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**FLAMENCO IN SOUTH AFRICA:  
OUTSIDER IN TWO PLACES**

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Cape Town 2012**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters in Music at University of Cape Town School of Dance

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is my own work unless specifically stated otherwise in this text. It is submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Music at University of Cape Town School of Dance and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university in South Africa or abroad.

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**31 August 2012**

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation interrogates the notion of flamenco identity in order to establish a case for the existence of a legitimate flamenco identity outside of Spain, and specifically in South Africa. Verification of the existence of a legitimate flamenco sub-culture in South Africa would add *gravitas* to the practise of flamenco by South Africans (as well as other outsiders across the globe), helping to shift the unspoken parameters governing who has the right to teach and perform flamenco, and which criteria might be used to decide this.

Spanish dance has appeared on South Africa stages since the mid-1800s. During the 1960s it came second only to ballet as South Africa's most popular dance forms among students with the means and access to extra-mural dance studies. As one out of four forms of dance that fall under the umbrella term 'Spanish dance', flamenco began to emerge in the 1980s as a singular, independent dance form in South Africa, with an identity separate from the collective 'Spanish dance'.

Changes in South African government policies post 1994 presented new possibilities for the growth of flamenco, when access to public funding became available to all who satisfied the criteria for funding. However, the perception that all Spanish dance forms are classified as eurocentric and in some way connected to ballet provides flamenco companies with the challenge of justifying their applications for funding. This argument for the verification of a legitimate flamenco identity in South Africa should be of value to flamenco dance practitioners and scholars, funding organisations, Spanish flamenco artists interested in working with South Africans, and artists from other parts of Africa interested in flamenco.

The introductory chapter formulates the argument of this dissertation, and defines flamenco dance in terms of its rules, structures and norms. Chapter One is a review of the literature I have consulted on flamenco identity, both from a historical and anthropological perspective. Chapter Two describes each category of Spanish dance and details aspects of Spain's cultural heritage pertinent to the evolution of flamenco. Chapter Three, the theoretical framework of this dissertation, exposes the stereotypes and assumptions concerning flamenco, and discusses concepts of cultural and national identity, race,

ownership, cultural transmission, tradition and the appropriation of cultural products. Through this interrogation I hope to dispel some of the myths that permeate flamenco and suggest a new set of parameters that might be applied to assign legitimacy to flamenco practice in South Africa.

Chapter Four documents my research methodology in terms of an heuristic enquiry using my own trajectory as a South African flamenco practitioner over more than thirty years. Chapter Five describes the (r)evolution of flamenco in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, sharing insight as to how the content and context of flamenco performance has shifted due to the effects of rapidly changing technology and globalisation. The concluding chapter documents the background of Spanish dance and flamenco in South Africa into the 1990s, which contextualises my work. It includes my own early experience of this genre, and describes the works of my company, *La Rosa*, from 1990 until the present. This forms the substance of a heuristic enquiry into the construction of my own flamenco identity, and that of my company. In closing, I distil the findings of this dissertation, and propose a set of recommendations that strengthen the case for the existence of a legitimate South African flamenco identity in South Africa, and on the global stage.

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## INTRODUCTION

The performing art known as *flamenco* is a multi-disciplinary form rooted in the culturally diverse history of Spain.<sup>1</sup> When flamenco<sup>2</sup> is performed or taught outside of Spain and by foreigners from countries such as South Africa, the identity and thus legitimacy of this art form come into question. This dissertation will examine this issue through a range of resources that will illuminate and refute the stereotypes that define the criteria against which legitimacy is measured, and will provide evidence in support of a case for legitimate flamenco identities existing outside of Spain. Donn Pohren, an American flamenco *aficionado*<sup>3</sup> describes flamenco as a performing art form that arose in Spain in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, consisting of *cante* (song), *baile* (dance) *toque* (guitar playing), *palmas* (hand-clapping) and *jaleo*<sup>4</sup> (the intermittent calls of encouragement given by performers and audience members) (Pohren, 2005, p. 55). Although the focus of this dissertation is the *baile*<sup>5</sup>, this element cannot be investigated independently of the others, as the links between each of the elements is vital to flamenco's history and place as a performing art in present times.

Flamenco is performed across the globe by artists from a myriad of cultural origins, including South Africans of diverse lineages. Two questions arise, and are the subject of contentious debate: Who may legitimately perform flamenco? In which contexts can flamenco be considered authentic? American flamenco *aficionado* Michelle Heffner Hayes describes the problem thus:

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<sup>1</sup> The diverse history of Spanish culture is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> The word 'flamenco' is intentionally not italicised in this dissertation to signify its independence as an art form.

<sup>3</sup> *Aficionado* is the Spanish term for 'enthusiast' and is commonly used in conjunction with the term 'flamenco', even in English texts.

<sup>4</sup> Spanish key words will always be italicised and followed by their English equivalent, and will be included in the Glossary of Terms provided at the end of this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, any reference to flamenco refers to flamenco dance, unless otherwise specified.

The debates surrounding the development of flamenco are concerned with the disputed origins of flamenco, which inevitably lead to arguments involving the cultural “ownership” of the tradition. The professionalization of flamenco and the effects of international commercialism provoke anxiety among flamenco scholars who mourn the “loss” of an “originary” practice and are enraged by the literal and figurative “prostitution” of the art form. Attempts to “reinvent” the “purity” of “true” flamenco spark debates regarding authenticity. These debates, in turn, influence the efforts of those who wish to codify and preserve “traditional” flamenco for future generations. As flamenco increasingly becomes a global practice, issues of cultural appropriation and contamination re-emerge, calling into question the role of flamenco as a representative of a specific ethnic, class or national identity (Heffner Hayes, 2009, pp. 42-43).

Outside of Spain, flamenco culture exists in geographically disconnected pockets. In South Africa, we are not sufficiently connected to the source of this discipline and way of life to enable our artists to reach the level at which the cream of Spanish flamenco artists perform. We have capable dancers who are technically strong but lack the proximity to and competition with others at the centre of flamenco, in Spain, in order to reach the depth of performance by Spaniards and the handful of foreigners living and working as flamenco artists in Spain. We lack the full complement of elements of flamenco – the *baile*, the *toque* and the *cante*. Although South Africa boasts two dance societies<sup>6</sup> with country-wide memberships offering Spanish dance syllabi to a number of teachers and their pupils, we have only two professional guitarists whose sole focus is flamenco capable of and willing to work with flamenco dancers. Furthermore, we have only one *cantaora* (singer, fem.)<sup>7</sup> in South Africa.<sup>8</sup> She learned to sing *cante flamenco* through self-study and informal experiential study alongside guest artists from Spain performing with *La Rosa Dance*

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<sup>6</sup> The Spanish Dance Society (since 1965) and *Alianza Flamenca* (since 1994) were both formed in South Africa and are both internationally recognised societies each offering their own syllabus for recreational and professional study of Spanish dance and flamenco respectively.

<sup>7</sup> The masculine form is *cantaor*.

<sup>8</sup> Currently the only *cantaora* in South Africa is Lorean Swartz, a graduate of La Rosa’s Vocational Training Programme. To the best of my knowledge there are no *cantaores* (masc.) either.

*Company*,<sup>9</sup> and has had limited exposure to the breadth of flamenco repertoire. Funding bodies have little knowledge of the value of learning at the source and appear dubious about granting bursaries to South African flamenco dancers applying to study in Spain, as they believe that learning from South African teachers who have already studied there is sufficient.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of this dissertation is to interrogate the notion of flamenco identity in order to establish the possibility of the existence of a legitimate flamenco identity outside of Spain, and specifically in South Africa. What does it mean to be *flamenco*? Can a South African speak for flamenco culture? If the answer to the second question is negative, then one might ask what it would take to be able to do so. Verification of the existence of a flamenco sub-culture in South Africa may go some way to legitimise the performance of flamenco by South Africans (as well as other outsiders across the globe), helping to shift the unspoken parameters around who has the right to perform flamenco, and which criteria might be used to decide this. Who may set these criteria? Do they even exist? The criteria may only exist in the minds of those who demand that the stereotypes associated with flamenco performance, described by Heffner Hayes as 'passionate, fiery, seductive, potentially violent, sensuous and exotic' (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 2), be apparent.

It is hoped that this dissertation will have value to dance practitioners and scholars, funding organisations, Spanish flamenco artists interested in working with foreigners, and performing artists from other parts of Africa interested in flamenco.

### **Flamenco – a dance form defined**

Flamenco dance fits comfortably into the definition of dance articulated by Judith Lynne Hanna in her chapter in Blacking's *The Performing Arts: Music and Dance* (1979):

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<sup>9</sup> La Rosa Dance Company (formerly known as La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre) was established in Cape Town in 1990.

<sup>10</sup> This observation came out of a personal communication between a staff member at La Rosa and myself in 2011. She informed me that she had received notification from a public funding body stating that her application to study in Spain had been declined on the basis that she currently worked with two previous recipients of bursaries from that body, and could learn from them instead of travelling to Spain herself. A response was sent to the funding body in question. Subsequently, a grant to study in Spain has been awarded.

Dance, in my opinion, can be most usefully defined as human behaviour composed, from the dancer's perspective of (1) purposeful, (2) intentionally rhythmical, and (3) culturally patterned sequences of (4) non-verbal body movements other than ordinary motor activities, the motion having inherent and "aesthetic" value – aesthetic referring to notions of appropriateness and competency held by the dancer's reference groups which act as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation to guide the dancer's actions. Within this conceptualisation, human behaviour must meet each of these criteria in order to be classified as "dance" (Hanna, 1979, pp. 19-20).

In an attempt to define flamenco dance for the purpose of this dissertation, I draw on each of the four criteria defining dance as stipulated by Hanna;

*...purposeful...*

In my experience, the purpose of flamenco dance is for an individual, schooled formally or informally<sup>11</sup> (or a combination of the two) in the flamenco style and technique, to give spontaneous physical expression to the emotion that arises in response to an event, or the mood of a song or a rhythm, within the parameters of flamenco style and technique, independently of an audience (paying or non-paying) being present. This response may be further developed by the dancer, resulting in choreography, or it may remain as a spontaneous moment never to be re-captured. Hanna's reference to dance being an emotional response to both pleasurable and problematic events or circumstances (Hanna, 1979, p. 25), strongly resonates in the context of flamenco.

According to Hanna, social structure also plays a role in the purpose of dance.

The purpose of dance can be understood in terms of the larger social structure, the standardised social form through which conceptualisation and action occurs. This relates to the nature of participation criteria and the dancers' relations to, and means of coping with, the broader social structure (Hanna, 1979, pp. 23-24).

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<sup>11</sup> The transmission of flamenco dance will be discussed in Chapter Three.

If the word 'flamenco' is inserted before 'dance' and 'dancer' in the quotation above, then questions arise as to what the 'larger social structure' might be in the case of flamenco, and whose 'standardised social form' is being applied, as the participation criteria are determined by the social structure governing the form. This dissertation aims to answer such questions in order to establish which social structures govern flamenco in South Africa, and the impact they make on flamenco identity in this country.

*...intentionally rhythmical...*

Compelling and complex rhythmic structures dictate the syntax of flamenco, providing the participants with codified pre-requisite structures that are unique to this form and ensuring clear communication between the performers of all of its component parts. The rhythmic and structural rules that govern the various flamenco *palos*<sup>12</sup> (flamenco song groupings) are clearly defined and provide the framework according to which all participants work in a flamenco performance. All danceable flamenco *palos* may be divided into two groups – those counted in a *compás*<sup>13</sup> (meter) of twelve counts, and those counted in *compás* of eight counts.

We are biologically and environmentally stimulated by rhythm, by patterned, temporally unfolding phenomena. Similar elements are repeated at regular or recognizable related intervals; there are alterations of relative quiet and activity (Hanna, 1979, p. 26).

According to Pohren, flamenco *palos* may be divided into four major categories – *jondo* (deep song) *intermedio* (intermediate song), *chico* (light song) and *popular* (popular) flamenco (Pohren, 2005, p. 57). This categorisation may apply differently to the *baile*, the

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<sup>12</sup> *Palos*- literally means wooden sticks; refers to flamenco song groupings, e.g., *Alegría*, *Soleá* and *Bulería*; all three have the same basic rhythmic structure of 12 beats to a *compás*, with accents on 3,6,8,10 and 12, but the speeds are regular, slow and fast, respectively, the song structure differs from one to the other and the emotive content ranges from joy, to solitude to playfulness.

<sup>13</sup> *Compás* – meter or grouping of rhythmic beats within a given *palo*, e.g., the *palo* of *Alegría* has twelve beats to a *compás*, while *Tango* has eight beats to a *compás*. The accentuation of the counts may vary slightly from one *palo* counted in twelve, to another, for example, in *Alegrías* the accentuations fall on the counts of 3, 6, 8, 10 and 12, while in *Bulerías*, they fall on 12, 3, 7,8 and 10, with steps starting in many of the phrases on the count of 12.

*toque* and the *cante*, where, for example, the *cante* and *toque* of the *palo* 'tientos' may be categorized as *intermedio*, while the *baile* is categorized as *jondo* (Pohren, 2005, p. 255).

During my years of studying flamenco dance in South Africa and Spain I learned that, in a flamenco performance where a *cantaor* (male flamenco singer), a guitarist and a dancer are present, the *cante* dictates the form. For example, if a *cantaor* decides that he would like to sing *por alegrías*,<sup>14</sup> the guitarist and the dancer should immediately understand that the *compás* will be a rhythmic phrase of 12 counts, with accentuation on the counts of 3, 6, 8, 10 and 12. The tempo would be moderate, and the mood of the piece light. The structure of *Alegria* would be known to all of the participants; it usually consists of an *entrada*, or entrance,<sup>15</sup> a *paseo* or walk, one or two *letras* or verses, a *campana* or *silencio* - a slow, unsung section during which the guitarist may play a *falseta*,<sup>16</sup> a *paseo de castellana*,<sup>17</sup> an *escobilla*<sup>18</sup> or intricate footwork section and ends in a *Bulería de Cadiz*.<sup>19</sup> By using a protocol of *llamadas* or calls understood by all three participants, implemented by accentuation of foot beats and stopping on significant counts, the dancer is able to communicate effectively with both the *cantaor* and the guitarist as to when a section may start or end. The *cantaor* would sing an introduction, at the end of which the dancer might execute his or her *entrada*, ending with a *llamada*, indicating to the *cantaor* and the guitarist that they may start the first *letra*. The length of sung verses is dictated by the *cantaor*: the dancer waits to hear the descent of the singer's voice to close the *letra*, either with the *cantaor*, or one *compás* after the *letra* has ended.

Dancers learn these codified structures of flamenco through formal and informal means of transmission. The perceived legitimacy of the source of knowledge about flamenco may contribute to the perceived authenticity of a flamenco performance. The notion of cultural transmission is covered in detail in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

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<sup>14</sup> *Alegrías* meaning 'joy': a flamenco *palo* that arose in Cádiz.

<sup>15</sup> *Entrada* - sometimes called a *salida*, as it refers to the dancer's exit from the wings onto the stage.

<sup>16</sup> *Falseta* - refers to the unsung 'verses' of a flamenco performance that feature the dexterity and artistry of the guitarist.

<sup>17</sup> *Paseo de Castellana* is a section of *Alegrías* referring to the era when women wore their finery on Sunday afternoons and paraded up and down the *Paseo de Castellana*, a busy thoroughfare in Madrid.

<sup>18</sup> *Escobilla* - the direct translation is 'little brush', referring to the rapid movements of the feet.

<sup>19</sup> *Bulería de Cádiz* - each region of Andalusia has a *bulería* typical to that region, varying in structure, speed and tune from that of the other regions. This *bulería* is from Cádiz.

...culturally patterned sequences...

Despite there being ample room for personal style and interpretation, flamenco's readily identifiable body lines, pathways of arms and footwork techniques render it unique, distinguishing it from other dance forms such as classical ballet,<sup>20</sup> contemporary dance<sup>21</sup> or tap dance. Hanna posits that:

Dance – as a system of ordering movement, a cumulative set of rules or range of permissible movement patterns – is one of the elements comprising culture. It reflects other cultural manifestations and is a vehicle through which culture is learned [...] Of the virtually infinite number of possible combinations of movements that can be manipulated and the dramatic variants possible, ranging from intense peaking or outstanding climaxes to the mere physiological change from repeating the same movement, only certain ones appear to be used by the dancers of a specific culture. These are used within certain parameters of delimiting rules (Hanna, 1979, pp. 29-30).

The techniques specific to flamenco occur consistently and differentiate it from other dance forms, rendering it unique and easily identifiable in the eyes of the knowledgeable viewer as flamenco. For example, the posture required is evidenced by an elongated spine, open and slightly lifted chest, open shoulders and a lifted head. The techniques include the execution of *zapateado* or footwork, *muñecas* or wrist-circles, and the positions and *brazeo*, or flow, of the arms specific to flamenco. Hanna's reference is to 'dancers of a specific culture', and the thrust of this dissertation is the question 'Whose culture is flamenco?'

I consider the possibility that over the centuries of flamenco dance's existence, particularly since the advent of film, and more recently with the rapid growth of travel and technology, exposure to other dance styles, particularly contemporary dance, may have shifted the parameters governing flamenco dance in terms of both stylistic and technical execution. Flamenco artists such as Eliezer Truco Pinillos 'La Truco', Eva Yerbabuena, Israel Galvan,

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<sup>20</sup> In this dissertation all references to 'ballet' refer to 'classical' ballet.

<sup>21</sup> In South Africa 'contemporary dance' is synonymous with 'modern dance' in American usage, and 'modern dance' in South Africa refers to jazz.

