre a tocar en el cortijo. Con ese dinero vivíamos. Yo, por suerte, no he tocado para ningún señorito. Mi padre lo ha evitado. Ha procurado siempre que no tuviéramos que pasar por donde él pasó... Hace diez años que el flamenco ya no pasa hambre, que haciendo flamenco la gente come”

(My father was a guitarist in Algeciras. We all lived from the guitar. What could I do if my father and my brothers spent all day with the guitar? In addition, one had to eat. I had to do something, and uneducated and with the fear of starving to death, the only way out was the guitar. Sure there was the possibility of becoming a good mason or a good mechanic and staying there, in the village, my whole life. But I would not have endured it. I would have ended up becoming a smuggler... My father was the guitarist in the festivities of the *señoritos*⁷⁶ (young gentlemen/ landowners/ playboys). He played in the cabaret, and when the *señorito* would set to enjoying himself with the prostitutes, he took my father to play for him at the farmhouse. We lived on that money. I, fortunately, have not played for any *señoritos*. My father avoided it. Has always made sure that we would not have to go through what he did... Going back ten years ago those who do flamenco are no longer hungry, people eat well doing flamenco).⁷⁷

Most *flamencos* working early on in informal flamenco establishments such as the *ventas*,⁷⁸ *colmaos*⁷⁹ and *cortijos*⁸⁰ still struggled to survive, they were not well paid or respected. Paco de Lucía at the end of this passage referred to a period in which *flamencos* began to be paid well for their art. According to de Lucía this started to take place around the 1960s. At this time, flamenco began to provide a group of people never before experienced security and social standing. “*Artistas dejaron de actuar ‘al plato’ o*

⁷⁶ A *señorito* is literally a young gentleman, typically landowners but also thought of derogatively as bullies and playboys)

⁷⁷ From an interview with Paco de Lucía quoted in Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 112

⁷⁸ A *venta* is a house or building on the outskirts of a town that functioned as a sort of informal nightclub where flamencos performed for little money.

⁷⁹ A *colmao* is a type of restaurant or establishment frequented by customers of the lower classes.

⁸⁰ A *cortijo* is a farmhouse.

esperando la generosidad de los señoritos y comenzaron a percibir una cantidad digna por su trabajo” (Artists stopped performing for 'the passing of the plate' or waiting on the generosity of the *señorito* and they began to receive a dignified amount for their work).⁸¹

Flamencos like Paco de Lucia's father and others gave flamenco social as well musical significance. Flamenco was used to voice values, describe ways of life, and denounce injustices. Those who practiced flamenco expressed their understanding of the world regardless of whether they were anonymous or important figures of the genre.

Verses sung in flamenco demonstrate this idea well:

*Tierra que no es mía
la trabajo yo,
y hasta la vía a mi me está quitando
quien tiene de tó [sic]*

(Land that is not mine/I work /and even my life is being taken /by he who has everything)⁸²

*Cuando yo estaba en prisiones
solito me entretenía
en contar los eslabones
que mi cadena tenía*

(When I was in prison/ alone I entertained myself / by counting the links/ that my chain had)

*En este rinconcito
dejadme llorar
que se me ha muerto la mare de mi alma
y no la veré más*

(In this little corner/ let me mourn/ for my dear mother has died/ and will see her no more)

*Mi marío [sic] es un minero
Que saca plomo en la mina
Y me da lo que yo quiero
porque soy canela fina*

⁸¹ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 119

⁸² These translations are my own. They are lacking in that they do not do justice to the poetry, but they hopefully serve to relay the intention of the verse.

(My husband is a miner/who mines lead in mine/ and he gives me what I want/ because I'm fine cinnamon)

The first three verses portray a traditional feeling of nostalgia, sadness and protest common in flamenco. The last verse portrays a change in outlook, possibly a change that coincides with the change of flamenco in society.^{83 84}

Just as flamenco emerged as a distinct form, it has also evolved, along with its capacity to serve as a marker of identity. Flamenco once was emblematic of exclusively disfavored or *Gitano-Andaluz* people, growing over time to represent Andalusian culture in general and then eventually Spanish culture at large. Some assert, “existe el temor de que del mismo modo que...cada día parece menos gitano, puede llegar el día que deje de ser algo exclusivamente andaluz...” (the fear exists that in the same way that ... [flamenco]appears less *Gitano* every day, the day may come when it stops being something exclusively Andalusian).⁸⁵ It could be that this day has already arrived. Flamenco has changed due to global influences and human nature. Paco de Lucia said in an interview when talking about the change in flamenco music, “...la mayor evolución no es en la música, sino en uno mismo” (...the main evolution is not in the music, but in oneself). Practitioners of flamenco have transformed and with that flamenco has changed.

Flamenco de uso and *flamenco de cambio* continue to exist and continue to influence each other, though one is surely more scarce than the other. Ironically, the disfavored classes so important in its formation seem to have become more estranged

⁸³ Cruces, Roldán C. *Clamaba Un Minero Así: Identidades Sociales Y Trabajo En Los Cantes Mineros*, 73.

⁸⁴ Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 30-34.

⁸⁵ Steingress, Gerhard. *Sobre Flamenco Y Flamencología: (escritos Escogidos 1988-1998)*, 186-187. Steingress asserts this statement in a provocative manner, not in a truly fearful manner.

from the form over time.⁸⁶

Processes of transculturation turned flamenco into an object of influences, which have been opportune for its survival to this point. These processes continue to work on flamenco today. The revolutionary flamenco singer from Granada Enrique Morente (1942-2010) relayed the following story when talking about the evolution of flamenco, “*En Triana, se cruzaba el río con barca, hasta que llegó un francés e hizo un puente. Ahora la gente pasa sin tener que remar*” (In Triana, people crossed the river by boat, until a Frenchman arrived and made a bridge. Now people cross without having to paddle).⁸⁷ Morente’s message was that outside influence changes things but sometimes this change is for the better. Outside influences in flamenco should not be feared; they have always existed. These influences are a part of its history and have certainly been instrumental in its survival.