Rocio Molina and Belen Maya include in their work contractions and isolations, terms not previously used in flamenco. Such elements may well have existed as part of an individual's style, but, in my experience, were not taught in this context until fairly recently.<sup>22</sup> Hanna supports this notion, stating that 'Movement styles are subject to forces of internal and external change. These occur in relation to other aspects of culture, as for example, work, economics, religion and politics' (Hanna, 1979, p. 31).

*...non-verbal body movements other than ordinary motor activities, the motion having inherent and "aesthetic" value....*

In this essay, *aesthetic* refers to notions of appropriateness, quality, or competency from the dancer's perspective. Expectations are created by the dancer's reference groups [...] Aesthetic experience can also be viewed from the perspective of the audience, which differs from that of the dancer, although empathy with the creator may be intense. The spectator experience can provide a variety of feedback responses that affect future performances. These responses range from ignoring the performance to euphorically encouraging a dancer and those who contributed to the dance production during or after the presentation (Hanna, 1979, p. 35).

Hanna is referring here to the style applied to the culturally patterned sequences (discussed earlier) that describes the movements according to an aesthetic code for dance. The aesthetic code for flamenco has developed over centuries and continues to evolve in current times, with innumerable styles of flamenco, from those passed down informally across flamenco dynasties<sup>23</sup> to those taught in the studios across the world by artists who

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<sup>22</sup> In my travels to Spain between 1990 and 2009 the inclusion of contemporary dance movement styles and terms in the teaching of flamenco increased significantly. Eliezer Truco Pinillos 'La Truco' conducts daily classes based on a detailed analysis of her trademark style, which incorporates the concepts of pelvic contractions, hip, thoracic and shoulder isolations and releases.

<sup>23</sup> The Ortega dynasty, originally from Cadiz, represents a long line of flamencos from as early as the 1800s to the present day (Pohren, 2005, pp. 84-85).

have developed their own unique take on, for example, how the arms might move – with elbows lifted (Magdalena, 1990 - 2001) , or with elbows dropped (Truco, 2001 - 2009).<sup>24</sup>

The question as to who determines inherent and aesthetic value is at the crux of this dissertation. In a private conversation with Spaniard Carmela Greco (Greco, 2008), a renowned flamenco teacher based at *Amor de Dios*<sup>25</sup> who visited South Africa in 2008 to conduct a series of classes for *Alianza Flamenca*,<sup>26</sup> Greco commented on the teaching methods employed by young, new flamenco teachers who were introducing elements of fitness into their classes that, in her opinion, had no relevance to the teaching of flamenco. Greco's introduction to flamenco was through her father José Greco, an American-born dancer of Italian decent, who rose to fame whilst performing with the Spanish companies of *La Argentinita*<sup>27</sup> and Pilar Lopez<sup>28</sup> in the 1940s and 1950s. In his description of José Greco, Donn E. Pohren writes

José Greco serves as an excellent example of the devastating effects of commercialism [...] As his name grew his dance deteriorated; each year he was less effective. In my mind his trousers symbolise the change of his dance; it seems that as they became more satiny and flamboyant (i.e. skin-tight satin champagne color, and the like), Greco took on an airy, ballet style and the characteristic virility and *duende*<sup>29</sup> of his dance suffered badly. This deterioration was augmented by acrobatics and gimmicks, and with time Greco became

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<sup>24</sup> Over the period from 1990 to 2009 I travelled to Sevilla and Madrid in Spain to experience tuition and choreography of some of the great Spanish dance masters, taking lessons in Spanish regional dance, *danza estilizada* and flamenco.

<sup>25</sup> *Amor de Dios* – the famous studios in Madrid that were originally situated in the old town street of the same name. The studios are now situated nearby, above the *Mercado Santa Isabel* at Atocha.

<sup>26</sup> *Alianza Flamenca* is an international alliance for the study of flamenco, established in South Africa in 1994 by Hazel Acosta, Clive Bain, Lina Dolores Vega and Linda Vargas.

<sup>27</sup> *La Argentinita* (1900-1945) was born in Buenos Aires, but brought up in Spain. Her company toured the United States for the first time in 1928, establishing her reputation as 'the belle of Spanish dance' by New York *aficionados* (Pohren, 1988, p. 226).

<sup>28</sup> Pilar Lopez (1912-2008), sister of *La Argentinita*, was born in San Sebastian, Spain. She was renowned for training male dancers, for example, José Greco, Mario Maya and Antonio Gades. Her style was a fusion of flamenco and theatrical dance (Pohren, 1988, pp. 229-230).

<sup>29</sup> *Duende* – a term peculiar to flamenco – means 'the spirit of inspiration that overcomes the dancer and endows his movements with a sense of "authenticity" lacking in fully choreographed productions' (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 113).

converted from a moving purist into a crowd-pleasing sensationalist (Pohren, 1988, p. 201).

Given Carmela Greco's own experience and context, her point of reference for flamenco is made up of a unique set of aesthetic values that may or may not coincide on some level with that of others of her age, culture, nationality or dance background, such as La Truco. Greco is revered by many students as one of the greatest flamenco teachers of her time and at the same time is deeply attached to the aesthetic values of flamenco with which she identifies, but which values may not form the whole set of any of her contemporaries. In Chapter Three I interrogate the parameters governing who has legitimate permission to perform flamenco. This may be all the more difficult to concretise given the diversity of experience and context that exists among leading figures in the realm of flamenco in present times.

### **Dissertation Outline**

In order to present my case for the legitimate existence of flamenco identity in South Africa, in this introductory chapter I have provided the reader with a definition of flamenco dance that establishes the point of departure for my research. The literature review in Chapter One offers insight into my choices of sources. While conventional historians, dance historians and flamencologists have explained the historical and cultural background to flamenco, I have turned to anthropologists and sociologists to inform my research on the concepts of cultural and national identity, race, ownership, cultural transmission, tradition and appropriation of cultural products.

Chapter Two describes where flamenco falls within the categorisation of Spanish dance, and relays the history of Spanish cultural formation from ancient times to the present day, tracing the imprint of cultures that inhabited, traded with, or conquered the Iberian Peninsula. Chapter Three outlines the theoretical framework for this dissertation, resulting in the emergence of a set of criteria that might be used to determine the legitimacy and authenticity of flamenco performance anywhere in the world. Chapter Four describes the research methodology of heuristic enquiry that I have employed in order to formulate the questions and arguments pertinent to this dissertation.

Chapter Five describes the (r)evolution of flamenco in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, sharing insight as to how the content and context of flamenco performance has shifted due to the effects of rapidly changing technology and globalisation. The concluding chapter documents the background of Spanish dance and flamenco in South Africa to the 1990s, which contextualises my work. It includes my own early experience of this genre, and describes the works of my company, *La Rosa*, from 1990 until the present, which formed the substance of an heuristic enquiry into the construction of my own flamenco identity to date, and that of my company. In closing, it distils the findings of this dissertation, and proposes a set of recommendations that strengthen the case for the existence of a legitimate flamenco identity in South Africa that can hold its own on the global stage.

University of Cape Town

## CHAPTER 1: RE-SEARCHING<sup>30</sup> FLAMENCO

In an attempt to gather evidence that supports a case for the existence of a legitimate flamenco identity in South Africa, I have conducted research by consulting literature from the areas of flamenco history,<sup>31</sup> dance, anthropology, cultural theory and history, and a selection of works included in the repertoire of *La Rosa Dance Company*. Some of these sources cover more than one area of research; for example, dance, flamenco and history may be contained in one publication, while another publication may more specifically cover the history of Spain. For the purposes of this chapter, I have divided my sources into two categories: those which cover or contribute to an outline of the history of Spain and thus the evolution of flamenco, and those which speak to the theories that others have applied to the notions of and concepts related to identity and culture.

Key texts on Spanish dance, flamenco and its history include those of La Meri (1948), Anna Ivanova (1970), Marina Grut (1981 and 2002), Donn E. Pohren (1988, 2005), Claus Schreiner (1990), James Woodall (1992), William Washabaugh (1996), Timothy Dewaal Malefyt (1998), Gerhard Steingress (1998) and Michelle Heffner Hayes (2000, 2003 and 2009) while works by George Borrow (1841) and Quintana and Floyd (1972) offer insight into the lifestyles of Gypsies in Spain. My research on identity, cultural theory and cultural transmission refers to texts by Joann Kealiinohomoku (1969 and 1979), Lynn Hanna (1979), Carol Brown (1994), Margaret Fee (1995), Gareth Griffiths (1995), Ann Cooper Albright (1997), Adrienne Kaeppler (2000), Teresa Jill Buckland (2001 and 2006), Tresa M Randall (2003), Helen Thomas (2003), Janet O'Shea (2006), Andrée Grau (2007), Sherry Shapiro (2008) and Pascal Boyer (2009).

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<sup>30</sup> Although the term 're-searching' was not sourced in any text, it is also found in Polkinghorne, D.E. (1983) *Methodology for the Human Sciences: Systems of Inquiry*. New York: State University of New York Press. Quoted In Hiles, D (2001).

<sup>31</sup> Much of the literature on flamenco history is not available in English. While my Spanish is sufficient for communication, I have chosen to focus on publications written in English to avoid the possibility of inaccuracies in my translations.

## Sources that tell flamenco's history

In order to contextualise flamenco and its place in the tapestry of Spain's rich cultural heritage, I have drawn on resources that outline the deep cultural roots that permeated the Iberian Peninsula<sup>32</sup> since ancient times. I have drawn on the writing of two retired professors who use the online *nom de plum* of Margaret & JG, the authors of [spainthenandnow.com](http://spainthenandnow.com) (Spain Then and Now, 2012).<sup>33</sup> This is a well-referenced website offering a detailed history of each of the peoples who inhabited the Iberian Peninsula and the impact on cultural activities made by those with whom they traded. Conquests by the Romans, the Visigoths and the Moors, and ultimately the Catholic *requonquista* or reconquest of Spain, were significant watersheds contributing to the formation of flamenco in the mid-19th century (Spain Then and Now, 2012). Of great interest to me is the deep-rootedness of a divided nationalism prevalent in modern Spain, and how a lack of a cohesive national and cultural identity manifests to this day. This is discussed in depth in Chapters Two and Four of this dissertation. Other resources that have provided insight into Spain's cultural history include a number of electronic sources, including websites such as *A Concise Historic Timeline of Jewish Life in Spain* (Alfassa, 2012) and *Jackson Hole Jewish Music Festival* (Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center, 2012).

The cultural contribution of Gypsy culture to Spain, and specifically to flamenco, is a cornerstone of this dissertation. As a missionary for the British and Foreign Bible Society, George Borrow wrote *The Zincali or an Account of the Gypsies in Spain* (Borrow, 1841), a lively text reporting on Gypsies from all over Europe but focussing on the *Zincali*<sup>34</sup> or Roma Gypsies who settled in Spain during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This account pre-dates the appearance

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<sup>32</sup> The Iberian Peninsula refers to the peninsula in the Southwest of Europe, consisting of modern day Spain, Andorra and Portugal, separated from Europe by the Pyrenees, and connected to Africa by the straits of Gibraltar. ([www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com)). Accessed on 15 March 2012.

<sup>33</sup> In seeking out the full names of the authors of this website, I encountered this search result:

'American University Programs in **Spain** | Embassy of the United States...

<http://madrid.usembassy.gov/education/american-university-programs.html>

Students take a variety of courses from **Spanish** language and **literature**, to contemporary socio-political .... Local co-coordinators: F. Otero and **J.G.** Zugazabeitia ... Fall and winter semesters, summer intensive, and special arrangements for a limited number of students on a **term** system. .... Resident Director: **Margaret Curtis ...**'.

I assume that this combination of 'Margaret and JG' refers to the authors of the website [spainthenandnow.com](http://spainthenandnow.com), but having conducted an extensive search through the American Embassy and the Fulbright Commission in Madrid, Spain, I do not yet have confirmation of this. Refer to Appendix 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Zincali* is the name by which Spanish Gypsies called themselves in the 1800s. It is believed to mean 'the Black men of Zend or Ind(ia)' (Borrow, 1841, p. 3).

of flamenco as a performing art, but provides a detailed insight into the Gypsies' way of life. A more recent book about the Gypsies, *¡Que Gitano! Gypsies of Southern Spain*, by cultural anthropologist Bertha B. Quintana and psychologist Lois Gray Floyd (Quintana & Floyd, 1972), is a more objective account of the Gypsy lifestyle garnered from interviews with Gypsies living in Granada in the 1970s. This text contextualises Gypsy perspectives on culture, particularly with respect to flamenco, and the debate regarding what constitutes flamenco identity. Other texts that contributed to my understanding of Gypsy culture are flamenco *aficionado* Jason Webster's travelogue *Duende* (Webster, 2003) and American critic John Updike's essay 'Drawn to Gypsies', included in his collection *Due Considerations* (Updike, 2007).

The sources I refer to that focus on Spanish dance and more specifically flamenco are generally written by non-Spaniards. American dance scholar La Meri's *Spanish Dancing* (La Meri, 1948) covers a broad history of regional, classical and flamenco dance and provides insight into the emergence of the style known today by several names – *baile teatral* or theatrical dance, *danza estilizada* or stylised dance, *baile clásico* or classical dance and *danza española*, or 'Spanish dance'. The context in which this dance form arose and the way in which it was perceived, especially by foreigners and tourists, underlies the rationale behind South African audiences' expectations of Spanish dance from the 1950s until the present. Although she attributes flamenco to the Gypsies, La Meri's perspective on Gypsy culture appears to be limited and disparaging, as evidenced by her comment, 'For this art is born of a folk, and that very folk, being ignorant, are unaware of the importance of artistic integrity (La Meri, 1948, p. 85). Caballero Bonald's *Andalusian Dances* (1959) focuses on dances from Southern Spain, with his own categorisation<sup>35</sup> of Andalusian dances distinguishing between what he refers to as classical dances, mixed theatrical dances, *jondo*<sup>36</sup> dances and flamenco dances (Caballero Bonald, 1959). The English version of this text appears to have been translated by a non-Spaniard and non-dancer, who, from his own

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<sup>35</sup> Caballero Bonald presents a complex and detailed categorisation of Spanish dance that corresponds with that of others (e.g., Pohren's and La Meri's) but uses terminology that does not tie in with the broadly accepted categorisation; for example, he uses *jondo* to group dances performed by Gypsies including the Alegria, whereas Pohren uses *jondo* to describe the deep, profound *palos* of flamenco, which do not include Alegria.

<sup>36</sup> *Jondo* is the profound category of flamenco *palos* describing the deep songs, e.g. *Soleares* and *Siguiriyas*, most of which were assumed to have been sung traditionally by Gypsies.

notes,<sup>37</sup> seemed to be confused at times. The photographs depict costumes and dance styles of the 1950s, bearing testament to the changing trends in flamenco.

Like La Meri, Anna Ivanova's *The Dancing Spaniards* (1970) covers the various Spanish dance forms. Her final chapter, entitled 'National Dance and the Influence of Flamencomania' presents a unique (but, in my opinion, poorly informed) perspective on flamenco: for instance, she refers to flamenco as 'Spanish gypsy dancing', and states that it is a 'facet of Andalusian regional dance' (Ivanova, 1970, p. 177).<sup>38</sup> London-based teacher Lalagia's<sup>39</sup> *Spanish Dancing: A Practical Handbook* (1985) is clear evidence of the blurred lines that exist in the categorisation of dances that emanate from Spain. It also carries statements that would now be seen as broad generalisations, and is thus useful for illustrating the perceptions and expectations audiences have of the term 'Spanish dance' based on stereotypes: talking about the posture while using arms, Lalagia writes, 'The national pride and developed ego of the Spaniards requires the dancers to have a definite and positive approach to their work' (Lalagia, 1985, p. 34). While *The Language of Spanish Dance* (Vittucci, 1990) has a useful alphabetical listing of Spanish dance, particularly *escuela bolera* and *danza estilizada* terminology, with illustrations and dance and musical notation, its reference to flamenco is limited.

*The Bolero School* (Grut, 2002) by South African dance author Dame Marina Grut (published in the United Kingdom) is a detailed account of the history and content of the *escuela bolera* or bolero school, a dance style similar to classical ballet that emerged in the royal courts of Spain at the same time classical ballet gained popularity amongst French and Italian royalty. This resource assists the reader in differentiating between flamenco and other forms of Spanish dance including *escuela bolera* and articulates the hierarchy of dance styles prevailing in Spain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was during this era that flamenco emerged as a codified dance genre in the *Cafés Cantantes*, where *cuadros boleros*<sup>40</sup> and *cuadros*

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<sup>37</sup> My assumption is based on some footnotes provided by the translator, e.g., see page 9 of the Bonald text.

<sup>38</sup> Flamenco draws on regional Andalusian music and dance, but is classified separately by Pohren (2005) and Heffner Hayes (2009).

<sup>39</sup> According to Acosta, the British woman who used the *nom de plum* Lalagia was a wonderfully lyrical teacher and dancer who was fluent in Spanish and had a deep and detailed understanding of the various forms of Spanish dance (Acosta, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> The direct translation for *cuadro* is picture or picture frame. It refers to the rectangular arrangement of *bolero* or flamenco artists seated on the sides and across the back of the stage seen in *Cafés Cantantes* and *tablaos*.

*flamencos* appeared on the same programmes (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 6), a style of presentation that may have precipitated the formulaic structure of Spanish dance performances which emerged during General Franco's regime from the 1940s to the late 1970s.

*The Flamenco Dance in the Cafés Cantantes Epoch: A Historiographical Review* (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012) contains valuable references to the works of Spanish dance writers who document the history of the codification of flamenco as a performing art form in the mid-19th century. Bennahum's *Antonia Mercé "La Argentina": Flamenco and the Spanish Avant Garde* (Bennahum, 2000) takes us to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, outlining the career of La Argentina, who, I believe, was the pioneer of the form known today as *danza estilizada*.<sup>41</sup> Mones et al. (2000) document the history of dance in Spain with a concise chronology of historical and political watersheds that affected the directions flamenco and Spanish dance in general have taken.

Donn Pohren's three essential texts *Lives and Legends of Flamenco* (Pohren, 1988), *A Way of Life* (Pohren, 1980) and *The Art of Flamenco* (Pohren, 2005) are invaluable sources of information written by an American outsider who lived and worked as a flamenco guitarist in Spain. In *Lives and Legends of Flamenco*, Pohren presents a chronological and biographical account of renowned flamenco performers from the Golden Age or *Cafés Cantantes* period (circa 1850) to the late 1980s. He comments on how flamenco performance changed over the years as it conformed to the whims and demands of audiences, fuelling the debate about the authenticity of contemporary flamenco performance versus traditional performance (Pohren, 1988). This has contributed to my analysis of the issue of authenticity, which emerged as this dissertation progressed.

*Flamenco: A Way of Life*, is an autobiographical account of Pohren's and his wife's personal journeys, living as *flamencos*, running a *peña* or small, exclusive flamenco club, at a *finca* (country house), and the challenges they experienced as outsiders participating in and organising flamenco performances that employed Gypsy artists. This text highlights the

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<sup>41</sup> The various styles of Spanish dance are discussed in Chapter Two.

impact cultural values have on what might be constituted as 'employment' or the 'manufacture' of a cultural product, for example, composing or singing a song, with a quantifiable value, versus what may be considered a cultural tradition or pastime with an inherent but intangible worth.

In *The Art of Flamenco*, Pohren offers a version of the history of flamenco as well as a detailed explanation of the genealogy of flamenco *palos* or rhythmic structures, including the history and structure of some of the better known *palos*. His updates with each new edition of his book provide interesting reading in terms of his sometimes shifting opinions regarding the authenticity of flamenco performance and the importance of ethnicity with respect to Gypsies, *payos*,<sup>42</sup> Spaniards and non-Spaniards (Pohren, 2005).

British freelance writer and editor James Woodall introduces another perspective from an outsider who is neither Spanish nor a practitioner of flamenco. His *Search of the Firedance: Spain through Flamenco* (Woodall, 1992) delivers a detailed account of the history of flamenco, describing its geographic foundations and performers through the ages, most prominently the Gypsies and performers of the Golden Age of the 19th century. He goes on to discuss flamenco in the modern world. This text highlights the regional nature of flamenco and brings to the fore the notion of birthplace or upbringing in a specific geographical location as a criterion for weighing the authenticity of flamenco performance.

Although American anthropologist William Washabaugh's *Flamenco: Passion, Politics and Popular Culture* (Washabaugh, 1996) focuses mainly on the *cante*, or flamenco song, his views on authenticity may be extrapolated to include the *baile*, or flamenco dance, which is the focus of this dissertation. His chapter about the Gypsies and their role in flamenco raises the debate as to the origins of flamenco, particularly with regard to the origins of the songs. Questions such as 'Were they *Andalusian* or Gypsy?' arise in this volume. He introduces terminology that has emerged along with the increase in the publication of texts on this subject, for example, *gitanofilia* meaning pro-Gypsy in the authenticity argument and *flamencologia* or the study of flamenco history. Both of these terms feature frequently in

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<sup>42</sup> *Payo* – non-Gypsy Spaniard

modern texts. This illuminates the increasing importance of the subject to those passionate about the art form, and about the theories surrounding Spanish popular culture.

Washabaugh also explores the impact that politics has on culture and dedicates considerable space to the period of Franco's regime (1939 – 1975) and the impact it had on perceptions of flamenco within and outside of Spain. His chapter entitled 'Anglo Perspectives on Flamenco Music' examines the insider/outsider debate, particularly with respect to outsiders who write on the subject but are not practitioners of flamenco.

*Sobre Flamenco y Flamencología* (Steingress, 1998) is a publication in Spanish by an Austrian professor of sociology at the University of Sevilla. Gerhard Steingress proposes that the origins of flamenco are Andalusian and that as the Gypsies were incorporated into the region from 1492 they adapted songs indigenous to that region, employing their unique voices and style of delivery to make them their own. In this way, Steingress questions the racial elitism pervading the realm of flamenco performance in Spain where it is assumed that an artist's Gypsy ethnicity instantly renders his or her performance authentic, independent of any other criterion. He proposes that factors such as *romanticismo* (romanticism) and *gitanismo* (pro-Gypsy sentiment) have played major roles in creating myths around the claims of authenticity in flamenco performance.

By virtue of its title alone, *Flamenco: Gypsy Dance and Music from Andalusia* (Schreiner, 1990) contrasts Steingress's work. Although this series of essays, edited by Claus Schreiner and written by a range of German flamenco *aficionados*, favours *gitanismo*, offering the reader a pro-Gypsy perspective on the question of cultural ownership and flamenco, it is realistic in that it acknowledges that today, many outstanding flamenco practitioners are not Gypsies. The writers' deep connections to flamenco and Gypsy flamenco artists suggests some thought-provoking alternatives to Steingress's views on the origins and evolution of flamenco as mentioned above.

This issue is concretised in *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance* (Heffner Hayes, 2009) in which American dance scholar Michelle Heffner Hayes provides a perspective on the effect of Spain's convoluted and complex history on flamenco (Heffner Hayes, 2009). She introduces the notion of the insider/outsider on several levels by illustrating the

perceived differences in terms of authenticity of delivery between flamenco performers who are *gitanos*<sup>43</sup> or Gypsies, *payos* or non-Gypsy Spaniards and *guiris* (a derogatory flamenco term for foreigners), with their own cultural identities. She contrasts traditional performance contexts such as *peñas* with commercial ones such as *tablaos* or flamenco nightclubs which are largely geared for tourists. *Aficionados*, those assumed to 'know' a good deal about flamenco, are pitted against those who are presumed not to know or understand about the form. Heffner Hayes proposes that audiences' expectations have been framed by an image of passion, femininity and sexuality. This image of the exotic and erotic Spanish *femme fatale* was created from as early as the middle of the 19th century by Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen*, and coincided with the emergence of flamenco as a codified, professional dance genre performed in the *Cafés Cantantes* or flamenco cabarets. Heffner Hayes suggests that the portrayal of the passionate Gypsy or '*latina*' in Hollywood films in the 1930s created a romanticised visual of Spanish women. She describes how this exotic image of flamenco was utilised by General Franco<sup>44</sup> to market Spain as a destination for tourists from the United States and other parts of Europe from the 1930s to the 1970s. She proposes that this desire for other continues to affect the way flamenco performance is executed by some contemporary flamenco dancers, and how it is perceived by some audiences to the present day.

I have used Heffner Hayes's book as a primary resource as it contextualises the examination of my own teaching and performance work through the eyes of a fellow 'outsider'<sup>45</sup> whose journey parallels my own in many respects. Her first encounter with flamenco was in the form of a gift from her grandparents after their trip to Spain in 1975. Her grandmother's excitement in recalling her experience of a *tablaos* echoes my own first experience of a staged *tablaos* as a 10 year old. She says of her grandmother, 'Her description planted the seeds of exotic fascination in me, a desire predicated by difference and, simultaneously,

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<sup>43</sup> *Gitanos* are Gypsies. The role of Spanish Gypsies in the evolution of flamenco is covered in detail in Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation.

<sup>44</sup> General Franco rose to power in 1936 at the end of the Spanish Civil war. Franco used dance in an attempt to build a cohesive national identity and to market Spain to the United States. This is discussed in more detail in Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>45</sup> Michelle Heffner Hayes is an American flamenco dancer, flamenco teacher and dance academic who, like me, was introduced to flamenco as a child. Our journeys have taken similar routes and our experiences as non-Spanish flamencos have much in common.

self-identification [...] I could be someone else' (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 1). Heffner Hayes asks '...how do I dare write about flamenco from the position of the foreign flamencophile? Am I not just another privileged outsider who is doomed to misunderstand and misrepresent flamenco and flamencos, perhaps at great cost to the artists and the art form?' (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 6). One intention of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the determinants of who is an insider or an outsider in flamenco are subject to interrogation on a number of levels.<sup>46</sup>

Another reference to Heffner Hayes is her analysis of flamenco improvisation in the chapter in Ann Cooper Albright and David Gere's book *Taken Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader* (2003), entitled 'The Writing on the Wall: Reading Improvisation in Flamenco and Postmodern Dance' (Heffner Hayes, 2003), on the differences between flamenco and postmodern dance improvisation (Heffner Hayes, 2003). The spoken and unspoken rules governing flamenco improvisation form a framework with which the dancer may work, determined by the *palo* or rhythmic structure being danced, as well as a codified vocabulary of measured sequences that are in sync with the guitarist, singer and other musicians (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 106). It is important to this dissertation as it describes the flamenco improvisation process, one I have increasingly used as a choreographer. Heffner Hayes holds that, even though a piece is 'structured', the dancer, given the liberty to make it his or her own in each performance, improvises, rendering the performance 'fresh each time, thus maintaining the element of improvisation so vital to flamenco performance (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 106 & 112). Heffner Hayes's discussion of the concept of *duende* gives consideration to yet another criterion for authenticity in flamenco performance (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 113). This source is valuable, as it interrogates authenticity in flamenco performance and questions the proliferation of racial and cultural assumptions that emerge in literature across the chronological spectrum of flamenco writing. A third resource by Heffner Hayes, a chapter entitled 'Blood Wedding: Traditional and Innovation in Contemporary Flamenco' (Heffner Hayes, 2000), in Doolittle & Flynn's *Dancing Bodies Living Histories* (2000) tackles the issue of traditionalism versus innovation, illustrating the impact of technology and the contemporary conceptualisation of dance works on tradition.

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<sup>46</sup> Chapter Three interrogates the unspoken and spoken criteria that legitimise flamenco practice.

An academic with an interest in consumer ethnography, Timothy Dewaal Malefyt (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998) uses gender theory to examine the inside and outside positions within flamenco in terms of the context of the performance, rather than culture or ethnicity of the performers. He maintains that the shift from *peñas* or small, exclusive flamenco clubs to public performance venues, in the form of the *Cafés Cantantes* in the mid-19th century and *tablaos* from the 1930s, resulted in the commodification of flamenco and thus diluted its authenticity, as it now played to the whims of the paying audience rather than the prevailing mood of an intimate family event or community event. Equating 'the internal' with the feminine, 'a domain of familiarity, equality and comfort', and 'the external' with the masculine, 'a domain of social distancing, hierarchy, and circumspect behaviour' (1998, p. 64), Dewaal Malefyt demonstrates how, over the period from the *Cafés Cantantes* to the present, the performance of flamenco has been manipulated by various elites to whose 'whims and caprices' (1998, p. 65) it has appealed. He holds that the mere fact that money has changed hands results in a performance that moves from one of authenticity to one that is exaggerated and intended to please the crowd. He contrasts a visit to a *peña* (by an insider) with his own attendance of a flamenco *tablaos* performance (as the outsider) at *Los Gallos*, a well-known tourist flamenco venue in the heart of Sevilla. Dewaal Malefyt's article presents another view of what might be considered authentic flamenco, which points to the possibility that authenticity depends upon the viewpoint of the speaker.

I have referred to several South African texts on dance in order to provide a background and context to my personal journey, first as a student and teacher of Spanish dance and subsequently as artistic director of *La Rosa Dance Company* in Cape Town. Although its focus is not on the flamenco dancer *per se*, Marina Grut's *The History of Ballet in South Africa* (1981) includes biographies of South African Spanish dancers and documents performances. *Mercedes Molina* (Ziegler, 1983), a tribute by Fred Ziegler to the late Mercedes Molina, describes the history of Molina's Spanish dance company and the personalities who contributed to it, many of whom have been connected to my own journey in dance. It also documents the history of the Spanish Dance Society, whose syllabus was a

cornerstone of my Spanish dance education. Jasmine Honoré's<sup>47</sup> introductory chapter to Ziegler's publication provides a concise history of Spanish dance.

A more current article entitled 'Flamenco Dance in Primary Education: A living theory approach to dance education' (2012), by South African flamenco dancer and choreographer Linda Vargas and her Spanish husband Demi Fernandez, demonstrates the shifts in teaching flamenco dance in South Africa over the past two decades. It explores the notion of identity through the application of a teaching methodology that invites young dancers to explore their own identities, incorporating what they have learned through dance into who they are, rather than seeing themselves as only who they were at birth (Vargas & Fernandez, 2012), a possible remnant of British colonialism. This perspective supports the notion that there is a case for flamenco identity in South Africa, which is the thrust of this dissertation.

#### **Sources that inform the theoretical framework of this dissertation**

My research has focussed on the concepts of culture, the notion of identity and the significance of cultural transmission. I have looked to the fields of anthropology, sociology and cultural theory to interrogate these ideas and provide evidence that may support the case for the existence of a legitimate flamenco identity in South Africa.

In John Blacking's *Performing Arts: Music and Dance*, chapters written by Joann W. Kealiinohomoku (Kealiinohomoku, 1979) and Judith Lynne Hanna (Hanna, 1979) assist to contextualise dance and therefore flamenco in the world of anthropology. Where Hanna's definition of dance has been utilised to provide the reader with an understanding of the purpose, rhythmic structures, song constructions and aesthetics of flamenco dance, Kealiinohomoku's chapter on 'affective culture' (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, p. 47), refers to

those cultural manifestations that implicitly and explicitly reflect the values of a given group of people through consciously devised means that arouse emotional

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<sup>47</sup> Jasmine Honoré (1924-) former Spanish dance teacher, choreographer and lecturer at the University of Cape Town School of Dance with academic interests in National dance and African dance.

responses and that strongly reinforce group identity (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, p. 47).

She describes how two traditional dance cultures of the Pacific, Balinese and Hawaiian dance, differ from one another in terms of access to learning and performing dances, the status attributed to dance and dancers, performance spaces and access for audiences, ritualistic as opposed to interpretive or improvised dance and the acceptance or rejection of new forms of these dances. This can be seen in the comparison of the trajectory of flamenco with that of *folklorico* (regional Spanish dance), noting that flamenco has evolved from its original, traditional form of the 1800s to a contemporary version of the form, whereas *folklorico*, so carefully preserved by General Franco's *Sección Feminina de Coros y Danzas*,<sup>48</sup> has remained static.

*An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a form of Ethnic Dance*, a second resource by Kealiinohomoku (Kealiinohomoku, 1969), is central to this dissertation as it questions the manner in which dance is categorised and the criteria used for such categorisation. Focussing on the vocabulary used by dance scholars, terms such as 'ethnic dance', 'primitive dance' and 'folkdance' are interrogated, along with the stereotypes associated with them. This text corroborates my perspective on identity, disregarding the notion of bloodlines and the mythical connotations that being Gypsy, Spanish or flamenco carry.

In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995) Margery Fee's 'Who Can Write as Other?' (Fee, 1995) refers to writers whose legitimacy as speakers for Maori culture is argued due to their mixed ancestry or upbringing, and questions the assumptions that ethnocentricity makes about authenticity. This text debunks the myths of bloodlines, promoting cultural affiliation or 'solidarity of feeling' (Fee, 1995, p. 244) rather than ancestry as a marker for inclusion in a culture. Gareth Griffith's 'The Myth of Authenticity' (Griffiths, 1995) describes the reporting by the white dominated media about a claim to a tract of land by two Australian Aboriginal groups, citing the media as mythologising the bases of claims of authenticity, resulting in the creation of a 'privileged hierarchy of Australian Aboriginal voice which in practice represents

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<sup>48</sup> The 'Feminine Division of Choruses and Dances' is discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

that community as divided' (Griffiths, 1995, p. 238). This echoes for me the claim by writers and *aficionados* from outside Spain who remain attached to an either/or scenario regarding who the originators of flamenco culture were - Gypsies or Andalusians - and thus whose flamenco is authentic. In my opinion, a more objective, neutral approach in attributing the origins and evolution of flamenco to all of the cultures that impacted on Spain's cultural heritage more accurately approximates the history of this form.

Dance academic Tresa M Randall's paper 'Interculturalism and Authenticity in the Work of Uday Shankar' (Randall, 2003) at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society of Dance History Scholars at the University of Limerick in Ireland, illustrates how the expectation of the audience for an artist to conform to the stereotypes imposed by the image of the exotic other impacts on the work of artists, and on their work being considered authentic or not. She describes the life and work of Uday Shankar, a male Indian dancer who revolutionised the performance of Indian dance in the 1930s by presenting himself and his dancers in a non-traditional, modern style and form. She proposes that the concept of authenticity was viewed by Shankar as a limitation when it implied the replication of traditional Indian dance. Indian traditionalists criticised and rebuked him, while American and European critics lauded him as 'the real thing' (Randall, 2003, p. 100).

In defence of his work, Shankar argued that Indian culture, like any other, is dynamic, and that art, as a reflection of culture, should not 'blindly imitate' (Randall, 2003, p. 103) but rather give expression to what is relevant in current times. This echoes the traditionalist versus modernist debate around the authenticity of flamenco performance described by Heffner Hayes (Heffner Hayes, 2000), whose writing supports the argument that authenticity depends on the experience, culture and identity of the speaker. It also corroborates Heffner Hayes's description of the 'Carmen' stereotype that pervades flamenco with reference to women, but in this case describes the 'exotic god' as the non-Western other (Randall, 2003, p. 101).