⁸⁶ Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 31. Cruces Roldán asserts that disfavored classes are becoming more estranged from flamenco. In talking with flamenco artists over the years, I see that as flamenco is being performed less by primarily disfavored groups as non-traditional performers perform it and as flamenco artists receive more compensation for their work.

⁸⁷ From an interview with Enrique Morente, quoted in Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 23

Chapter Three: “Names, People and Places, The Evolution Of The *Baile*”

The following is a description of the transformation of flamenco dance in the public arena. Though the account will describe primarily the evolution of the *baile* (dance) through the periods in its history, this should in no way infer that the *cante* (song) and *toque* (guitar) are secondary; the *cante* and *toque* are both equally important in the evolution of flamenco as separate entities.

This history will serve to highlight trends in the dance; it will focus on events, innovations and innovators that shape future manifestations of the dance. Claims about innovations and “firsts” in the dance are utilized to show that flamenco evolves as artists inspire each other.

“Bailes De Candil And Academias (1830 and 1850)”⁸⁸

The first documented accounts of flamenco dance, still in its incipient stages, took place between 1830 and 1850; it is interesting to note that documented accounts of the *cante* and *toque* both predate the dance by a few decades. Flamenco appeared simultaneously in dance academies and in patio settings called *Bailes de Candil*. The *Bailes de Candil* were “*los bailes de la gente del pueblo*” (dances of the people of town). These public dances got their name from the *candiles* (oil lamps) that hung on walls and illuminated the romantic locations. These locations were patios of neighboring houses or taverns, probably frequented by lower-class clientele. Performers in these establishments were likely *aficionados*, not yet professionals.⁸⁹ There are a few names that come out of this period, though not many. Candelaria was the name of a dancer described in the

⁸⁸ (Dances of the Lamps and Dance Schools)

⁸⁹ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 13-17.

writing of a French tourist named Davillier who visited Andalucía in 1862. Candelaria was also a cigarette vender according to Davillier who described her as “*flexible, robusta y regordeta*”⁹⁰ (flexible, robust and very plump), qualities that apparently stood out for the gentlemen.

The dance repertory of *Bailes de Candil* consisted of national dances, flamenco, and *escuela Bolero* (bolero school dance) “*a lo flamenco*” (in the flamenco style).^{91 92} The national dances mentioned in historical accounts were the *Bailes de palillos* (dances with castanets), namely *el vito, los panaderos, el zapateado, el jaleo, el ole* and *el fandango*; the flamenco dances mentioned were the *zorongo, rondeña* and *soleá*. It is important to note here that flamenco was performed along with other Spanish dances; flamenco was not yet the main attraction.

In dance academies, flamenco was taught, but was also presented as spectacle. Audiences paid entrance fees to see the show, and prices varied depending on the caliber of artists. Competition among schools was fierce with each school claiming to present the best dances and dancers. In 1850, the accredited academy of Manuel de la Barrera in Sevilla publicized that on August 3 they would be presenting “*Ensayos Públicos Extraordinarios De Bailes Nacionales*” (Extraordinary Public Rehearsals of National Dances).⁹³ National dances were again performed alongside flamenco forms. A process of “refinement” took place in the academies where adjustments were made to “improper”

⁹⁰ Spoken by a French tourist named Davillier, quoted in Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 14.

⁹¹ *Escuela Bolera* is a Spanish theatrical dance genre that was popular by early nineteenth century developed from traditional regional dances. *Escuela Bolera* is also called Spanish ballet.

⁹² Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 11-17.

⁹³ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 19.

dances in order to make them suitable for enthusiasts in the upper classes.⁹⁴ Dance master Maestro Otero described this process in his dance manual titled *Tratado de Bailes*.

"(flamenco) no se podía bailar en todas partes, por las posturas, que no siempre eran lo que requerían las reglas de la decencia... y como este baile ha pasado a la jurisdicción de explicarlo los maestros, ocurre que lo pongo en reglas de baile con trabajo de pie, y no con posturas deshonestas. Yo enseñé a mis alumnos cuatro tangos distintos, y todos se pueden bailar delante de las personas más delicadas..."

([flamenco] could not be dance everywhere, because of the positions, that were not always what would be permitted under the rules of decency ... and since this dance has passed to the jurisdiction of the teachers to be explained, it happens that I establish regulations for dance with footwork, not dishonest positions. I teach my students four different *tangos*, and all of them can be danced in front of the most delicate people...)⁹⁵

This passage spoken by Otero described not only the refining of the dance, but also its codification. A new structure and aesthetic was imposed upon primarily improvised dances, making them suitable for dance manuals and the population at large. The process of refinement conducted in schools also made flamenco more like other Spanish dances, blurring the forms and making the dance from the academies a standardized form. A dancer named Miracielos (He who looks at the sky) was important in the performances of the academies. Miracielos was the first known professional dancer of flamenco.^{96 97}

“Cafés Cantantes (1860-1920)”⁹⁸

The period of the *Cafés Cantantes* was also called “*La Edad De Oro*,” (The Golden Age) in flamenco.^{99 100} Flamenco in the *Bailes de Candil* and academies

⁹⁴ See Otero, Aranda J. *Tratado De Bailes De Sociedad, Regionales Españoles, Especialmente Andaluces, Con Su Historia Y Modo De Ejecutarlos*, 223-225.

⁹⁵ Otero, Aranda J. *Tratado De Bailes De Sociedad, Regionales Españoles, Especialmente Andaluces, Con Su Historia Y Modo De Ejecutarlos*, 223-225.

⁹⁶ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 19-35.

⁹⁷ Miracielos got his name apparently from a defect that prevented him from being able to bend his neck to look down.