According to Randall, Shankar's creation of a new movement vocabulary, although maintaining several essential elements that serve as criteria for determining whether a style is Indian dance or not, was not based explicitly on classical Indian dance vocabulary; yet it

was still regarded by some dance scholars<sup>49</sup> as Indian, as it retained the requisite posture, gestures and expression (Randall, 2003, p. 103). The deconstruction, fusion and reconstruction of flamenco vocabulary in some of the repertory pieces presented by *La Rosa Dance Company* over the past five years may be seen in the same light, as it produces a new vernacular based in flamenco language, contributing to the discussion about the evolutionary nature of flamenco and the legitimacy of those who perform it.

In a different discussion of Indian dance (O'Shea, 2006), in Buckland's *Dancing from past to Present: Nation, Culture, Identities* (Buckland, 2006), Janet O'Shea analyses the different approaches to authenticity by two specialists in the field of *bharata natyam*, a classical Indian dance form. The parallels revealed through this text between the trajectories of *bharata natyam*, from ancient temple dance to a 21<sup>st</sup> century performing art, and flamenco, from a community pastime to its present day form, contribute to establishing a set of criteria for what may be labelled authentic.

In *Dance, identity, and identification processes in the postcolonial world* (Grau, 2007), social anthropologist Andrée Grau analyses the construction of a range of identities in the performing arts, including the identities of dancers, dance works and dance forms. She interrogates the status of dance forms within a hierarchy that separates 'high art forms' such as classical ballet from those classified as traditional, ethnic or indigenous. This exposes the hierarchies prevalent in Spain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when flamenco became a codified dance form, recognised as flamenco by its audience. Until this time flamenco had not been taught in academies and dance forms handed down informally by oral tradition were regarded as less important than those taught in formal training facilities. Gypsies might argue the contrary, claiming that flamenco can *only* be taught by oral tradition, passed down from parent to child, rendering it exclusive to Gypsy culture. Grau's concluding section on 'Identity, power and access to resources' (Grau, 2007, p. 201) yields valuable insights into the discussion of identity and access to arts funding. This relates to the challenges a South African flamenco dance company faces, where the claim of flamenco identity becomes

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<sup>49</sup> Referring to a comment by dance Scholar Joan Erdman in 'Performance in Translation: Uday Shankar in the West' in *The Drama Review*. 31, no.1 (Spring 1987): 64 – 88.

problematic for South African funding agencies in a country ostensibly unrelated to flamenco culturally, and with its own diverse cultural heritage.

Philosopher and anthropologist Pascal Boyer's *Cognitive Predispositions and Cultural Transmission* (Boyer, 2009) examines the way in which culture is transmitted and how this is affected by identity or ethnic categorisation (Boyer, 2009, p. 289). He outlines how racial stereotyping promulgates myths and suggests how the criteria for membership of cultural groupings may shift depending on the perspective of the claimant. With respect to flamenco, this speaks to claims of Gypsy heritage in the interest of substantiating authenticity, a discussion that forms part of Chapter Three of this dissertation.

Dance academic Theresa Jill Buckland's article 'Dance, Authenticity and Cultural Memory: the Politics of Embodiment' also refers to cultural transmission, illuminating how English ritual dances are passed down 'as a manifestation of cultural stability and continuity' (Buckland, 2001, p. 1) and how advances in technology and changes in economic and social norms affected them. Performance contexts, criteria for permission to participate such as bloodlines, gender or local residence and the methods used for cultural transmission are all considered in weighing the authenticity of the performance of these dances. The theories discussed in this article may be applied to the assessment of the performance and teaching of flamenco in South Africa in terms of authenticity and contribute to the argument for the recognition of a legitimate flamenco identity outside of Spain.

In *Re-tracing our steps: The possibilities for feminists dance histories* (Brown, 1994), feminist scholar Carol Brown investigates the possibility of applying feminist theory to the history of dance in an effort to investigate issues of stereotyping, identity and appropriation. She argues: 'Representation of the female body depends on the sets of rules, codes and conceptions which are specific to a genre and period of dance, and in turn, are related to prevailing beliefs and ideologies within the wider context of society' (Brown, 1994, p. 204). Substituting the image of the female body with the image of the flamenco dance form, Brown's findings may be applied to determine the stereotypes assigned to flamenco and how these may affect perceptions of the performance of flamenco by South Africans in South Africa and abroad, particularly in Spain.

Performer, choreographer and feminist scholar Ann Cooper Albright interrogates issues of stereotyping in the chapter entitled 'Dancing Across Identity in Choreographing difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance' (Cooper Albright, 1997, pp. 21-27). The chapter describes the performance and creative process of Congolese-Canadian dancer Zab Maboungou, who resists the stereotypes assigned to African dance, exposing the 'politics of naming in dance' (Cooper Albright, 1997, p. 22) and flouts the expectations of her audience. 'Because Maboungou refuses to enter the popular construction of an African woman dancer, her audience can't easily plug her into a stereotype' (Cooper Albright, 1997, p. 23). This text is of interest to me as many of the dancers employed by *La Rosa Dance Company* are black Africans and bear no resemblance to the stereotypical dark-hair-and-wildly-flashing-eyes associated with flamenco. Yet these dancers have other characteristics that fall well within the criteria for performance excellence, for example, impeccable rhythmic skill, technical skill and artistry. Maboungou's deconstruction of African dance vocabulary and the reconstruction of that into something individual and new, all the while retaining the integrity of the dance styles employed, echoes my own choreographic process in pieces where fusion is intended, discussed in detail in the concluding chapter.<sup>50</sup>

In *Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance* (Kaepler, 2000), Adrienne L. Kaepler investigates a range of approaches to the study of dance. She describes dance in terms of socially and culturally constructed systems of knowledge 'created by, known, and agreed upon by a group of people and primarily preserved in memory' (Kaepler, 2000, p. 117). Her commentary on the work of studies on dance by a range of social anthropologists and ethnographers offers the reader a number of alternative directions of research.

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<sup>50</sup> La Rosa's works *Ewebeelde/Imágenes* staged at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees in Oudtshoorn and the Bloemfees in Bloemfontein in 2001, and in *Elementos* at the Artscape Arena in Cape Town in 2003, *Misa Flamenca*, staged at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch in 2002, *Fronteras* staged at the Spier Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch in 2002 and at the Tesson Theatre at the Civic in Johannesburg in 2004, *Blood Wedding* staged at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch and at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees in 2005 and at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg in 2006, *Kutheth' Ithongo* staged at the Artscape Arena in Cape Town in 2006, *Viaje Flamenco* staged at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch in 2007 and at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town in 2010, *Heart of Sand* staged at the Artcape Arena in Cape Town and at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees in Oudtshoorn in 2009 and *Bernarda* staged at UCT's Hiddingh Hall in 2011 and at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown in 2012, are all repertory pieces which entail collaboration or fusion with other dance or theatre disciplines outside the traditional ambit of flamenco, for example, Indian dance, Xhosa dance or drama.

Dance academic Sherry B. Shapiro's *Dance in a World of Change: A Vision for Global Aesthetics and Universal Ethics* describes the effects on dance of technology and globalisation. This text informs Chapter Three of this dissertation, in which the (r)evolution of flamenco in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is discussed. Issues such as the commodification of cultural endeavours, appropriation of cultural products, the (perceived) threat to indigenous traditions and the notion of invented tradition are discussed in depth, shedding some light on the issues that face flamenco today, both within and outside Spain.

Cultural theorist Helen Thomas's *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (Thomas, 2003) reveals how different approaches to the study of dance and dance forms affects the outcomes of such studies. In Chapter Three entitled 'Ethnography Dances Back', Thomas analyses various approaches to the study of dance, including ethnography, postmodernism, feminism and anthropology, indicating how one's approach to such research may affect the outcome. In Chapter Five entitled 'Reconstructing the Dance: In Search of Authenticity', Thomas relates the experience of choreographers attempting to resurrect and reconstruct the works of choreographers honouring the authenticity of the pieces. The debate as to whether a dance should be preserved as a museum piece, or reconstructed in the context of the present day, addresses the issue of the attempt by flamencophiles to reconstruct flamenco from days of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Cafés Cantantes* in pursuit of authenticity, or to present it in a way that acknowledges the dynamic and evolving nature of flamenco, while respecting the integrity of this form.

A synthesis of the concepts, ideas and viewpoints emanating from these texts forms the framework upon which this dissertation rests, which is covered in Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER 2: FLAMENCO ROOTS/ROUTES

In order to provide a context for the discussions in Chapter Three regarding the parameters of flamenco identity, authenticity and cultural transmission it is necessary to trace the journeys of the diverse groups that contribute to Spain's rich cultural heritage, of which flamenco forms a significant part. Before I do this, I would like to clarify how flamenco fits into the broad range of Spanish dance, while remaining a stand-alone performing art in its own right.

Flamenco is often included in the term 'Spanish dance', a catch-all phrase for a number of distinct Spanish dance styles that arose on the Iberian Peninsula over a period of history spanning more than two thousand years (from 215 BCE to 1850 CE)<sup>51</sup> as a result of economic, social and political developments in that region (Honore, 1983). The term 'Spanish dance' is problematic in itself, as it is often confused with dance styles that arose in South America subsequent to the 'discovery' of that continent by Spanish mariner Christopher Columbus in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Argentine *tango*, Latin-American style dances including the *rumba*, the *samba*, the *paso doble*, and the Cuban *salsa*, are all performed to songs with Spanish as their language base. Each has its own identity in terms of rhythm, style and technique. Danced in pairs, they were initially performed as social dances and most are currently performed at a highly competitive level on stages throughout the world, for example, in the production *Burn the Floor* (capetowntoday, 2012) staged at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town in July 2012. However, although some common terminology is evident in the forms, by virtue of their common language base, these forms are not to be confused with Spanish dance as it is referred to in this dissertation.

Some South American influence may be found in the flamenco songs that fall into the group known as the *Ida y Vuelta* or 'There and back' *palos*. Soldiers and sailors travelling between the port of Cadiz in the south of Spain and the Americas in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries learned songs sung by South Americans, for example the *Colombiana*, a song originating in

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<sup>51</sup> I have chosen to use the convention of BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) to denote the periods before and after what was believed to be the birth of Jesus.

Colombia, and the *Guajira*, which is based on a Cuban song sung by labourers employed on tobacco plantations. These songs became absorbed over time into the flamenco repertoire that was performed in port towns, and subsequently into the broader flamenco repertoire that existed at the time (Spanish Dance Society, 2004).

### **The categorisation of Spanish dance**

Spanish dance may be divided into four distinct categories. Based on my tutelage by the Spanish Dance Society, the styles of Spanish dance were divided into three main categories: *folklorico* (regional dance), *escuela bolera* (the bolero school) and *flamenco*,<sup>52</sup> for which there is no English translation. (Spanish Dance Society, 2004). However, in my own research, I have encountered several writers who refer to a fourth category (without listing it as such). Among them, in her book entitled *Spanish Dancing*, American ethnic dance scholar and writer La Meri refers to 'the neo-classic Spanish Dance' (La Meri, 1948) and Michelle Heffner Hayes refers to *baile teatral* (theatrical [Spanish] dance) (Heffner Hayes, 2009). They are referring to what colleagues resident in Spain refer to as *Danza Española* (Spanish dance) (Truco, 2012) and what the International Spanish Dance Society terms *danza estilizada* (stylised dance). For the purposes of this dissertation this style is discussed as a fourth category, and will be referred to as *danza estilizada*.

### ***Folklorico*: a tapestry of Spain's cultural diversity**

*Folklorico* (regional dance) describes the folk dances specific to the many and varied provinces of Spain and may differ from one village to another in terms of costume, musical instrumentation and song. According to La Meri, 'There are forty-nine provinces in Spain, the whole country one thirtieth of the size of the United States, and yet there exist over a hundred accepted, unchangeable, traditional dances' (La Meri, 1948, p. 2).

The structure of Spain has changed little since 1948, when it consisted of 17 autonomous regions divided into 50 provinces, with the addition of one province since 1948: the Canary Isles have been divided into two provinces. Quoting Aurelio Capmany, La Meri states;

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<sup>52</sup> Flamenco is italicised only in this instance in the context of its place under the umbrella term 'Spanish dance'.

To give the picture its true value it is necessary to imagine the Iberian Peninsula divided into three main regions or sections, which could be termed northern, central and southern. The differences between the dances of the first section and those of the third are so obvious that in no other country can one find an example of such diversity. From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, following a line parallel to the Pyrenees and as far as the Cantabrian Sea, we find dances of a certain similarity or kinship, as though they had a common origin. Though the character is different the same can be said of the extensive region of Andalusia; and the intermediary region, besides having much of its own, partakes to a certain extent of the characteristics of the other two (La Meri, 1948, p. 32).

The *gallego* from the province of Galicia in the North of Spain is danced to the music of the *gaita*, a bagpipe-like instrument, possibly of Celtic origin. The vocabulary includes running steps, jumped steps, turns, and intricate floor patterning. The costumes are traditionally red with black trimming and low-heeled buckled shoes are worn. The *jotas* from the provinces of Zaragoza and Aragon in the Northeast also contain jumped steps and intricate floor patterning. Dancers wear *alpargatas* (roped-soled *espadrilles*) and play castanets attached to the middle finger (as opposed to the thumb, as in *escuela bolera*, *danza estilizada*, and *folklorico* dances from other regions, such as the *sevillanas* from Andalusía) producing a 'clacking' sound rather than the more common *carretilla* (roll). Andalusian regional dances, performed in costumes similar to those worn for flamenco performance, include *fandangos de Huelva* and *sevillanas*, a dance performed in partners, with or without castanets.

Regional dances are traditionally performed by groups of dancers in public spaces during festivals and at religious and family celebrations such as *rocios* (religious processions), weddings, baptisms and funerals (Spanish Dance Society, 2004). During the rule of General Franco, the tuition of regional dances to young women through the *Sección Feminina de Coros y Danzas* or Feminine Division of Choruses and Dances (Mones et al., 2000, p. 152) formed part of General Franco's cultural policy to encourage Spanish nationalism (Heffner Hayes, 2009). This plan did not succeed entirely, as several provinces established independent regional dance organisations in opposition to Franco's policies. Regional

dances have also been included in the repertoires of present day dance theatre companies like Spain's *Ballet Nacional de España*<sup>53</sup> and *Iberica de Danza*.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Escuela bolera*: a shift from cultural past-time to academic pursuit**

The Spanish classical dance style called *escuela bolera* (bolero school), emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Spain's capital city of Madrid. Taught in formal dance academies and performed on professional stages, its popularity soon spread to several provinces of Spain, and subsequently to Europe (Grut, 2002, p. 109). Its style and technique are reminiscent of classical ballet, a dance style that developed in the French and Italian courts at the same time that the *escuela bolera* emerged. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century *escuela bolera* was performed in theatres in Spain and other parts of Europe including Paris, London, Venice and Copenhagen by leading romantic ballet dancers of their time such as Fanny Elssler<sup>55</sup> and Mari Taglioni, and as the title of Marina Grut's fourth chapter states, it became known as Spain's national dance (Grut, 2002, pp. 77-108).

In a paragraph under the sub-heading 'Misunderstandings When Foreign Choreographers Portray Spanish Dancing', Grut states:

#### *Escuela Bolera is not ballet with castanets*

It is usually thought that the *Escuela Bolera* is ballet with a Spanish accent. This is a total misconception. A ballet dancer would be hard pressed to dance these dances without extra study. First there is the addition of playing castanets, no mean feat to sustain while jumping. Then the arms are used in

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<sup>53</sup> Within the programmes that appear on the website <http://balletnacional.mcu.es>, many of the works listed are regional dance pieces, choreographed by the likes of Pedro Azorin and Mariemma, famous for their regional dance works. The *Ballet Nacional de España* was formed in 1978 under the direction of Antonio Gades for the purpose of preserving all aspects of Spain's indigenous dance heritage (Mones, Carrasco, Casero-Garcia, & Colome, 2000, p. 147).

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.ibericadedanza.com/menu.htm> - regional dances are frequently listed in the repertoire of this company. Accessed on 14 April 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Austrian Fanny Elssler and Italian Marie Taglioni were two of the many ballet dancers from the Romantic period (19<sup>th</sup> century) who incorporated Spanish dances from the *escuela bolera*, such as the Cachucha, into their repertoires (Grut, 2002, p. 91).

circular movements, totally different from ballet, although the arm positions used in ballet are taken from Spanish dancing<sup>56</sup> (Grut, 2002, p. 7).

Notwithstanding Grut's protestations, the ephemeral quality and fascination with a sylph-like lightness that personifies classical ballet is duplicated in *escuela bolera*, a combination of the techniques of classical ballet - pointed feet, jumped steps and rotation of the legs from the hip - with Spanish regional dance influences and the addition of castanets,<sup>57</sup> an instrument synonymous with Spanish dance. (It should be noted that certain steps found in classical ballet today were influenced by or derived from the *escuela bolera* ((Grut, 2002, p. 9)), for example, the beaten steps or *battiere* work included in *escuela bolero*, borrowed from the regional Spanish *basque* dances from the Basque region in northern Spain.)

### ***Danza estilizada: from music hall to concert stage***<sup>58</sup>

*Danza estilizada* (theatrical or stylised Spanish dance, also known as *danza española* or *baile teatral*) is not always named as a separate category. Heffner Hayes calls it theatrical dance or *baile teatral*, stating that in the 1970s and 1980s a fusion of Spanish classical dance and flamenco 'emerged as the contemporary vehicle for flamenco dance outside of *tablaos* or flamenco nightclubs, and *peñas* or flamenco clubs' (Heffner Hayes, 2009, pp. 41-42). She notes that the *Ballet Nacional de España* (Spanish National Ballet) incorporated *baile teatral* into their repertoire during this period, resurrecting the dance works of renowned Spanish composer Manuel de Falla (p. 42). I contend that this dance form actually emerged in the 1910s as evidenced by the works of renowned choreographer and dancer Antonia Mercé, known as *La Argentina*<sup>59</sup> (named after her place of birth) who popularised Spanish dance on the theatre stages of Paris (Bennahum, 2000). *La Argentina's* choreographies combined the techniques, styles and vocabularies of *escuela bolera* which she had learnt from her father, regional dances studied during her extensive studies throughout Spain, and flamenco learnt

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<sup>56</sup> I believe Grut is referring to some but not all the arm positions used in ballet.

<sup>57</sup> According to La Meri, the origin of castanets or *palillos* and also *castañuelas*, is uncertain. Records exist of their presence from Roman times, when it was known that *gaditanes* or citizens of Gades, now known as Cadiz, in the South of Spain, used them. Instruments reminiscent of castanets are found in Greek, Indian, Moorish, Arabic and Egyptian cultures – all of which may have contributed in some way to Spanish culture through trade routes, wars, territorial occupations and cultural exchanges. (La Meri, 1948)

<sup>58</sup> This is borrowed from the title of Chapter Three of *Antonia Mercé "La Argentina" - Flamenco and the Spanish Avant Garde* (Bennahum, 2000).

<sup>59</sup> Antonia Mercé will be referred to as 'La Argentina' throughout this dissertation.

from Gypsies living in Andalusía, the southernmost province of Spain (Bennahum, 2000, p. 26).

By 1910, Argentina, like Falla, was to incorporate the flamenco verse (*copla*) and the flamenco rhythm (*compás*) into the turns, kicks and jumps of the *escuela bolera*, thus forging an intensely dramatic connection between poetry, music and dance. Thus in Argentina's fusion of Gypsy flamenco with Spanish dance rhythm spoke narrative as well as accompaniment (Bennahum, 2000, p. 39).

La Argentina's works were often performed to orchestrated music, rather than the traditional flamenco guitar, and included works like the re-constructed version of *El Amor Brujo* (Love, the Magician) written by Spanish composer Manuel de Falla<sup>60</sup> between 1914 and its performance in 1925 (Bennahum, 2000, pp. 94-98).

Throughout her career, Argentina never forgot the *cante*, choosing Ninón Vallin, Marguerite Beriza, María Barrientos, Alicita Felici, and many other great woman singers, to accompany her on stage, together with guitar, piano and at times, a fifty-member orchestra (Bennahum, 2000, p. 39).

The *preludios y intermedios* or preludes and interludes from the Spanish light operettas or *zarzuelas*<sup>61</sup> continue to serve as the musical score for choreographies in this style today, as is evidenced in Dame Mavis Becker's<sup>62</sup> choreography to *La Boda de Luis Alonso*<sup>63</sup> which was presented in the University of Cape Town's School of Dance 2009 production entitled *Duende*. This style, initiated by La Argentina, was popularised during the 1950s and 1960s and was included extensively in the repertoires of Spanish dance companies like that of

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<sup>60</sup> Manuel de Falla was a Spanish composer renowned for his innovative and modern works in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>61</sup> *Zarzuelas*- Spanish operettas based mostly on satirical themes (Bennahum, 2000).

<sup>62</sup> Dame Mavis Becker adopted the stage name 'Marina Lorca' while working for Luisillo in the 1960s. This was a tradition amongst foreigners during that time, as it gave credence to their 'Spanish dancer' identities and was useful in that their names could be included in *jaleo*, when called out in Spanish during performances. This naming convention is discussed further in the concluding chapter.

<sup>63</sup> From the Zarzuela of the same name composed by Gerónimo Giménez (1897).

Mexican born Luisillo, Italian-American born José Greco, and Spanish born Antonio Ruiz Soler, all touring to numerous countries on several continents, including South America, the United States, Europe and even to South Africa. It should be noted that *danza estilizada* is one of the presentation styles to which South Africans became accustomed when viewing the repertoires of touring companies presenting Spanish Dance programmes from the 1950s (Honore, 1983). In my view this significantly influenced the presentation of Spanish dance in South Africa by South African companies for the next 30 years.

The undeniable links between the four categories of Spanish dance, although distinct from one another, are not only forged by their geographic origins but also by the impact of social structures and historical events that shaped their respective evolutions. In this dissertation, I will allude to the impact that *folklorico*, *escuela bolera* and *danza estilizada* have had on flamenco as it is presented today by established practitioners of this genre on mainstream flamenco stages and festivals, such as the annual *Festival de Jerez*.<sup>64</sup> This dissertation will also present the possibility of flamenco sub-categories – *flamenco puro* (pure flamenco) and *nuevo flamenco* (contemporary flamenco) which supports the argument for the existence of a range of flamenco sub-cultures in the context of modern day flamenco.

### ***Flamenco: Gypsy or Andaluz? Conflicting Histories***<sup>65</sup>

There are several perspectives on the origin of the word ‘flamenco’. According to Donn E. Pohren, one theory is that Spanish Jews who had fled to Flanders were now permitted to sing their religious songs unhindered. These songs became known as ‘flamenco songs’ by Jews who remained in Spain during the Inquisition. Another theory is that the word ‘flamenco’ stems from two Arabic words, *felag* and *mengu*, which, when combined mean ‘fugitive peasant’, and referred to the fugitives persecuted during the Spanish Inquisition (Pohren, 2005, pp. 53-54). Marion Papenbrok disagrees:

Ricardo Molina (1971, p.19) lists some of these supposed root words, most of which are from the Arabic: *felag-mengu* (migrant farmers), *felaicum* or

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<sup>64</sup> [http://www.jerez.es/en/areas\\_tematicas/festival\\_jerez/](http://www.jerez.es/en/areas_tematicas/festival_jerez/). Accessed on 22 March 2012.

<sup>65</sup> This is borrowed from the title of Michelle Heffner Hayes’s book *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance* (Heffner Hayes, 2009).

*felahmen ikum* (farmer), and *felagenkum* of *flahencou* (Moorish songs from the Alpujarra region). In each of these tortured derivations, one essential fact has been completely overlooked: the word “flamenco” which originally only meant “Fleming” of “Flemish”, only became synonymous with “gitano” at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and denoted a Spanish Romany. This fact makes its derivation from the Arabic, 350 years after the conquest of Granada, hardly plausible. The shift in meaning can undoubtedly be traced to the argot of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in which “flamenco” in its adjectival form meant “ostentatious, dashing” and had a slightly negative connotation. This usage probably goes back to the Flemish soldiers of Charles V, whose arrogant behaviour expanded the use of the word “flamenco” from the merely regional to the general. By the time this term was applied to the gypsies, its derogatory nuance had been lost, so that Charles III, who ended the centuries-long persecution of the gypsies in 1782, could safely propose “flamenco” as a substitute for the unpopular word “gitano” (Papenbrok, 1990, p. 35).

These two disparate points of view reflect the discourse on the origins of the flamenco form itself, and are a manifestation of the conflicting histories from which this form has emerged. Flamenco was first acknowledged as a singular performing art by the Spanish public in the 1850s when it became popular in the *Cafés Cantantes* (singing cafés) in Sevilla, a city in the province of *Andalusía*.

In the 1850s, an enterprising impresario in Sevilla employed Gypsy singers, guitarists and dancers in his taverns as an attraction to patrons, and the *Café Cantante* period began. For the first time flamenco became known and popular with the public in Spain (Honore, 1983, p. 10).

A combination of song, dance, the playing of guitars, hand clapping and calls of encouragement (as outlined in the introductory chapter to this dissertation) flamenco was performed mostly by Gypsies and working class Andalusians (Honore, 1983).

Heffner Hayes maintains that the histories of flamenco differ according to the 'struggle for power among differently aligned participants in a global culture. (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 4). She observes that

The shape of the history depends upon the authorial voice, the "authority" of the voice that speaks or writes it. There is no single, monumental history of flamenco. Instead, different representations of history and the versions of the flamenco stereotype they produce form an entire field of meaning, embedded in and constitutive of a specific culture (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 4).

According to South African dance academic and former Spanish and African dance teacher Jasmine Honoré flamenco emerged as a performing art form in the 1850s when an entrepreneur in Sevilla employed Gypsies to sing, dance, and play guitar in the popular *Cafés Cantantes* (Honore, 1983, p. 10). But the origins of flamenco are more complex than this, and can be traced to numerous cultural influences affecting the Iberian Peninsula over centuries.

In order to provide a clear timeline depicting the origins of flamenco, I have divided the remainder of this chapter into five parts. Each section is separated from the next by significant social and political events that influenced Spain's cultural landscape from ancient times to the present day, resulting in the evolution of flamenco from the time that it became acknowledged as a performing art form in the mid 1850s to current times.

### **Convergence of Routes/Roots to the time of the Spanish Inquisition (900 BCE – 1492 CE)**

Even at first glance, a viewer of flamenco may detect elements of various dance and music styles from across the globe. The Indian classical dance *bharata natyam* has highly specific hand movements and arm lines similar to those used in flamenco. Indian *kathak* dance produces a range of foot beats arranged in diverse and complex rhythmic structures reminiscent of flamenco. Flamenco music carries strong strains of Sephardic Jewish, Byzantine and Arabic music. Rhythms of North African Berber music are echoed in flamenco and the regional dances from *Andalusía*.

Contrary to a widespread belief, the Spanish gypsies were not the sole creators of the mysterious art called flamenco. Rather, it is generally agreed that flamenco is a mixture of the music of the many cultures that have played important roles, directly or indirectly, throughout the centuries in Andalusia, the most important of these being the Muslim, Jewish, Indo-Pakistani and Byzantine (Pohren, 2005, p. 49).

In order to establish the origins of flamenco and flamenco identity it is necessary to trace the roots of the cultures that occupied Spain since ancient times, and the routes of the cultures from other parts of the globe that contributed to the art form of flamenco dance, music and song.

According to Honoré in her chapter 'About Spanish Dance' in Fed Ziegler's book *Mercedes Molina* (Honoré, 1983), the first inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula were of Semitic<sup>66</sup> descent and originated in North Africa. In *Spain Then and Now*, 2012), the authors state that the origin of the Iberians is open to question: some believe that they entered the peninsula over the Pyrenees, and others claim that they hailed from North Africa. Celts and Iberians are cited as the two earliest identifiable tribes occupying the Iberian Peninsula. It is fiercely debated which, if either, represents the 'true roots' of Spanish identity, a debate that continues to govern issues around self-determination and governance in modern day Spain. Iberians 'showed a preference for urban life and were a remarkably cultured and artistic people'. Evidence of this emerges through the discovery of Iberian artefacts adorned with human figures dancing or playing musical instruments, often bearing Greek characteristics (Spain Then and Now, 2012).

Celts are thought to have migrated from Europe via the Pyrenees to the Iberian Peninsula in two waves, these being around 900 BCE and 700-600 BCE. They occupied the north coast of the peninsula. It is thought that the intermingling of Celts and Iberians inland of the peninsula resulted in the Celtiberians referred to in Roman texts. In contrast to the Iberians,

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<sup>66</sup> Semitic – 'a member of any number of peoples of ancient south western Asia including the Akkadians, Phoenicians, Hebrews and Arabs' in <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/semite>. Accessed on 25 July 2012.

the Celts were a warlike tribe, pastoral by nature, and thus not inclined towards urban existence, and possessed with a mythical lore that still prevails in present day Celtic communities. One identifiable cultural legacy of the Celts is the *gaitas* or bagpipes native to the northern Spanish province of Galicia and the jumped, jig-like dances that they accompany (Spain Then and Now, 2012).

Knowledge of native communities on the peninsula was derived through the records of Phoenician traders who had established trading posts along the south coast around 700 BCE, trading mostly with Tartessus, a port that, due to its now unknown location, has gained a mythical status somewhat comparable with that of the lost city of Atlantis. Greek traders followed the Phoenicians, documenting trade with a tribe residing on the Mediterranean coast that they identified as Iberians, and with tribes from inland areas, whom they referred to as Celts. Traders from Carthage<sup>67</sup> in North Africa gained dominance over Phoenician settlements on the south coast of the peninsula. There is little evidence as to the extent to which these early traders may have contributed to Spanish culture (Spain Then and Now, 2012). However, records exist in Roman texts from as early as 215 BCE, describing the dancing of women in *Andalusía*, the southernmost province of Spain, and heartland of flamenco (Honore, 1983, p. 8). Honoré suggests that it may have been the Greeks who introduced an early form of castanets to the Iberian Peninsula (p. 11). It should be noted here that, although castanets are synonymous with Spanish dance, they are not traditionally a flamenco instrument and were not used by Gypsies originally, but were introduced to flamenco repertoire through some of the Andalusian regional dances that were assimilated into flamenco, for example, the *Fandangos de Huelva* and the *Sevillanas*. Possibly under pressure to conform to audience demands, Gypsies did introduce castanets to their dancing from as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Skiera, 1990). Honoré maintains that some writers consider the Greeks to be responsible for the *palmas* or rhythmic hand clapping prevalent in flamenco (Honore, 1983, p. 11). It appears that this phenomenon was common to the dance of several cultures present on the peninsula over centuries.

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<sup>67</sup> Carthage is close to present day Tunis in North Africa.

The Romans arrived on the peninsula in 219/8 BCE to liberate Spain from Carthaginian control. Even at that time, the diversity of tribal cultures that existed on the peninsula at that time provided no 'cohesive opposition' to the Roman newcomers. 'Rome controlled the Iberian Peninsula for roughly 600 years' (Spain Then and Now, 2012). According to Pohren the Romans, like the Greeks who had traded in this territory before them, had a sophisticated music culture. I propose that this may have had some influence on Andalusian culture and thus on flamenco (Pohren, 1988, p. 174).

The Gothic invasion of Hispania, as the Iberian Peninsula was then known, took place from 409 CE in a series of migrations over the Pyrenees by a range of Germanic tribes including the Sueves, who settled in the Northwest, the Vandals who settled in the South, the Alani and finally the Visigoths, who dominated the peninsula from the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Spain Then and Now, 2012).

It was under the Visigoths that, aside from the Basque region in the north,

...the peninsula was united from within as a nation under one ruler for the first time. Under Rome it had been no more than a province, ruled from outside; with the Visigoths it took the first significant step to self-identity (Spain Then and Now, 2012).

This is significant as it points to the complex notion of Spanish hybrid identity, which forms the crux of this dissertation. Evidence of the contribution by the Visigoths to Spanish culture is scant; there is nominal 'linguistic evidence of their presence', possibly due to the preferred use of Latin by authors of the day. In architecture, Visigothic arches appear in several churches. However, their contribution in terms of unifying the peninsula politically, legislatively and religiously was profound. 'Some Spanish historians view these years as the birth of the nation, others reject even the idea that the Visigoths were Spanish' (Spain Then and Now, 2012).

The Moors'<sup>68</sup> invasion of 711CE set Spanish (Gothic)<sup>69</sup> pride against the invading infidel (Spain Then and Now, 2012). Much of flamenco's music, song and dance is attributed to Arabic influence (Pohren, 1988, p. 175), thus this first hint of Spanish nationalism sets the tone for what may precede the stance of current day Spaniards towards flamenco – those who see it as part of Spain's cultural heritage, and those who see it as foreign, other or outsider. It also speaks to the notion of bloodlines, to which a significant part of Chapter Three is dedicated. Referring to the status attached to Visigothic descent during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and again in the 16<sup>th</sup> century,

...the expression "*Es de los godos*" ("*he descends from the Goths*") was used to identify anyone who claimed lineage traceable to the purity of pre-Moorish days...Verification of such claims freed an individual of the worst social stigma possible, the accusation of being of Jewish or Moorish descent, i.e., of being a *Converso* or *Morisco*. The obsession with purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) cannot be underestimated during this period (Spain Then and Now, 2012).

The period referred to above is the period just prior to and including the Spanish Inquisition, which will also be discussed in this chapter. I suggest that this may well go beyond the 16<sup>th</sup> century, prevailing in some Spanish communities even today.

### **The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot<sup>70</sup>**

Before I embark on a discussion about the Moors' 800-year occupation of Spain, mention must be made of the significant presence of Jews on the peninsula over a period that spans several centuries. Opinions vary as to when Jews arrived in Spain. According to Honoré, it was around 300 CE (Honoré, 1983) while Shelomo Alfassa holds that that the Jews arrived

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<sup>68</sup> Moor – term used to refer Muslims or Arabs, of Berber, Syrian or Egyptian descent (Woodall, 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Gothic refers to 'Visigothic'.

<sup>70</sup> This is borrowed from the book of the same title by Trudy Alexy (1993), which includes the story of Marranos Jews or *Conversos* at the time of and after the Spanish Inquisition. A Mezuzah is a piece of scroll that is placed on the door frames of Jewish households to protect the home and its occupants. Its prominence, however, also announced one's Jewish practice. The Inquisition placed Marranos under pressure to grace the entrance ways to their homes with religious artefacts to portray their conversion to and practice of Catholicism, and so secretly placed their Mezuzahs inside the feet of the Madonnas.

before the Roman invasion of the peninsula that took place in 220 BCE, probably when the Greeks were establishing *emporía* (city-states) across Europe (Alfassa, 2012), that is, during the period 350-250 BCE<sup>71</sup>. Although this is probable, there is little conclusive evidence that exactly dates the Jews' arrival in Spain. It is believed that most Sephardic Jews settled in Spain after the Great Diaspora following the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Jews living on the Iberian Peninsula are referred to as *Sephardim*, so named after the Hebrew word for Spain, *Sepharad* (Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center, 2012). Their contribution to Iberian culture lay not only in their skills as artisans, but also in their musical traditions which, according to Honoré, stemmed from the chanting of songs in religious ceremonies (Honore, 1983).<sup>72</sup>

Under both Roman and Visigothic law Jews were excluded from holding government or military posts, and, as in many other parts of Europe, were relegated to specific means of employment, mostly as money-lenders (Johnson, 1987). At the time of the religious unification of Spain as Catholic, the Jews were the only outsiders and faced continued and increasing pressure to convert. But with the Moors' invasion in 711 CE, ironically, a period of respite ensued and Jews, Muslims and *Mozarabs*<sup>73</sup> (local Christians) lived 'a multicultural coexistence' at all levels of society (Spain Then and Now, 2012). The fate of the Jews after 1492 is discussed later in this chapter.