⁹⁸ (Cafes of Singing)

⁹⁹ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 55; the first *Café Cantante* dates to probably 1847.

continued into this time, but the *Cafés Cantantes* was an entirely new genre of flamenco establishment. At this time, theaters in Andalucía had cafes next-door or across the street where the public waited for the main event to begin. The *Cafés* were rowdy places of entertainment where nothing seems to have been sacred. Historian Álvarez Caballero calls them “*un prostíbulo donde cantaban y bailaban*” (a brothel where they sung and danced).¹⁰¹ The shows were of a vaudeville nature, including entertainment other than flamenco, although flamenco became the spine of the event. The *cuadro flamenco* was born in the *Cafés* as the flamenco spectacle moved into a more structured setting and onto a formal stage; tables and chairs were placed in front for the audience and groups of professional artists established themselves in the *Cafés* permanently.¹⁰² ¹⁰³ Competition among the establishments was fiercer than before; with more competition and more establishments came more professional artists. Ángel Álvarez Caballero called flamenco history from this period a “*Mosaico de Nombres*” (mosaic of names).¹⁰⁴ Names of professional flamenco artists poured out of this period. Flamenco dynasties emerged, consisting of family members who did flamenco professionally for generations. Miracielos, the first professional continued to be popular. La Mejorana (1862-1922), the mother of *Pastora Imperio* who would be a sensation in the next period of flamenco, was regarded in some historical accounts as the first *bailaora* (female dancer) to lift her arms

¹⁰⁰ Hayes, Michelle H. *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance*, 39. Hayes dates The Golden Age in flamenco to the turn of the twentieth century, after the decline of the *Cafés Cantantes*, but Hayes references the fact that there is not consensus about the dates of this period.

¹⁰¹ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 57.

¹⁰² The *cuadro flamenco* is the structured environment where the artists, dancers, singers, guitarists and others are positioned on a stage, often arranged around the square of the space, in front of an audience. This formal setting was born in the *Cafés Cantantes* and continued to be used in the *tablao*.

¹⁰³ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 69.

¹⁰⁴ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 76.

above her head in the *soleá*.¹⁰⁵ La Mejorana was also known for accompanying herself with the *cante* as she danced. This was a common practice among female artists in the period.¹⁰⁶ Juana La Macarrona (1870-1947) sang and danced in her *bata de cola* (train dress) the popular *letra de tango* (*tango* lyric),

*Caballero, Caballero,
Mi madre fue una gitana
Mi padre un caballero
De esos que pelan borricos
En la puerta del matadero*

(Gentleman, gentleman/my mother was a Gypsy /my father a gentleman /like those who skin the donkeys/ at the entrance of the slaughterhouse)

This particular *tango* lyric became a staple in the repertoire of *tango* for generations to come.^{107 108} The *tango* was one of the most popular dances of the time, and the use of the *bata de cola* (train dress) became a standard for women.^{109 110}

“Ópera Flamenco and Flamenco Teatral (1920-1960)”¹¹¹

Flamenco transitioned into theaters in the early part of the twentieth century. It is important to mention that during this period terms like “authenticity” and “purity” became standards.¹¹² This was caused by the influx of non-traditional practitioners to

¹⁰⁵ La Mejorana Arms in *soleá* see Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 132.

¹⁰⁶ *El Baile Flamenco*, 81 and Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 322.

¹⁰⁷ See Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 322-323.

¹⁰⁸ The *tango* was said to be imported from the Latin America, an *ida y vuelta* form. This is interesting because it is also considered a very flamenco form, where the other *ida y vuelta* forms are not.

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¹¹⁰ *Bata de cola* in *Cafés Cantantes* see Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 81 and Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 322-323.

¹¹¹ (Flamenco Opera and Theatrical Flamenco)

¹¹² Washabaugh, William. *Flamenco: Passion, Politics, and Popular Culture*, 34.

flamenco as well as to the great transformation that would occur in flamenco during this time.

New forms of entertainment, such as movies and film, instigated the close of the previous era and inspired the birth of this one.¹¹³ The early part of this period was called the *Ópera Flamenco*. During this time the stages were grander, the productions more elaborate, and the audiences larger. Some artists from the *Cafés Cantantes* transitioned to *Óperas* with varying degrees of success; some found it hard to compete with the elaborate nature of the new atmosphere.¹¹⁴ “Flamenco Ballets” emerged here such as *El Amor Brujo* set to the musical composition of Manuel de Falla. Pastora Imperio (1885-1979) the daughter of La Mejorana was the first to perform this opera.¹¹⁵ La Argentina (1888-1936) called “La Madre de La Danza” (The Mother of The Dance) also performed *El Amor Brujo* touring it and many other theatrical flamenco productions around the world. Expansion of flamenco internationally marked this period.¹¹⁶

La Argentina was born in Buenos Aires to Spanish parents who were both artists; her father was the choreographer and dance master of the *Teatro Real de Madrid*. Argentina dedicated her life to dance and flamenco. Largely because of her work and talent, there was a shift in the way flamenco was approached. When asked about how she would train dancers, La Argentina responded:

Aprovecharía sus años de adolescencia para lograr que dominase la escuela italiana de danza, sin esta base coreográfica no hay técnica de baile posible...le haría conocer música...procuraría que conociese una selección de obras literaria...las obras de la pintura universal, y por

¹¹³ Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 413.

¹¹⁴ Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 134.

¹¹⁵ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 182.

¹¹⁶ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 180.

ultimo le haría conocer y estudiar a fondo el origen y la historia del baile a que quisiera dedicar.

(I would take advantage of their adolescence in order for them to dominate the Italian school of dance, without this choreographic base dance technique is not possible ... I would have them know music ... I would ensure that they know select literary works ... works of painting, and finally I would have them know and study thoroughly the origin and history of dance to which they chose to dedicate their study.¹¹⁷

La Argentina urged that dancers should be well rounded, aware of the world around

them. She also emphasized the importance of classical training in any dance form.

Dancers, in general, were to be disciplined in their study of dance; this belief came to be adopted by many in flamenco and would influence the work of generations to come.

Vicente Escudero (1888-1980), a non-*Gitano* like La Argentina, was from Valladolid in northern Spain. He was also a renaissance-type figure, known for his love of painting, literature, music and dance. Escudero was condemned in flamenco for his unorthodox dancing and occasional lack of rhythm. One musician he worked with, a guitarist who was a *Gitano*, said it was impossible to do flamenco next to Escudero because “*estropeaba todo*” (he messed up everything).¹¹⁸ He made shapes with his body that had never been seen before; one called him “*uno que baila por los pueblos que está como las gaviotas*” (one who dances around the towns and looks like a seagull).¹¹⁹

Despite the fact that many criticized him, Escudero influenced generations of flamenco dancers to experiment with the art form. Escudero stated, “*El que baile sabiendo anticipado lo que va a hacer, está más muerto que vivo*” (The person who dances knowing in anticipation what they are going to do, is more dead than alive).¹²⁰ Escudero made this bold statement in rebellion against dancers who “...*siempre bailaban lo*

¹¹⁷ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 201.