### **Al-Andalus**

Spain was occupied by Moors or Arab Muslims from 711 until 1492 (Woodall, 1992, p. 17), when they were finally banished by the Catholic monarchy's Spanish Inquisition. By use of the terms Moor or Muslim, Woodall suggests that the occupiers may have been Arabs of Berber, Syrian or Egyptian decent (Woodall, 1992, pp. 17-18). Despite the fact that their occupation initially extended as far as the Asturian border in the North of Spain, by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Moors' last and only stronghold was Granada (Woodall, 1992, pp. 18-

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<sup>71</sup> Greek coins in Spain were in use from as early as approximately 350 BCE (Wild Winds, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> My personal experience is of listening to the chanting of familiar flamenco tunes by the *Chazan* (cantor or singer) in the synagogue, and conversation with Joaquin Ruiz (Ruiz & Salinas, 2009) about the origin of one of the *falsetas* used in the flamenco *palo* called *Farruca*, where the tune is the same as one sung in the synagogue for a prayer that starts with the words '*Adon olam, asher malach*'. Joaquin was walking through the old Santa Isabel area of Madrid and heard the familiar tune coming from a synagogue in the area. Upon closer inspection he realised that this was indeed the tune he had choreographed to. Joaquin Ruiz's *Farruca* forms part of *La Rosa's* flamenco repertoire.

<sup>73</sup> Mozarabs – the name given to Christians who lived in Al-Andalus during the Moorish occupation (Hitchcock, 1998, p. x).

19). The *Reconquista* or re-conquest of Spain by a Castilian-Catholic monarchy began in 718 (Woodall, 1992, p. 19). Woodall attributes the persistence and strength of the unified Castilian and Aragon dynasties and the tribal in-fighting of the Arabic rulers to the downfall and ultimate demise of Arabic presence on the Iberian Peninsula (Woodall, 1992, p. 19).

Although Woodall questions what the Arabs contributed to Spain's history (Woodall, 1992, p. 17), Honoré suggests that the arrival of Arabic culture in Spain in the 8th century brought elegance to Iberian culture, with architectural innovations, the construction of universities and libraries and the influences of Arabic music, song and dance. She writes,

The Arabs fused aesthetically with the cultures they conquered, adding a touch of lightness, sensuality and elegance. Vigorous people, they brought the best of Greek philosophy, Roman law and government, Byzantine and Persian art and music (Honore, 1983, p. 8).

The Arabs in Andalusia absorbed the Persian classical music and the liturgical music of both Sephardic Jewish synagogues and the Byzantine church; the latter had been introduced around 400 CE after the conversion of the Sueves, Vandals and Visigoths to Catholicism (Honore, 1983). Their profound influence on the cultural landscape of the region now known as *Andalusía*, particularly in the cities of Granada, Sevilla and Cordoba, offers a firm foundation on which to base the assumption that flamenco as we know it today is deeply rooted in Arabic culture. The Spanish guitar, from which the flamenco guitar developed, is thought to be a product of the *guitarra latina* or Latin (roman) guitar and the *guitarra morisca*, or Moorish guitar, which, according to Donn E. Pohren, is a descendent of the *kithara asiria* or oriental zither (Pohren, 1988, p. 253). The Arabic origins of the *fandangos*, Andalusian folksongs included in flamenco repertoire (Pohren, 1988, p. 17), and the Arabic arm and hand movements (based on classical Indian dance) that remain 'intact' today (Pohren, 1988, p. 175) are further evidence. Honoré suggests that the *palmas* or the rhythmic clapping of hands accompanying flamenco is prevalent in Arabic dance, and also compares it to a 'similar framework of clapping spectator-participants and soloists' that features in rural South African dances. She compares the 'Ay' used by flamenco singers, an

expression typical of the *jondo* or profound *palos* to the Islamic call to prayer (Honore, 1983, p. 11).

At this juncture it is necessary to introduce the Gypsies to the mix of cultures already discussed as living in Spain at the time of the Spanish Inquisition, in order to complete the picture of racial disharmony that emerged on the peninsula during the 15<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the Inquisition and which may have had some effect on the flamenco form.

### **The arrival of the Gypsies in Spain**

According to some historians, the first of the two major Gypsy migrations occurred in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Roma Gypsies, or *Zincali*, as they called themselves (Borrow, 1841), entered Spain from North Africa as camp followers of the invading Muslim armies (Pohren, 2005, p. 50). This may point to the origin of the Spanish word for Gypsy, *gitano*, a truncated form of the full *Egiptano*<sup>74</sup> or Egyptian (Woodall, 1992, p. 79). In the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Gypsies fleeing India in the aftermath of Tamerlane the Great's invasion (around 1400 CE), reached Spain via Persia (now Iran), Arabia and North Africa (Honore, 1983, p. 9). Some Gypsy tribes wandered through the Middle East and then split up, taking routes on either side of the Mediterranean, while others took the path through Eastern Europe, arriving in Barcelona via France in 1447 (Pohren, 2005, p. 49). According to George Borrow, an agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society in Spain in the 1800s, the Gypsies favoured Andalusía as their home, as it provided them with an environment conducive to their trade in horses and met their needs in terms of resources (Borrow, 1841, p. 43). Quintana and Floyd confirm this, adding that most of the Gypsies gravitated to Granada (then still under Muslim rule), where Moors, Spaniards, Jews and Gypsies co-habited in a seamless existence conducive to each group's cultural pursuits (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 17).

The arrival of these immigrants added to the cultural richness of the region, bringing with them musical instruments, songs and dance techniques from the East (Pohren, 2005, pp. 51-52). Pohren is of the opinion that upon settling in the Iberian Peninsula the Gypsies, having come from a heritage rich in song and dance, absorbed and preserved the songs and

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<sup>74</sup> Many Gypsies bear the name *Faraón* (masculine) or *Faraóna* (feminine), meaning Pharaoh.

dances they encountered, adding their own flavour to the existing styles and customs, which resulted in a form which came to be known as flamenco (Pohren, 2005, pp. 51-53). 'Others',<sup>75</sup> states Pohren, 'insist that flamenco developed solely among the Andalusians, free from outside influences' (Pohren, 2005, p. 53). And a third argument supports the Gypsy claim of ownership of flamenco. A case in point is the reference to flamenco as Gypsy dance, as appears in the title of Claus Schreiner's book entitled *Flamenco: Gypsy Dance and Music from Andalusia*. Marion Papenbrok's chapter entitled 'History of Flamenco' cites flamenco historian Ricardo Molina<sup>76</sup> thus:

Molina is very clear about the major role played by the gypsies in the creation of flamenco: They were the "blacksmiths" who hammered out the original flamenco from the "metal" of Andalusian music – a unique amalgam not found in any other Spanish provinces nor in other Romany cultures. The stubbornness with which the thesis still persists, mostly in Spain, that the gypsies were 'only interpreters' rather than creators of flamenco, reveals the ambivalent mixture of envy and admiration, fear and disdain that has always been directed toward these people (Papenbrok, 1990, p. 36).

I am interested in his analogy, in that, although Molina claims that the Gypsies were the inventors and not the interpreters of flamenco, his reference to their resource in the form of Andalusian music has him reluctantly leaning towards the perspective that Pohren holds on this issue.

With the fall of Granada to the Catholic Monarchy in 1492, the Gypsies, some of whom had aided the Catholics and others the Moors, became victim to Spanish law imposed by the Inquisition. Unlike the Jews and Moors, who were persecuted on religious grounds, Gypsies were subjected to harsh measures that bore the intention of 'controlling their growing numbers, their nomadic tendencies and their frequently dishonest methods of gaining a livelihood' (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 19). The Gypsies faced a choice of settling 'in one place under "masters" governing their employment or be exiled for life' (Quintana & Floyd,

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<sup>75</sup> Pohren does not specify who he means by 'others'.

<sup>76</sup> Molina, R (1977) *Obra Flamenca*. Madrid. p.21.

1972, p. 19). Their plight intensified as the Inquisition's power grew, to the extent that they were forbidden, 'under threat of exile, to use the name, dress, and language of the Gypsies "in order that, ...this name and manner of life may be evermore confounded and forgotten"' (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 19). Gypsies were executed for 'wandering' or vagrancy, and between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, at least twelve anti-Gypsy laws were promulgated, the severity of which increased with each piece of legislation.<sup>77</sup> It is interesting that despite the incessant persecution to which they were subjected the Gypsies survived. Borrow attributed this to the Gypsies' ability to corrupt officials (Borrow, 1841), while Konrad Bercovici<sup>78</sup> suggests that it was their ability to befriend powerful Spaniards who offered them means of diversion and protection.

Quintana and Floyd sum it up as follows:

Cut off, then, from other European countries which had legislated against them, protected by influential friends and the bribable state of Spanish justice, sheltered by wild terrain, and developing to the highest degree their own capacity for resistance, the Gypsy had yet to be tamed or made captive by Spanish law (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 21).

The 'wild and untamed' stereotype that exists around flamenco dance is possibly attached to this notion of freedom synonymous with Gypsy life. Ironically, Gypsy, *payo* and *guiri* artists alike require immense physical, rhythmic and emotional discipline to gain mastery over this form.

### **The Inquisition and the discovery of the New World**

According to Pohren, it may have been the event of the Spanish Inquisition during the rule of the Catholic Monarchs Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragón (which began at the culmination of the *Reconquista* in the late 15th century) that brought together those cultures oppressed by the Inquisition, forcing them underground as it were, forming the

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<sup>77</sup> This legislation is comparable to the apartheid laws in South Africa from 1948 to 1994, governing subjects such as marriage, land ownership, freedom of movement and job reservation (Borrow, 1841, pp. 191-207).

<sup>78</sup> Bercovici, K. (1928) *The Story of the Gypsies*. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation.

basis of what we now call flamenco (Pohren, 2005, p. 177). 'Christianity was now the common bond that held Spaniards together' (Spain Then and Now, 2012) and in a process of ethnic cleansing, on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1492 an edict was signed by Isabella and Ferdinand forcing Jews into baptism or exile. In 1501 Muslims were subjected to the same fate.

*Conversos* (baptised Jews) and *Moriscos* (converted Muslims) were the subject of close scrutiny by the Inquisition, a body appointed by the state but populated by the church, as their conversions were not always trusted to be genuine.<sup>79</sup>

...it is safe to say that the flamenco dance, and flamenco in general, has been brewing in Andalusia for many centuries. During the time of the Moors this type of dance was undoubtedly both religious and popular. After the Moors were forced out, all religious connotations in the dance ceased. The dances were not only banned from the church because of their increasing sensuality and "sinful" movements, but at one time persecutions were carried out against interpreters of certain dances regardless of where they were danced. It was then that dance, together with the *cante*, went underground, becoming an art of the "lawless elements" of society. This happened more or less simultaneously with the sixteenth century edicts ordering the expulsion of the Moors, gypsies, and Jews, and can probably be cited as the beginning of the formation of flamenco as we know it today (Pohren, 1988, p. 177).

In describing the evolution of flamenco, Honoré states that 'The essence of the style (flamenco) has grown out of the appalling conditions under which they (Gypsies and poor Andalusians) lived, suffering extreme poverty, persecution and social ostracism' (Honore, 1983, p. 8). I suggest that, as public dancing was largely outlawed during this time, the

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<sup>79</sup> *The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot* (Alexy, T., 1993) bears testament to this, telling the stories of Jews and their mechanisms of surviving persecution throughout Europe over centuries. As a person of Jewish ancestry, it was a haunting experience for me to climb to the top of the *giraldá* or watch tower near the Guadalquivir River that forms part of the Cathedral of Sevilla, overlooking the *Judería* (Jewish quarter) and, across the river, the Gypsy *barrio* of Triana. For it was from there that Inquisitors would have singled out houses from whose chimneys no smoke appeared on Friday nights or on cold Saturdays, a clear sign that observance of the Sabbath was in practice in the home.

earliest version of flamenco dance was most likely practiced in intimate, familial contexts, such as religious occasions and significant events such as weddings, out of the public eye and the scrutiny of the Inquisition.

In the same year that the edict was passed forcing conversion of Jews to Catholicism, Christopher Columbus 'discovered' America, providing the impetus for the rapid development of Spain's colonial empire (Woodall, 1992, p. 61). Not long thereafter, the succession to the Spanish throne of the powerful Hapsburg family further increased Spain's wealth in terms of territory. As many of the ships sailed from Cádiz, the southernmost port of Andalusía, occupied by working class Andalusians and Gypsies, one of the effects of Spain's colonial exploits was the assimilation of songs and cultural artefacts into the dances of the day that eventually became incorporated into what we now know as flamenco. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *ida y vuelta* or 'there and back' songs were borrowed from the Americas, for example, the *Guajira*, a song of the Cuban tobacco plantations workers called *guajiros*, and the *Colombiana*, based on a tune borrowed from Columbia. The accessories used by women in many of the flamenco dances for example, *mantones de Manila* (embroidered silk shawls from Manila) and *abanicos* (fans) came from China via the Philippines, a Spanish colony (Olivo, 2012).

### ***La Edad de Oro* or the Golden Age of Flamenco (1850s to 1920s)**

While the earliest forms of flamenco were subverted from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, regional songs and dances permitted by the Inquisition flourished and the bolero school became popular in theatres in Spain and the rest of Europe (Honore, 1983, p. 9). In the 1850s 'bohemia' became a fashionable style throughout Europe, particularly in Paris, and led to the resurfacing of flamenco as a performing art form in Spain (Steingress, 1998). Honoré describes how an enterprising impresario from Sevilla sparked a new era known as *La Edad de Oro* (the Golden Age) by introducing the concept of *Cafés Cantantes* (singing *cafés*). His employment of Gypsy dancers, singers and guitarists in his taverns attracted Spanish audiences, popularising this formerly relatively unknown art form in Spain (Honore, 1983, p. 10).

It is to this era that some writers, for example Pohren (Pohren, 1988, p. 178) and Heffner Hayes (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 51), refer when discussing the concept of authentic flamenco performance, as it is known to be the period during which the key elements of flamenco performance were established and the form become known and recognised as flamenco.

The proponents of *flamenco puro* look back on history and imagine a period in which flamenco reflected the innocence of an untouched paradise. They rewrite the history of Andalusia, producing a portrait of a land and a people unspoiled by the political and economic realities of civil war, a fascist dictatorship, and international commercialism. Many practitioners and aficionados attempt to recapture the dance style of the Golden Age of the *cafés cantantes* (roughly 1881-1900) in private, non-commercial, or professional concert productions (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 51).

Zalagaz and Cachón-Zalagaz (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012) refer to flamenco historian Martínez' work,<sup>80</sup> which places the *cafés cantantes* era as the second stage of flamenco history and not the starting point. Martínez proposes that this era was important as it was then that 'the styles are set, the rhythm is disciplined and the rules that will have to last more-or-less undistorted until our time are forged' (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012). I concur with Martínez' proposal, as this was the watershed that shifted the earlier forms of flamenco from being a cultural expression to being a commodity. In support of this, Zalagaz and Cachón-Zalagaz quote flamenco historian Álvarez, who states that:

From the domestic circles, the village dances and even the academies [...] to a public place expressly created for the exhibition of shows, a noticeable transformation occurred, demanded basically because now there was a stage, or a platform, which has a much more structured organisation. The flamenco scene, we could say, is institutionalised (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 8).

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<sup>80</sup> Martínez, T. (1969) *Teoría y práctica del baile flamenco*. Madrid: Aguilar.

The institutionalisation of the form now called flamenco most likely occurred circa 1865 (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 7). The profound changes to which it was subjected at this time changed it from a private, closed-circle expression of culture to a public spectacle. It was during this era that a new theatre space called the *Cafés Cantantes* appeared. Dancers became progressively professional as they were now employed to perform their art form and the techniques and styles of the dancers became more demanding as the audiences began to express their preferences (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 5). It was also the time during which the dance became the 'centrepiece' of the performance, whereas the song had previously held this coveted space (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 7)

The importance given to this period by specialists is a constant in most writings on the subject. Dance was aesthetically codified and purified, and the emergence of the performance space, the platform, together with the gradual specialisation of the audience and the fierce competition implied by professionalisation, brought about the consolidation and progressive separation between singing and dancing, the latter possibly reaping the benefits in this context (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 12)

The platform referred to above was a simple wooden structure called a *tablaó*, the truncated form of the word '*tablado*' meaning wooden platform.

Due to its new-found economic worth, flamenco was now being taught at Andalusian dance academies, where *maestros* or teachers saw its potential as an audience attraction. It was here, too, that the stylistic gap between Gypsy and *payo* (non-Gypsy) began to emerge: once techniques became established, *maestros* or teachers began to sift out and 'remove the expressive tricks and variants that the gypsies attached to existing popular dances' (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 6) such as the *tangos*, the *farruca* and the *garrotín* (p. 10)

### **The Spanish Civil War and General Franco's Fascist Rule (1930s to early 1970s)**

Flamenco 'fell out of fashion' (Honore, 1983, p. 10) early in the 20th century, resulting in the dwindling of its aforementioned popularity. Concerned about the apparent demise of flamenco, Manuel de Falla, a well-known Spanish composer of classical music, and Spanish poet, playwright and political activist Federico Garcia Lorca organised the first *Concurso de Cante Jondo* (congress of flamenco singers) in Granada, Spain in 1922 in an attempt to '...restore the primitive sincerity of the style, its harshness of voice, the use of microtones, sounding off-key to our western ears and [the] lack of theatricality that had been vulgarising the genre' (Honore, 1983, p. 10). De Falla and Lorca were concerned with the 'contamination of commercial influences' on flamenco song manifesting in the *Cafés Cantantes*, and wished to restore the traditional values that legitimised flamenco (in their eyes) in terms of 'ethnic identity, national pride and artistic purity' (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 89).