¹¹⁸ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 205.

¹¹⁹ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 204.

¹²⁰ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 205.

mismo” (always danced the same dance). He believed dance should be spontaneous. He encouraged generations to come to think outside the box and improvise. An interesting correlation could be made between this idea and the idea of “forgetting” mentioned in the first chapter of this essay. Escudero believed a dancer had to forget in order to be alive. This forgetting gave Escudero freedom; forgetting allowed him to improvise. Improvisation became a key element of “true” flamenco; this was not due solely to the philosophy of Escudero, but Escudero certainly played a role in encouraging the tradition of improvisation.

In the *Ópera*, flamenco dance repertory continued to grow. Songs and dances of Andalusian origin were expanded on such as the *fandangos*, *fandanguillos*, *malagueña*, and *granáina*; the Latin American forms of the *ida y vuelta*, *colombianas*, *guajira* and *rumba* became popular; and in 1942 Vicente Escudero claimed he created the dance structure for the *siguiriyas* by playing with the geometric form of the rhythm and its relationship to the *cante*.^{121 122}

“Flamenco Around The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)”

A number of artists fled from Spain around the time of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). These artists continued their work in theaters around world. Pilar López (1912-2008), Carmen Amaya (1913-1963) and Antonio Ruiz (1921-1996) are a few of these artists who earned extreme notoriety performing around the world but later returned to Spain with their productions where they received similar recognition and celebrity.

¹²¹ Washabaugh, William. *Flamenco: Passion, Politics, and Popular Culture*, 35.

¹²² Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 253. The *siguiriyas* had been considered a sacred form; it was not danced. This opened the door for others to dance to song forms that were previously off limits; see also Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 197.

Pilar López and her sister La Argentinita (1897-1945) lived and worked in New York for nearly a decade, 1938-1945.¹²³ La Argentinita died while working in New York and López returned to Spain shortly after the passing of her sister. These artists incorporated the culture of the variety show and musical into their work in catering for new audiences that craved spectacle. Flamenco in this setting was often packaged and marketed to the world under the umbrella of Spanish dance. The prominent dancers of this period toured Spanish dance productions that typically included *escuela bolero*, *jota*, flamenco, and other regional dances.¹²⁴

These prominent artists influenced countless foreigners with their works abroad during this period. On occasion, these artists invited young dance *aficionados* from the United States and Latin America to train with and join their companies. This happened in particular in the company of Pilar López. Dancers like José Greco (1919-2000) from Brooklyn, New York, Manolo Vargas (1914-2011) and Roberto Ximenez (1922-) from Mexico, and José Granero (1936-2006) from Buenos Aires joined López's company in this manner.

Pilar López was called “*Una de las mejores forjadoras de talentos que ha tenido España*” (One of the best forgers of talent that Spain has had).¹²⁵ Pilar López maintained and directed a dance company for nearly thirty years, from 1946 to 1973, bringing into her company flamenco's most notable *bailaores* such as Mario Maya (1937-2008), Antonio Gades (1936-2004), El Guito (1942-) and El Farruco (1935-1997).¹²⁶ Mario

¹²³ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 235.

¹²⁴ Jota and veridales are regional Spanish dances. Jota is danced in Northern provinces; verdiales is a regional dance from Malaga.

¹²⁵ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 283.

¹²⁶ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 280.

Maya called her “...*la maestra de una generacion*” (the teacher of a generation).¹²⁷ López’s contribution to flamenco in her capacity as a director and teacher was particularly noteworthy because of the number of dancers she guided and the longevity of her career. López has been remembered by those who danced for her for instilling in them respect for the art, discipline as artists and professionalism. Antonio Gades repeatedly claimed that Pilar López taught him “antes la ética que la estética de la danza” (the ethic of dance before the aesthetic of dance).¹²⁸ It is worth noting again that López was instrumental in training both foreign born and Spanish dancers who became icons in flamenco.

Carmen Amaya, a *Gitana* from Barcelona was called the “Queen of the Gypsies.” Until Carmen Amaya, the female aesthetic of the *bailaora* favored “*garbo y la gracia*” (elegance and grace) utilizing primarily movements “*de cintura para arriba*” (from the waist up), while the aesthetic of the *bailaor* (male dancer) favored somberness and strict verticality in the upper-body combined with frenetic use of the feet.¹²⁹ Carmen Amaya combined the male and female aesthetics and changed the standard for *bailaoras*.

By this time, thanks in part to the innovation of Vicente Escudero with the *siguiriyas*, anything was danceable. The *taranto* was said to be first danced by Carmen Amaya in America in the 1950s. Amaya claimed to take the song of the *taranto*, which did not have a defined rhythm, and set it to the rhythm of the *zambra*; and Antonio Ruiz

¹²⁷ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 21.

¹²⁸ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 336.

¹²⁹ Cruces, Roldán C. *Antropología Y Flamenco: Más Allá De La Música (ii): Identidad, Género Y Trabajo*, 133 ; and Gamboa, José Manuel. *Una Historia Del Flamenco*, 322.

was said to be the first to dance a *martinete*, a *cante a palo seco* (songs sung a capella) in 1952.^{130 131}

It is important to reiterate that throughout the *Flamenco Teatral* period, national dances and Spanish classical pieces were almost always incorporated into flamenco productions. Flamenco was not typically presented in spectacles exclusively.

“Los Tablaos (1950-)”

The 1950s saw the birth of the *tablaos*. This establishment was created in the image of the *Café Cantante* offering an exclusively flamenco experience; national dances were not performed here. The locale was much smaller than a theater hence it allowed for a more intimate, less grandiose experience. The *cuadro flamenco* established in the *Cafés Cantantes* performed on a small *tablado* (stage) and a place was designated for the audience. *Tablaos* offered food and drinks and presented a series of shows each night that continued into the early morning.

The *tablaos* played a pivotal role in the development of the dance. Most establishments presented at least one show a night and competition among establishments was intense. This competition pushed dancers to supersede each other. The *tablaos* also provided dancers an opportunity to watch and learn from one another on a daily basis.¹³² Many dancers described finishing their shows at one *tablaos* and running across town to see another show where another dancer was performing. Watching and listening in this way was one manner in which *flamencos* studied. The dancer from Granada Mario Maya mentioned earlier as a dancer who danced in Pilar López’s company commented on this

¹³⁰ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 272.

¹³¹ Antonio Ruiz Soler, born in Sevilla in 1921.

¹³² Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 318.

idea of learning in the *tablaos*. “*En mi generación para saber de cante y baile, ha sido necesario pasar por el bachillerato de muchas noches sin luna y, sobre todo, ser un buen aficionado...*” (In my generation to learn singing and dancing, one had to go through the school of many moonless nights, and above all, learn to be a good fan ...).¹³³ Mario Maya went through the school of moonless nights tucked away in the *tablaos* of Madrid listening, watching and developing his *afición* (appreciation) of flamenco. The process of watching and learning combined with performing every night, several times a night, led to the formation of incredible dancers.

Evidenced in the flamenco performed in *tablaos* was a trend to return to more traditional manifestations of the art; the flamenco danced in this period was less decorated and more primal, more *Gitano* in style. This flamenco was a response to the elaborate productions of the previous period; but it also catered to the tastes of tourists visiting Spain and in search of “real” flamenco.¹³⁴

La Chunga (1938-) was an icon from this period whose work exemplified this idea. She was called “*la bailaora de los pies descalzos*” (The dancer barefoot) because in at least one number of every show she danced barefoot.¹³⁵ She claimed she danced barefoot because that is how she had always danced. La Chunga grew up economically underprivileged in Barcelona and began dancing at a very young age in order to earn money. La Chunga formed a duo with Mario Maya in 1959 in the popular Madrid *tablaos* *Café de Chinitas*.¹³⁶

¹³³ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 20.

¹³⁴ See Hayes, Michelle H. *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance*, 41.

¹³⁵ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 323.

¹³⁶ McArdle, Terence. "Renowned Flamenco Dancer Mario Maya." *The Washington Post: Breaking News, World, US, DC News & Analysis*. The Washington Post, 10 Oct. 2008. Web. 5 Apr. 2012.

Dancers such as El Guito and El Farruco were also celebrities in the *tablaos*; these dancers were also *Gitanos* known for their execution of pure flamenco.

Some dancers danced in both *tablaos* and theaters, but many dancers however, such as La Chunga, rarely had opportunities to dance outside of the *tablaos*. La Chunga spent her entire professional career dancing in two *tablaos* in Madrid, *El Coral de la Morería* and *Café de Chinitas*.¹³⁷

Tablaos continue to be important in flamenco today. They serve as a testing-ground for artist seeking to advance in the art; and they allow dancers the opportunity to perform on a regular basis, enabling them to mature quickly as artists as they earn a living. The dancer Concha Jareño discusses her work in *tablaos* in an April of 2009 interview:

“Durante muchos años he sido bailaora de estar todas las noches bailando, y cuando eso se rompió fue duro...ahora uso el tablao como laboratorio. Estoy pensando en nuevas ideas y las testeo... No quiero bailar sólo en teatros, esa magia que se tiene tan cerquita, la improvisación... es una maravilla.

(For many years I have been a dancer that danced every night, and when that was finished it was hard ... I use the *tablaos* now as a laboratory. I'm thinking of new ideas and trying things out ... I do not want to dance only in theaters, the magic that is so close [in the *tablaos*], improvisation...it is a marvel).¹³⁸

Jareño mentions that she works currently in both *tablaos* and the theaters. She describes the specialness of the *tablaos* in her statement. The intimate nature of the *tablaos* combined with the informality of the setting and regularity of its performances make the *tablaos* a special place in the history of flamenco dance.

“Flamenco In Theaters Again and Festivals (1970-)”

¹³⁷ Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 322.

¹³⁸ Calado, Silvia. “Concha Jareño, Bailaora de Flamenco, Entrevista: No Quería Quedarme Toda La Vida Siendo La Mejor Del Cuerpo De Baile.

Two important dancers from the early part of this period were Antonio Gades and Mario Maya both disciples of Pilar López. Evident in the work of these artists was the ideology implanted in them by López regarding professionalism and discipline; yet both of these dancers followed unique paths in their development as artists, and their contribution to flamenco dance was unique. Antonio Gades was a co-founder of the *Ballet Nacional de España* (National Ballet of Spain). He became the director of this company in 1978. Gades' most recognized works were *Bodas de Sangre* (1974), based on the literary work by García Lorca, *Carmen* (1983), set to the opera composed by Bizet, and *El Amor Brujo*, a full-length work set to Manuel de Falla's 23-minute composition (1986).¹³⁹ These works were created first for the theater and later for film.¹⁴⁰ In an interview where Gades described *Bodas de Sangre* he stated, “*A partir de ahí se abren mentes y se ve que se puede hacer otra cosa... Ahí está lo que yo he aprendido en las academias de aquí, y lo que yo he visto bailar. Y lo que yo bailaba en el pueblo*” (From this point minds open and you see that you can do anything ... In [*Bodas de Sangre*] is what I learned in the academies, and what I have seen danced. And what I danced in the village).¹⁴¹ In *Bodas de Sangre*, Gades utilized dance vocabulary that he had grown up seeing and dancing to relay the narrative of García Lorca's love story.¹⁴² What was particularly remarkable about this *Bodas de Sangre* was the fact that Gades used strictly flamenco dance

¹³⁹ "Antonio Gades; Página Web Oficial. "Portales de Contenidos Latinos," *Portal Latino, Música y Cultura, Culturales, Musicales*.