The *Cafés Cantantes* lasted until the time of the Spanish Civil war in 1936 – 1939 (Mones et al., 2000, p. 154) when they were most likely gradually replaced by *tablaos* (flamenco night clubs). Due to the rising popularity of Spanish dance in Paris and other large European cities, Spanish dance companies began touring Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, the company of La Argentina had a strong following in Paris, and subsequently throughout Europe and America (Bennahum, 2000). Spanish dance, including a theatrical version of flamenco, was becoming an internationally recognised discipline and was included in the repertoires of European touring companies, for example, that of Russian dance luminary Serge Diaghilev (Mones et al., 2000, p. 154).

During the same period, however, certain stars arose in the flamenco dance world, slowly lighting up the flamenco scene and increasing the historic importance of this unique art form. The art spread its influence from traditional taverns and streets to official theatres, where it gained a real and responsive audience (Mones et al., 2000, p. 154).

The Mones et al. reference to 'real and responsive audiences' is of significance to me, as I believe that it was the demands of these very audiences that further shifted flamenco out of the form that existed prior to the *Cafés Cantantes* era into something more palatable for foreign audiences. Amongst these 'stars' of the 1940s were Vicente Escudero, a dancer who is not considered to be *flamenco* by *aficionados* as he failed to comply with the rules of *compás*<sup>81</sup> (Pohren, 1988, p. 188) and Carmen Amaya, a Gypsy who transformed the role of women in flamenco by donning the male attire called *traje corto*<sup>82</sup> and performing *zapateado* (footwork) equal in strength and speed to her male counterparts (Pohren, 1988, pp. 230-231). Michelle Heffner Hayes dedicates a significant section of her book *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance* (Heffner Hayes, 2009) to the Carmen stereotype, so beautifully filled by Amaya, whose Gypsy heritage, stereotypical Gypsy features and passionate performances appealed to foreigners seeking the exotic 'Carmen' they had grown to know and love through Prosper Merimeé's opera, written in the 1800s, and now popular across the globe.

It was through La Argentina that flamenco was re-introduced to the stages of Paris, albeit juxtaposed with *escuela bolera* and regional dance (Bennahum, 2000, p. 39). In my opinion, it was at this point in the history of flamenco that a further significant shift occurred, by Mercé's transposition of flamenco public performance from the *café* into the theatrical arena. This may have opened the path that was to lead to the work of the likes of the late Antonio Gades, to be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

I argue that flamenco did not die during this time; rather, its 'real and responsive audiences' reverted to being those *aficionados* passionate about the art form in its 'purest' sense, who may have rejected the changes that they witnessed at the hand of commercial producers, and who might have chosen not to become part of the audience that supported this new form.

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<sup>81</sup> The rules of *compás* were discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation.

<sup>82</sup> The *traje corto* is a suit consisting of high-waisted, fitted trousers and a short waistcoat worn over a shirt or blouse (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 150).

Heffner Hayes informs us that 'some flamencos chose to emigrate rather than remain in Spain when Civil War broke out in 1936' (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 40). In the period from the 1940s to the 1960s, under General Franco's rule, Spain continued to produce touring companies, some focusing on flamenco (for example, Carmen Amaya), and others whose dancers were competent in several forms of Spanish dance, including the companies of José Greco and Luisillo, both, ironically, non-Spaniards<sup>83</sup> (Ziegler, 1983). During the 1950s flamenco's popularity in the United States, facilitated by Hollywood's interest in the exotic, created a new interest in flamenco in Spain and across the globe (Heffner Hayes, 2009). Hollywood filmmakers captured the work of Carmen Amaya, José Greco, Rosario and Antonio, Pilar López, and La Chunguita (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 40) raising the issue amongst flamenco scholars of compromising the form for the sake of commercialism, as discussed at length in Chapter Two. It was at this time that several young South African ballet-trained dancers interested in gaining further exposure to Spanish dance auditioned for Luisillo's company when he toured South Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

During this time, Franco utilised flamenco as a strategic tool to market Spain's tourism industry. He took advantage of Spain's military alliance with America, creating *tablaos* to provide entertainment, in the form of flamenco, to US troops based at American military bases in Spain (Heffner Hayes, 2009, pp. 40-1). One of the costs of General Franco's (ab)use of flamenco to further Spain's tourism industry was that the integrity of its performers was compromised. Heffner Hayes sums up the situation thus:

The period from the sixties to the seventies stands out as the all-time low period for the art among flamenco scholars. Flamenco and prostitution became synonymous, and the performance conventions sank to the level of the burlesque. At the same time Franco's government circulated the image of the flamenco dancer to promote Progressive Spain (Heffner Hayes, 2009, pp. 40-41).

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<sup>83</sup> José Greco was born in Brooklyn, New York, of Italian parents, and studied with some of the greatest teachers of his time in Spain (Pohren 1988, p.201). Jasmine Honoré maintains that Greco was born in Italy of Spanish-Italian parents (Honoré, 1983, p. 17). Luisillo was born in Mexico (Honoré, 1983, p.19).

This supports the account by Rhoda Rivkind, the current South African organiser of the Spanish Dance Society, on asking her parents' permission to study in Spain in the early 1960s, when they responded that 'no decent girl would go off to Spain to study Spanish dance' (Rivkind, 2010). Becker tells a similar story.

Flamenco's spread from Andalusía in the South to central and Eastern Spain was largely due to the mass migration of working class Andalusians seeking employment in the large industrial cities such as Madrid and Barcelona in the 1950s and 1960s (Mones et al., 2000, p. 157). Madrid has become the flamenco 'Mecca' to thousands of students from across the world wishing to study with great masters, many of whom come from, or base themselves in Madrid at *Amor de Dios* or other reputable studios. Over the past 40 years, many of these students have become the ambassadors for flamenco in their own cities and countries, resulting in the 'diasporic practice' (O'Shea, 2006, p. 126)<sup>84</sup> of flamenco that crosses many of the frontiers that, in previous years, seemed to restrict access to flamenco to Spaniards only, and in the view of some, Gypsies only.

#### **Present Times (late 1970s to present day)**

The flamenco 'diaspora' was accompanied by the inevitable dangers of commercialism and appropriation. According to Heffner Hayes,

...since the 1970s, a sense of outrage against the commercialisation of the art as developed among flamencos within and outside of Spain. The revitalisation of flamenco within Spain in the last years of Franco's regime incorporated a coded sense of rebellion against the dictator and a criticism of his repressive policies, felt keenly by Andalusians and gypsies. [...] The movement towards purism in flamenco flourished through to the end of the century and continues to buoy conversations among "traditionalists" (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 41).

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<sup>84</sup> O'Shea is referring to the diasporic practice of *bharata natyam*.

With the establishment of the *Ballet Nacional de España* in 1978, *danza estilizada* came to be included in their repertoire and musical works by Manuel de Falla composed in the 1920s were resurrected (Heffner Hayes, 2009, pp. 41-42). Although this hybrid of flamenco and *escuela bolera* was not new, as it had been performed by La Argentina in the 1920s and 30s, its resurgence in the state funded dance company provided flamenco with a new, public platform beyond *tablaos* and *peñas*. Choreographer Antonio Gades extended its reach across the globe with his filmed versions of three of his major choreographic works in collaboration with film director Carlos Saura. His interpretations of Garcia Lorca's *Bodas de Sangre* (1981), Merimee's *Carmen* (1984) and de Falla's *El Amor Brujo* (1986) attained international acclaim and, in my opinion, went some way to restore dignity to the art form that Franco had prostituted to the world.

It was during the early 1980s that I encountered Jose Antonio Ruiz, former director of the *Ballet Nacional de España*, to whose works I was exposed in my first few years as a young professional dancer with Dame Mavis Becker's company, Danza Lorca, and whose choreographic style influenced my earlier work. Since the 1980s, the directorship of Spain's *Ballet Nacional* has changed several times. With each change has come a range of tastes and preferences, affecting the structure and content of its repertoire (Ballet Nacional de Espana, 2012) from *avant garde* contemporary Spanish dance works to conservative stagings of regional dances and contemporary flamenco pieces to traditional works. During this period, other smaller companies besides the *Ballet Nacional de España* have come and gone, with very few being able to access the kind of state funding necessary to sustain a dance company.

The current trend in contemporary flamenco is for individuals and companies to work on a project basis, creating works, forming a company for a season, and recasting when repeat seasons happen, or when new projects develop. Examples of these are the companies of Joaquin Ruiz, La Truco, Pepa Molina and Inmaculada Ortega, all of whom include a wide variety of repertoire spanning the range from narrative works to pure flamenco performances. Flamenco dancers often work as soloists, participating in festivals, or staging performances featuring themselves supported by a musical ensemble, or, as in the case of Paco Peña's company, add the element of dance to performances featuring soloist musician

or singers. Many flamenco artists earn their living by teaching in Spain and abroad. Companies made up of flamenco artists from the great Gypsy dynasties, for example *Los Farruco*, present their art as a family, preserving the traditions of their forebears.

During the twentieth century, flamenco became one of the most visible symbols of Spanish national identity in the international community, largely due to the attraction of the tourist-oriented spectacles in Spain and abroad. Despite the continuing popularity of the exotic stereotype of the Spanish South, flamenco has also served as a counter culture site of youthful resistance against the Franco regime, a forum for Gypsy civil rights activism within Spain, a means of asserting regional identities in a country often treated as a single, monolithic culture, and more recently, a state-sponsored and state-regulated art form. (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 1)

The (r)evolution of flamenco from cultural past-time to the full-blown, internationally recognised art form it is today, unhinges the pieces of the puzzle that previously shaped the picture of flamenco, replacing them with a new set of values that may question time-jaded parameters that hold back its image on the contemporary world stage. In the following chapter I identify the pieces of that puzzle, and in Chapter Five I consider the work of several contemporary flamenco artists in order to offer an alternative weighting mechanism for the legitimacy of flamenco performance, in order to make a case for a legitimate flamenco identity outside of Spain, and particularly in South Africa.

## CHAPTER 3: THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION<sup>85</sup>

...it is clear that identity (however inexplicit), boundary (however elusive and nebulous) and authenticity (however contested and contestable) are matters in which people invest huge value (Grau, 2007, p. 203).<sup>86</sup>

In 2010 flamenco was inscribed on UNESCO's website of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2012). Flamenco met the criteria for inscription as follows:<sup>87</sup>

- R.1: Flamenco is **strongly rooted in its community**, strengthening its **cultural identity** and continuing to be **passed down from one generation to the next**;
- R.2: The inscription of Flamenco on the Representative List could raise awareness about **intangible cultural heritage**, while promoting human creativity and mutual respect among communities;
- R.3: Ongoing and proposed measures demonstrate the concerted efforts of regional governments, institutions, NGOs, the communities and private persons to **ensure Flamenco's safeguarding** (UNESCO, 2012)

UNESCO's definition of flamenco accurately describes the component elements of flamenco (as laid out in the introduction to this dissertation) as the *cante* (song), the *baile* (dance) and the *toque* (guitar playing). But in their description of flamenco's performance contexts, constituents and transmission mechanisms, several significant components of the flamenco community are excluded.

Flamenco is performed during **religious festivals, rituals, church ceremonies and at private celebrations**. It is the **badge of identity** of **numerous communities** and groups, **in particular** the Gitano (**Roma**) **ethnic community**, which has played an

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<sup>85</sup> Chapter title borrowed from the text of Buckland's journal article (Buckland, Dance, Authenticity and Cultural Memory: the Politics of Embodiment, 2001, p. 13).

<sup>86</sup> Grau quoting Anthony Cohen in the Introduction entitled 'Discriminating Relations: Identity, boundary and authenticity', in Cohen, A. P. *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values* (2000) London: Routledge (p.14).

<sup>87</sup> My own use of bold text is to extract and stress concepts that will be further discussed in this chapter.

essential role in its development. **Transmission** occurs through dynasties, families, social groups and Flamenco clubs, all of which play a key role in its **preservation and dissemination** (UNESCO, 2012).

This statement raises many questions about whose culture we refer to when discussing flamenco, and what its parameters might be in terms of authenticity. It draws attention to the role of the Roma Gypsies, while not listing all of the other communities and sub-cultures that have played significant roles in the performance and development of flamenco over the centuries, for example, all other Andalusian *flamencos*, *flamencos* from other parts of Spain, and indeed, *flamencos* from across the globe. The description excludes public performances, limiting performance contexts to those of a private nature. Yet flamenco is the means by which many Gypsies earn their living, where public performance is frequent and necessary, and offers of flamenco courses, particularly to foreigners, are regularly presented by the very Gypsy dynasties and families the statement describes (for example, *Los Farrucos*, possibly the most renowned flamenco dynasty of this era). It ignores the contribution that Gypsy Carmen Amaya made to flamenco in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, establishing it worldwide as a dance form to be reckoned with, and Camarón de la Isla and other Gypsy *cantaors*, whose legacies of recorded *cante* repertoire continue to inspire young singers, years after the *cantaors'* deaths.

UNESCO's approach places flamenco in an epoch prior to the mid-19th century, the point just prior to the time of the commodification and commercialisation of flamenco during the *Cafes Cantantes* (singing cafés) era, or Golden Age of flamenco. It excludes the possibility of technical or stylistic development, the effects of politics, history, economics and globalisation on culture, as well as many flamenco artists, Spaniards and non-Spaniards that are not of Gypsy decent, who have devoted their working lives to the preservation and dissemination of flamenco.

UNESCO's statement raises the question of legitimacy in terms of who has the authority to practice flamenco, and according to which parameters. I suggest that UNESCO's perspective is but one view of the answer to these questions. As Janet O'Shea suggests: 'Concepts of authenticity, tradition, classicism, and history do not necessarily invoke agreement; rather,

they form the bases of diverse points of view' (O'Shea, 2006, p. 125). In order to unpack this comment, and to present the reader with some alternative points of view, I will expand on the statements made by UNESCO, providing evidence in support of an argument for the acknowledgment of the existence of significant and legitimate flamenco cultures beyond that of the Roma Gypsies and the unnamed communities to which their statement refers. I will draw on texts from the areas of anthropology and cultural theory, ethnology, historiography and pedagogy for evidence that suggests a set of criteria against which other flamenco identities, including a South African flamenco identity, may be viewed. This chapter outlines research conducted on the notions of culture, authenticity, identity, ethnicity, stereotypes, tradition and cultural transmission that point to the possibility that South African flamenco has a legitimate place in the cultural landscape of South Africa, and indeed, in the flamenco world.

### **The notion of culture and cultural products or badges of identity<sup>88</sup>**

American law professor Susan Scafidi proposes that culture is an object of ownership and may be seen as the seat of authenticity (Scafidi, 2005, p. x). It is a complex and layered notion, and the subject of extensive discourse, particularly in the realm of anthropology. Culture is the term used to name a set of specific, identifiable norms, beliefs, practices, concepts, experiences, traits and forms of expression that are shared by one group, that differs from the sets of norms and concepts shared by other groups (Boyer, 2009, p. 288) and (Scafidi, 2005, p. xi). Its existence is reliant on members of the group to repeatedly 'invoke and reinvent it in the course of social interaction' (Blacking, 1979, p. xvi). According to the anthropological approach, the fact that these traits persist over time points to the assumption that they have resisted, to varying degrees, the effects of erosion caused by their transmission and acquisition (Boyer, 2009, p. 290) as well as the effects of technology, economics and social change. The dilemma facing the 'curators' of flamenco is summed up by Heffner Hayes as follows:

These curators of a tradition struggle to preserve and promote an art form that is, on the one hand, visually appealing and highly accessible for audiences

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<sup>88</sup> Refers to UNESCO's statement (UNESCO, 2012).

unfamiliar with the form and its history, and on the other hand, constantly in danger of being replaced by the “tourist-oriented” version of flamenco that has spurred a highly profitable market interest across the globe (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 3).

The issues of cultural transmission will be discussed further on in this chapter.

As described in Chapter Two, flamenco’s origins and evolution until the time of its technical, stylistic and rhythmic codification in the middle of the 19th century (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012) have been influenced by a myriad of cultures that have contributed to it in various ways. This raises the question of whose culture we are talking about. According to UNESCO, it is mainly about the Roma Gypsies (UNESCO, 2012). According to Gerhard Steingress, we are talking mainly about working class Andalusians with an already established culture of song and dance with whom the Gypsies assimilated over a period of time, adopting Andalusian songs and dances and adapting them by adding their own interpretation (Steingress, 1998).

In her research on cultural change, Joann W. Kealiinohomoku refers to ‘affective culture’ as ‘those cultural manifestations that implicitly and explicitly reflect the values of a given group of people through consciously devised means that arouse emotional responses and that strongly reinforce group identity’ (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, p. 47). Affective culture comprises behaviours, experiences and artefacts that reflect the ‘cultural reality’ of the members of the group and that are recognised by outsiders as a reflection of the essence of the group’s culture (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, p. 47). For the purposes of this discussion, flamenco dance may be recognised as one such artefact.