¹⁴⁰ These were made in collaboration with filmmaker Carlos Saura,

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Álvarez, Caballero A. *El Baile Flamenco*, 347

¹⁴² *Bodas de Sangre*. By Antonio Gades. Olympic Theater, Rome. 2 April 1974.

to relay narrative. This production did not incorporate Spanish classical or national dances. The production was simple in that it did not utilize elaborate decor and focused on the dance telling the story in a pure and honest way. This work inspired others to see new possibilities in flamenco. Flamenco could be used as it was, free of embellishment, to tell a powerful story in a theater. This was a change from the previous theater period in flamenco where choreographers incorporated national dances and qualities taken from variety shows in their productions. Gades' work was powerful but it felt simpler; it had taken a "step back" by moving away from the flowery mirages of the previous period.

Mario Maya created two pivotal works, *Camelamos Naquear* (We Want to Speak) in 1976, and *¡Ay...Jondo!* (Deep Songs of Andalusia) based on the poetry of Juan de Loxa in 1980. These were theme-based works that relayed a message of *Gitano* pride. These theatrical flamenco works were used to voice ideas and denounce injustices. Like Gades, Maya utilized strictly flamenco to tell these stories, but Maya's message was more political. The work *¡Ay...Jondo!* incorporated text as the artists recited the poetry of Juan de Loxa intermittently through the production. Everyone on stage, including the musicians, was a central part of the story. The artists moved around the space and the musicians functioned almost as dancers in the choreography. This was a new way of doing flamenco.¹⁴³

Maya founded his own dance company in 1983; in this company danced artists such as Rafaela Carrasco (1972-), Manuel Betanzos, Israel Galván (1973-) and Maya's

¹⁴³ "'Ay Jondo' Mario Maya - YouTube." *YouTube - Broadcast Yourself*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Apr. 2012.

daughter, Belén Maya (1966-), all dominant figures in flamenco today. Eva La Yerbabuena (1970-), the dancer who once again revolutionized the dance technique of the *bailaora* in flamenco was also his student. Maya instilled in these dancers his views on flamenco as an art and discipline. His work truly transformed the flamenco we see today.

Dancer Israel Galván spoke of how he came to study with Mario Maya and the impact of that training in his life in an interview conducted in March of 2009:

*Un día puse un video de '¡Ay! jondo' y cuando vi una postura que puso él me quedé sorprendido y dije que vaya poca vergüenza, que cómo podía bailar así, con qué cara lo hacía. La impresión que me dio fue por la trasgresión que hizo con el cuerpo. Yo antes bailaba afarrucado, más salvaje y aquello lo desconocía. Y la verdad es que tuve mucha suerte de que mi padre me llevara al estudio de Mario y que me escogiera para estar en su compañía. Aquello fue otro shock, entrar en una compañía, tener una disciplina....Y Mario me hizo trabajar del pelo a la punta de los zapatos, una dinámica total de cuerpo. Y también noté que Mario bailaba como una pluma. No hacía falta tanto zapatear...De Mario también puedo decir que fue muy importante que fuera gitano. Cuando se habla de baile gitano es porque se asemeja al estilo de Farruco o del baile de Jerez. Yo creo que Mario también es baile gitano, pues no se va en ningún momento a otro lado. Toda la dinámica del cuerpo que tiene se refiere al flamenco. (One day I put on a video of 'Ay Jondo!' and when I saw a posture that he made I was surprised and I said wow how shameless, how could he dance like that, how dare he do that. That feeling was impressed on me because of the transgression he committed with his body. Before I used to dance *afarrucado* [in the style of the Farrucos], wilder, and I did not understand this kind of movement. The truth is that I was very lucky that my father took me to the studio of Mario and to be chosen to be in his company. That was another shock, joining a company, having discipline...And Mario made me work from the top of my hair to the tips of my toes, a total body experience. And I also noticed that Mario danced like a feather. It was not necessary to do so much footwork...Of Mario I can also say it was very important that he was Gypsy. In thinking of Gypsy dance it usually resembles the style of Farruco or Jerez. I think that Mario's [flamenco] is also gypsy dancing; it does not ever cross a line. The whole*

dynamic of his body he uses to do flamenco).¹⁴⁴

The fact that Maya was *Gitano* was important to Galván as a *Gitano*. The issue of Maya's race was also important for anyone else who sought to emulate *Gitano* style flamenco. Maya showed that *Gitano* dance did not have to look one particular way or be rough and forceful. Maya insisted that flamenco should be subtle and beautiful as well as powerful. He proclaimed, "*El flamenco no es fuerza brutal, sino sensibilidad; no es virtuosismo fácil, sino gracia inesperada. Lo difícil del arte es hacer que aparezca fácil, inexplicable e indefinible*" (Flamenco isn't brute strength but sensitivity, It isn't easy virtuosity but unexpected grace. The hard thing about art is to make it seem easy, inexplicable and indefinable).¹⁴⁵

Dancers in Maya's company did a *ballet barre* daily as part of their study; Maya, who moved to New York City in 1965 to study modern dance at the Nikolais and Ailey schools, also incorporated modern technique in his style of training. Maya was successful in passing on to the dancers he trained the ideals he learned from those who guided him. Maya and Gades and many others from their time had a huge impact on the flamenco dance that was to follow, particularly in terms of its theatricality, technique and aesthetic.

Israel Galván is doubtlessly one of the most conspicuous and celebrated figures of the flamenco theater period working today. Galván is a master at combining traditional and modern aesthetics in flamenco. He unites the music, drama, and energy common and appreciated in flamenco with his unique and very personal movement style; Galván often

¹⁴⁴ Calado, Silvia. "Flamenco X 2. Belén Maya & Israel Galván Hablan Sobre Mario Maya: El Legado Intangible De Mario Maya." *Flamenco - world.com / La web del flamenco/ The flamenco website*. Flamenco-world.com, Mar. 2009. Web. 16 Mar. 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 21.

adds to this union a political message or statement in his work. *Arena* is an early work of Galván's that debuted in 2006.¹⁴⁶ This work exemplifies his work in flamenco.

Arena is a dance drama about a *Fiesta de Toros* (a bullfight). *Arena* is broken up into six scenes each named after a famous bull made famous after killing a bullfighter. *Arena* is not a typical reenactment of a Spanish bullfight; there are no standard bullfighter lunges in this production or beautiful women fawning. Instead, displayed on a huge video screen throughout the performance, are recorded images of people at a bullfight enjoying themselves while there is blood and death in the arena below. With *Arena*, Galván brings to light the contradiction that exists within the *Fiesta de Toros* and makes a commentary on the irony and contradiction that exists in society in general.¹⁴⁷

During this final period of flamenco Flamenco Festivals also need to be mentioned. *La Bienal de Flamenco* held in Sevilla is the oldest festival dedicated to flamenco still in existence, beginning in 1980. Countless flamenco festivals exist today throughout Spain and the world. Particularly known festivals include the Festival de Jerez in Jerez de La Frontera, Festival Flamenco Mont de Marsan in France, Sadler's Wells Flamenco Festival in London, El Festival Suma Flamenca in Madrid, Flamenco Festival USA in New York, and Festival Flamenco Internacional de Albuquerque in New Mexico. Festivals provide flamenco artists with more opportunities to perform in theaters and create works on a larger scale that push the creative boundaries of the art.

¹⁴⁶ *Arena*. By Israel Galván. Dir. Pedro G. Romero. Perf. Israel Galván, David Lagos, El Eléctrico, Bobote, Alfredo Lagos, Diego Amador, Enrique Morente, Charanga Los Sones and Diego Carrasco. Teatro Central, Sevilla. 15 September 2006. Performance.

¹⁴⁷ Romero, Pedro G. "Compañía Israel Galván: *Arena*: Seis Coreografías Para el Mundo del Toro." Performance Dossier.

The previous history of flamenco dance in the public arena obviously leaves out countless important names and events that shaped the art form. My goal in formulating this history was to extract broad occurrences that influenced flamenco from one generation to the next in order to illuminate trends, particularly trends that are associated with the idea of purity and authenticity in flamenco. I also chose to discuss, particularly in the descriptions of more recent history, artists and developments that I feel have directly influenced my work as a dancer.

Chapter Four: “My Work”

“My Pursuit of Truth Evidenced In Dance”

My pursuit of truth in dance largely involves gaining understanding. My work in flamenco dance spans over many decades, but in recent years, my approach to studying flamenco has evolved. The following describes current issues in my study and how this investigation affects my work.

My approach to gaining technique in flamenco dance shifted as I began studying other forms of movement. Ironically, I see large growth in my technique as a flamenco dancer as I move away from flamenco and study other forms of dance and exercise. I study ballet, modern, Pilates, and yoga regularly to enhance my flamenco dance training. While focusing on these other styles, I have never completely stopped dancing flamenco. I continue to work on flamenco daily, but I do not focus on it exclusively. I find that in incorporating the study of other forms I am able to find depth in the understanding of movement concepts. For instance, in looking at an issue such as maintaining a neutral spine, I can carry this idea with me from form to form and see how each practice affects my control and understanding of the issue. Through this process I see the most benefit and growth in my execution of flamenco; this is probably because I have more control and freedom in the form. Nonetheless, this process allows me to take my technical skill in flamenco to a more sophisticated level, allowing me to perform skills that I could not previously perform.

Cross-training is particularly beneficial because it requires the dancer to move their body in a different way. For instance, movement in flamenco can be very vertical and bound; I find that studying modern dance challenges the way I move and helps me

find release in my muscles. This release has directly affected my flamenco dance by making my weight shift easier, and as a result my footwork is clearer and faster. Excellent dancers of flamenco have this release, but it took me studying other forms of dance along with practicing flamenco daily to find this technique. This is just one example of the dance technique issues that I am able to address in cross-training. As illustrated in the previous chapter, training in other forms of dance is not something new in the art of flamenco, but it is a method that I currently utilize to gain body awareness and control. This awareness and control gives me liberty in flamenco.

Evident in my work is also my quest to augment my knowledge of flamenco *cante*. I expand this knowledge primarily through researching *cante* forms and choreographing to these forms. Exceptional dancers of flamenco are authorities on the *cante*. The *cantes* of flamenco are distinct; broadening my awareness of this subject makes me increasingly cognizant of the variation between them. This awareness allows me to perceive each *cante* differently, which in turn affects the way I dance each *cante*. I find my dancing in this way feels more real and powerful.

In my recent work *Ilhuicamina*, I dance *taranto*, *siguiriyas*, *soleá* and *cantiñas*.¹⁴⁸ The *taranto*, *siguiriyas*, and *cantiñas* are all song forms that I have never danced before. The *cante* of the *taranto* is different from other song forms in that the lyric is structured differently, the melodic progression of the song is distinct, and the song is open rhythmically; it is not bound by a strictly marked rhythm. Choreographing to this song form forced me to study many different types of *taranto cante*. The open nature of the

¹⁴⁸ *Ilhuicamina*. By Marisol Encinias. Perf. Marisol Encinias, Vicente Griego, Ricardo Anglada and Carlos Menchaca. Rodey Theater, Albuquerque. 10 March 2012. Performance.

song insures that every performance of the *taranto* will be different. This in turn makes dancing the *taranto* challenging. In flamenco, the dancer responds to the resolve of the song; as each resolve occurs, the dancer accentuates that resolve with movement and accents in the body. In order to understand where the *cante* is going to resolve and in order to be able to anticipate the resolve, a dancer has to be very familiar with the melody as well the lyrics of the music. Becoming familiar with the *taranto*, due to its complicated nature and uniqueness, heightened my awareness of other *cantes*.

The *letra* (lyric) of the *siguiriyas* is interesting in that its poetry is concise but each verse of the song is very long. The singer extends each line of the *cante* at his or her will, embellishing as they play with tone and rhythm. One popular *letra* of *siguiriyas* is the following,

A clavito y canela

me hueles tú a mí

La que no huele a clavito y canela

no sabe distinguir

(Like cloves and cinnamon/ you smell like to me/ the girl who does not smell like cloves and cinnamon/ does not know how to discriminate)

This short piece of poetry is drawn out commonly for at least ten *compases* (measured phrases).¹⁴⁹ The verse of *siguiriyas* is broken up into two parts, the first parts consists of the first two lines of the poetry and the second part of the last two lines. These sections of the verse are separated by a *respiro* (break in the *letra*), which typically lasts for one *compás*. Dancing a *siguiriyas* requires listening for how the singer is going to lengthen each line of the poetry and resolve each part of the verse; the dancer responds in these places. Dancing to the *siguiriyas* is difficult because the singer has more liberty to embellish in this slow, sparse and drawn out form.

¹⁴⁹ The *compás* of the *siguiriya* consists of a very slow phrase of twelve. 100 beats per minutes is a common tempo for a slow *siguiriyas*

I also broaden my awareness as a dancer by researching how others dance flamenco. I dedicate time to watching and learning from flamenco done in the past and present. From this process, I gain perspective on the form. Watching dance from the past helps me to bridge the past to the present, and it provides me a foundation for where I hope to go with my work in the future. Flamenco guitarist Juan Carmona (1963-) states, “Recomiendo a los jóvenes mirar para atrás y escuchar a los viejos maestros...De los viejos es de los que se aprende... (I recommend that young *flamencos* look back and listen to the old teachers...from the old teachers in where one learns).¹⁵⁰ I agree with this statement not because I think that the present has less to offer, but because I believe that a lot of the answers we seek as artists have been answered in the past. I find often that an idea that I have has already been done in flamenco, but in seeing those ideas performed I can see where I might go from there; and I imagine ways to make them different and more personal.

This practice of taking ideas from the past and bridging them with the present is evidenced in my *taranto* from *Ilhuicamina*. In creating this choreography I use primarily traditional flamenco movement and imagery and I draw from traditional conventions in partnering, while I play with the use of space to tell a story. This is a very different way of approaching flamenco choreography. In choreographing the *taranto*, I play with the drawing that the dancers make in the space as they move and interact. This drawing reiterates the story of the relationship that exists between the two dancers.

My pursuit of truth is also evidenced in my venture to work as an independent artist. I have worked for many years as a principal dancer in flamenco dance companies directed by other artists, but I have not directed a large amount of work on my own.

¹⁵⁰ Grimaldos, Alfredo. *Historia Social Del Flamenco*, 162-164

Being a part of a company is an incredible experience that allows for opportunities of great growth as you learn and perform works set by other artists; but working in this capacity does not necessarily facilitate personal growth as a creator and director. This experience is also limited in the way it prepares a dancer to dance flamenco being that flamenco is traditionally a solo art form.

In doing *Ilhuicamina* I create, direct and perform a full-length work. This provides me the opportunity to formulate a concept and work it to fruition. In creating *Ihuicamina* I pull from my existing flamenco knowledge, and supplement my understanding as much as possible, in order to complete the project. *Ilhuicamina* is a simple work of four artists- two dancers, a singer and a guitarist. My intention in creating this straightforward show is to isolate the core that I believe is vital to flamenco: the dance, song and guitar in a clean format, and through that format relay a story.

Ilhuicamina is a modest show because of its sparseness. The dance is not supported by many guitarists or singers creating separate voices in the music, and there are not a number of dancers on stage creating energy collectively, but I think the sparse nature of this show gives it power. Creating a work with fewer artists makes each artist's role larger thus more crucial. In *Ilhuicamina* the investment required of each artist is great. Because of this each artist takes ownership of the production. I believe I am drawn to this type of work because it contrasts with my experience of working in a large company. The type of work I do in *Ilhuicamina* challenges me as a flamenco artist because it involves combining the intimate nature of traditional flamenco with the demands of creating a theatrical production.

Ilhuicamina is “true” and “pure” flamenco that blends tradition and innovation. The work incorporates theatrical, musical, choreographic and poetic elements to relay a message in an allegorical manner. In choreographing and conceptualizing *Ilhuicamina* I hold close the essential elements of flamenco tradition that I believe are vital to any work that is flamenco. I believe that in creating flamenco tradition cannot be avoided; the issue becomes deciphering what is vital in tradition. Once that is decided, tradition can be played with and molded in creating work that is honest and truthful. In *Ilhuicamina* I speak (create) with a unique voice as a dancer and choreographer, and I discuss themes that are relevant to my personal experience. Developing a unique voice and using this voice is as important in creating “true” flamenco as is keeping with tradition. I believe that my pursuit of truth in flamenco has allowed me to develop a unique voice; and this voice combined with my deep understanding of tradition allows me to create “true” flamenco.

“My Work In The History Of Flamenco”

An advisor of mine once asked, ““So, have you figured out how to dance truthfully?” My answer to that question today is in the affirmative. I have learned how to dance truthfully. I dance truthfully by doing it everyday, studying it earnestly, and by making it a part of who I am. The flamenco that I do is truthful and it has a place in the continuum of the art. I am no longer troubled by discussions of purity and authenticity. I find qualities of purity and authenticity in any manifestation of flamenco performed with sincerity and understanding. Pursuing truth in flamenco is something I will continue to do as an artist and *aficionado* because the process of understanding never ends. Someone once said that the more

you learn, the more you realize how little you know. This is the case with me in flamenco. I hope to keep developing as an artist, but I know that my work is real.

I feel my work in flamenco is unique in part because of who I am and where I practice. As I continue to create work in flamenco I hope to continue to develop a unique voice. Though I am eager to make a mark as a dancer, I am probably most excited about my work as a teacher in the future of the art.

My philosophy of dance and flamenco guides my creative journey. In teaching, I share my philosophy of dance with my students. This includes instilling in them a desire to know more about flamenco and a willingness to work tirelessly at becoming a better artist. Flamenco can easily be taken at face value, as a form of entertainment, and not understood as the intricate and complex subject that it is. While encouraging my students to appreciate the uniqueness of flamenco I ask them to also see the similarities that exist between it and other forms of art.

In teaching I see that everyday I shape future manifestations of the form. I am fortunate to teach flamenco in places where I have the ability to influence students who will certainly go off and create their own work and develop their own philosophies about flamenco. Hopefully what I teach them will be beneficial and help them to do so. My dream is to be like a Pilar López or a Mario Maya who shaped generations of *flamencos* to come. There is nothing that I enjoy more than seeing my students grow and begin to see themselves as flamenco dancers, as part of the history of flamenco.

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