Borrowing from Scafidi, flamenco dance, both in the form of performances and tuition, may be referred to as a ‘cultural product’ (Scafidi, 2005, p. x). Cultural products may occur as a result of national pride, communal identity, law, tradition, value, consumerism, appreciation and habit (p. xii). Grappa, champagne, port, feta and pizza are all culinary products over which their producers, located in specific regions of Italy, France, Portugal and Greece, have fought for the right to call their own, as well as for the exclusive naming rights to these

products (Geist, 2010). What would be the basis for a decision taken to reserve 'flamenco' as the name given to the form of expression used exclusively by 'numerous communities and groups, in particular the Gitano (Roma) ethnic community' (UNESCO, 2012), seemingly forbidding any form of expression that differs from those version(s) of flamenco being called 'flamenco'?

When it comes to disagreement about the ownership and authenticity of cultural products, however, or about their appropriate context and uses, there are few rules or even guideposts to ensure quality, prevent *faux pas*, or give credit where it is due. Although public awareness of the value of creative enterprise rose dramatically with the Internet Revolution, the legal protections of copyright, patent, and trademark do not ordinarily extend to cultural creations. In fact, group authorship creates legal unease, and communal or traditional artistry often goes unrecognised (Scafidi, 2005, p. xi).

In the case of the UNESCO statement, the rich heritage of Andalusian song and dance that existed centuries before the arrival of the Gypsies (Pohren, 1988, pp. 173-5) has gone unrecognised.

Given the 'conflicting histories' (Heffner Hayes, 2009) of flamenco, as discussed in Chapter Two, the challenge lies in determining who this product belongs to and who might have legitimate permission to participate in it. It needs to be borne in mind that 'culture is naturally fluid and evolving' (Scafidi, 2005, p. xii), and although legal protection of culture may be well-intended, the potential to fracture communities that may be divided in opinion as to the perceived benefits and threats of protection and the potential ossification of the cultural product in question, need to be considered (ibid. p xii).

Dance anthropologist Andrée Grau refers to cultural products as 'cultural objects', which include music forms, dance styles and choreographic works (Grau, 2007, p. 192). Citing the changeability of the identity of music forms over the ages, dependent on the perceived demographics or political stance of the performers, Grau draws attention to social interpretation of identity and its effect on perceptions of the period during which these

interpretations prevail (Grau, 2007, p. 192). As an example of this premise with reference to dance, Grau discusses the history of the waltz, which shifted from being seen as immoral in the 1800s to its being considered an elegant dance in current times (Grau, 2007, p. 192). She states:

Once again, the cultural object has maintained its form, while its meaning has been transformed to the point that, for some, the dance now represents the exact opposite of what it did, for some, when it first appeared in England. (Grau, 2007, p. 192)

By asking the questions, 'What would be necessary to bring the existence of a cultural artefact to an end?' and 'What is necessary for it to persist?' (Grau, 2007, p. 192), Grau raises the issue of the boundaries imposed by attempting to categorise cultural objects, and proposes that, due to their complex and ever-changing natures, the identities of cultural objects (such as flamenco) are determined not by external manifestations, but rather by the 'histories and "stories" ' of the individuals executing them (Grau, 2007, p. 193):

Cultures and histories are embodied in all of our activities, in the sense that they are constructed through human beings' involvement in society and through their engagement in systems of beliefs that operate through and beyond discursive principles (Grau, 2007, p. 193).

The word 'engagement', which includes conscious choice, raises the question as to whether one's culture is that into which one is born, or one that an individual might choose. In an account of her personal identity formation, South African flamenco performer and dance educator Linda Vargas (née Wesson) echoes my own experience.

I, Linda, am South African by birth, but flamenco, a dance originating in Spain, has encouraged me to embrace broader perspectives of other cultures which extend beyond my immediate culture and to shape an identity and a voice that I could not find in the culture into which I was born (Vargas & Fernandez, 2012).

In the following section I will unpack the notion of identity, providing some indication of how identity may affect the permission for participation in and performance of flamenco.

### **Identity – what it is to be *flamenco*, or not**

In this dissertation, the word identity may refer to the identity of the practitioners – artists and teachers, the identity of the dance form itself, or the identity of a dance work. Depending on their areas of interest, anthropologists refer to different forms of identity: individual identity (Grau, 2007), group and ancestral cultural identity (Kealiinohomoku, 1979), national identity, cultural identity (Erasmus, 2001) and ethnic identity (Thomas, 2003). I will refer to these writers throughout this chapter to interrogate how the concept of identity may assist researchers in the study of dance, dancers, choreography and their respective places in the world, and the processes that establish the identities of dancers, choreographers and their works. This will establish of a set of criteria that emerge as benchmarks for measuring the legitimacy of flamenco practitioners and thus the authenticity of their work as performers, teachers and choreographers.

The concept of identity is one such criterion. Grau defines identity as follows:

Looking at dance and its many practices through the lens of identity may be helpful in our search for a better understanding of the phenomenon and of those engaged in it, as the concept brings together aesthetic and socio-cultural realms [...] Identity is what makes one the being one is. It is made up of those attributes that make one person unique as an individual and different from all others, indeed unlike anyone but her/himself (Grau, 2007, p. 189).

Referencing academics from various fields,<sup>89</sup> Grau concurs that concept of the self can only be realised through acknowledgement of the other. With reference to dance, she argues that:

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<sup>89</sup> Grau refers to sociologist and philosopher Alfred Schultz, poet Arthur Rimbaud and philosopher Michel Foucault (Grau, 2007, p. 190).

...the identity of a dance work exists always in relation to other dance works and each performance of a work in relation to all other performances of that work. Following this line of reasoning, identity is first and foremost dialogic, given that it is constructed through dialogue with the other, and it is constantly in construction, given that it is bound to the dynamics of interactions (Grau, 2007, p. 191).

I propose that this concept might be extrapolated from dance works to dance styles, for example, contemporary dance, classical ballet and flamenco.

The key defining terms of flamenco identity may differ from one set of participants to another, given the conflicting histories discussed in Chapter Two. Elements of *compás* (rhythmic phrasing), and *duende* (spirit) appear as the essence of flamenco in most texts on the subject (Pohren, 2005; Heffner Hayes, 2003; Woodall, 1992). Ironically, *compás* is, in my experience, extremely challenging to teach, and *duende* is impossible to teach. Although a student of flamenco dance may be coached in the notion of *duende*, and encouraged to access the experience of this state of being through dance, its presence relies on the artist's ability to interpret rhythm in a specific way and to access a personal emotional state without sacrificing the technical and stylistic integrity of the dance form. This requires rhythmical, technical and stylistic mastery of the form to the extent that the dancer is able to sufficiently integrate the language of flamenco and use it in improvisation as a vehicle to readily access and express his or her emotion in response to a song or an event. Madeleine Claus sums it up as follows:

Only a soloist working within a defined format can give full range to his own improvisation, his own creation; only in this way can the "duende", that mysterious genius which sparks spontaneous inspiration in the world of flamenco, really take hold of the artist (Claus, 1990).

This raises the question of who is authorised to practice flamenco. Individuals who claim a flamenco identity call themselves *flamencos* (Pohren, 2005). The identity of an individual may be made up of a number of criteria, for example, ethnic grouping, language or gender

(Grau, 2007, p. 191), however, identities are also shaped by lived realities and experiences (Erasmus, 2001, p. 13). The key defining terms of flamenco identity may vary from one group of *flamencos* to another as Gypsies, non-Gypsy Andalusians, Spaniards from other parts of Spain and non-Spaniards have unique (although overlapping on some levels) heritages, histories and experiences. The nature of identity in everyday life is dynamic in that one's perception of one's own identity may change, dependent on social change through affiliation and differentiation (Grau, 2007, p. 191). The hierarchical arrangement of these criteria will differ from one person to the next, depending on the personal circumstances of the individual's social-historical context (Grau, 2007, p. 192); for example, for one person, the hierarchical arrangement of the criteria of gender, religion and then nationality may reflect their identity, whereas for another, the arrangement may be nationality, religion and then gender.

In describing Zab Maboungou's performance of *Reverdanse*, Ann Cooper Albright (Cooper Albright, 1997) argues that an artist may have his or her own experience of some aspect of his or her identity, which may or may not fall within the stereotypical expectations of audiences.

It is this striking difference in performative intent from what often gets marketed as "African" dance that, I would argue, opens up a space for Maboungou's own experience of that identity to become visible. Because Maboungou refuses to enter the popular construction of an African woman dancer, her audience can't easily plug her into a stereotype [...] The gap created by this difference forces the viewer to look again, asking us to follow the nuances in her very personal experience of that identity (Cooper Albright, 1997, p. 23).

In South Africa, where I perform and teach flamenco to fellow Africans, a range of stereotypes, prejudices and expectations arises. Can an African call herself a *flamenco*, and on what basis?

### **Flamenco - Living tradition or ossified museum piece**

The notion of tradition forms an integral part of the identity of cultural products and practitioners, but the definition of tradition may vary from one group or practitioner to another, in terms of what constitutes tradition and what its parameters might be (O'Shea, 2006, p. 131). I believe that one of the contributing factors to the varied opinions about the traditional parameters of flamenco is the range of stylistic and technical innovations that took place during the *Cafés Cantantes* epoch, shifting flamenco from private performance to public display, as discussed in Chapter Two. Another contributing factor could be the reliance of flamencologists on anecdotal evidence and graphic reproductions to describe the styles and techniques employed by dancers of that time. Dance historians Zalagaz and Cachon-Zalagaz note:

The constant difficulty stemming from the study of both corporal and musical artistic expressions is perfectly well-known, particularly those from specific historical periods that solely provide us with graphic representations, direct and indirect mentions, or less-specific iconographic and literary material. While in other artistic domains, such as painting, sculpture or architecture, we possess artistic fact itself, in music and dance, up until the appearance of video and techniques for recording and mechanical reproduction, we only retain visual and textual representations: individual perspectives to narrate a dynamic and changing reality. Is it possible to reconstruct through writings, testimonies and graphic pictorial or photographic representations? Can one tell the history of dance and music? Can flamenco fact be passed on solely with words? (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 6)

One of the dangers of the idea of tradition is that in the attempt to render a performing art form in 'the traditional' form years afterwards could result in the production of 'performance museums', as opposed to performances presenting 'lived traditions' (Thomas, 2003, p. 142). An attempt at the replication of performances from the *Cafés Cantantes* in the 21st century would need to exclude any advancement of techniques, the effects of fabric and costume design on style, exposure to contemporary dance styles (Thomas, 2003, p. 135) and the new technology available to enhance staging and sound. Referring to the

writing of Raymond Williams,<sup>90</sup> Helen Thomas suggests that an exact replication may well result in the ossification of tradition, rather than ‘generating *lived* and *living* traditions’ (Thomas, 2003, p. 144) that leaves the essence of the performing art form intact but creates something new with each subsequent performance.

The effects of migration and globalisation may pose a threat to indigenous tradition and the identities of the individuals claiming them (Shapiro, 2008, p. 257). I submit that, as flamenco is not indigenous to South Africa, and as tradition is passed on through various forms of cultural transmission, in South Africa the traditions of flamenco have been established through, first, the transmission of flamenco culture by teachers who have travelled to Spain to study with those who they perceive to be masters (be they Gypsy or *payo*) and, second, by their own personal histories and individual identities. Taking a broad view of flamenco and its practitioners in South Africa today (covered in more detail in the concluding chapter), there is no doubt that the histories and experiences of each of the contributors to this sub-culture have been different, with the common thread, clearly visible, of the influence of Elsa Brunelleschi,<sup>91</sup> and the formation of the Spanish Dance Society<sup>92</sup> weaving the tapestry.

### **Ancestral Cultural Identity: The Race Card**

Where doubt may exist as to the legitimacy of a claim to flamenco identity, social categorisation may take precedence over cultural transmission in providing the criteria for participation. In *Memory in Mind and Culture* (Boyer, 2009) Pascal Boyer proposes that the human being’s tendency towards social categorisation, be it according to race, social class, ethnic grouping, caste, lineage or gender, is based on the underlying notion of ‘immutable natural difference’ inherited biologically, rather than cultural patterns learned over time (Boyer, 2009, p. 296). Boyer maintains that, ‘Indeed, members of the target group are often

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<sup>90</sup> Thomas refers to Williams, R. (1981) *Culture*, London: Fontana.

<sup>91</sup> Elsa Brunelleschi (1908 – 1989). London based teacher born in Buenos Aires, Argentina (Ziegler, 1983, p. 29). Refer to Table 6.1. in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

<sup>92</sup> The Spanish Dance Society was formed in South Africa in 1965 by a group of South African individuals who had returned to South Africa after performing with Luisillio’s international touring company in the late 1950s and early 1960s, to provide a syllabus that would inform the teaching of several categories of Spanish Dance, including the *escuela bolera*, *folklorico* or regional Spanish dance, *danza estilizada* or stylised, classical Spanish dance and flamenco. The society is covered in detail in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

said to carry a particular “something” that is (a) undefined, (b) inherited, (c) unchangeable, and (d) causally efficacious (Boyer, 2009, p. 298).

The Gypsies are one such group, frequently thought to be the only authentic exponents of flamenco. In the preface to his book *Flamenco: Gypsy Dance and Music from Andalusia* (Schreiner, 1990), Claus Schreiner writes, ‘Flamenco is the music, dance and attitude towards life of a Spanish minority’ (Schreiner, 1990, p. 7). One of the myths perpetuated around the performance of flamenco by Gypsies is based on the idea that Gypsies do not ‘learn’ flamenco (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 108). Heffner Hayes refers to the captioned photograph in Matteo Vittucci’s *The Language of Spanish Dance* (Vittucci, 1990) of children dancing on a street in Sevilla, ‘improvis(ing) on rhythms that come naturally as a spontaneous ethnic expression’ (Vittucci, 1990, p. 99) In *¡Que Gitano! Gypsies of Southern Spain*, Quintana and Floyd include a section in Chapter Six entitled ‘The Babies Come Out Dancing’ (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 94). The authors conducted interviews with sedentary Gypsies residing in the caves of Sacro Monte in the Andalusian city of Granada to glean information about the Gypsy way of life. On the topic of flamenco ‘being in their blood’, interviewee Isabel (no surname given) states:

Now the little Gypsy is fat - she dances – one day after another – until the nine months are up. She stops dancing in the *zambra* – she goes to her *cueva* – and then, at the right moment she gives birth. That way, with Gypsies, the babies come out dancing (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 94).

Isabel’s metaphor claims that dance, for Gypsies, flows in the blood and is transmitted in childbirth. My own two-and-a-half-year-old adopted African daughter claps *palmas* in perfect *compás*, holding her hands in the correct position to execute *palmas sordas* (muted clapping), appropriate to use when a singer is performing. Yet her birth mother is no Gypsy. She knows the form because I have exposed her to the rhythm and technique and she hears and sees it repeatedly when I teach. Upon seeing herself in a mirror, she moves her arms gracefully with lifted elbows, and circles her wrists in true flamenco style. Although this child of African descent is not of my own blood, I believe that her exposure to flamenco through me from the age of 10 months has resulted in an unconscious transmission and absorption

of certain elements of flamenco dance, and as a result, culture, as is the case with children from Gypsy families. The degree to which children might be exposed to flamenco may differ, but I propose that the fact that they are exposed, consciously or not, results in cultural transmission.

In a similar vein, in 'Who Can Write as Other?' (Fee, 1995), Margery Fee discusses writers of mixed Maori and white ancestry, who, although they have not been brought up learning the Maori language, are recognised as voices of authority within the area of Maori cultural dissemination and transmission. To some, they might be seen as inauthentic; to others they are part of a 'living, changing culture' (Fee, 1995, p. 243). I propose that my daughter's place in this scenario is no different from mine; flamenco culture is as far removed from her indigenous culture as it is from mine and yet because I have claimed flamenco as part of my own identity, my daughter's identity has been touched by it too. The extent to which this continues will be the manifestation of her own volition as she forms her own identity.

Children of Spanish families that 'live' flamenco learn this form simultaneously with verbal language acquisition. This is not limited to Gypsy children, but rather goes across all *flamencos* or those who claim flamenco identity, Gypsy or *payo*. It is in the rhythms of nursery rhymes, tunes and religious carols heard in the homes of parents and grandparents, at school, through the media and in church. It is heard at the rituals of recurring festivities such as weddings and birthday celebrations, and events of a religious nature such as *Semana Santa* or Holy Week, the Spanish Easter celebration. Spanish children who show a talent for flamenco music, song or dance from a young age are strongly encouraged and supported by their parents, who often perform with them as accompanists on local platforms, for example at *peñas*, in competitions and on television programmes that nurture flamenco culture and performance excellence.

Concha Jareño, a flamenco teacher and performer from Madrid, recently shared a YouTube video clip on Facebook (Jeropitufo83, 2012). It was taken at the birthday celebration of a grandfather whose two grandchildren, all of three to four years old, sang and danced *por bulería*. Their timing and understanding of the structure of *bulería* is impeccable. They have no dance technique to speak of, but they demonstrate clear flamenco style in terms of

vocabulary of movement, arm lines and body movement. From their names, and from other YouTube video clips I have viewed which feature the three-year old granddaughter Triana Jero, I believe that they are of Gypsy descent. In a clip from a television programme entitled *Menuda Noche*, also found on YouTube, the narration below the clip states:

*Esto de la Sangre ¿Si o No?. Porque esta niña con tan solo tres años (3) baila sin que en ningún momento pierda el COMPÁS. ¿Es esto normal en una niña tan pequeña? Yo creo que no es normal, pero para estas familias que desde que nacen ya están participando de lo que hacen sus mayores.*

My translation:

This from the Blood? Yes or No? Because this little girl only three years old dances without losing the *COMPÁS* for one moment. Is this normal in a girl so little? I believe it is not normal, except for these families who, since they are born, participate in the things that their elders do (cukoyo4099, 2010).

While the mythical notion of ‘in their blood’ appeals on a romantic level, in practice I propose that, although it may take a foreigner several years to absorb the complex rhythms, style and wide range of techniques of flamenco, it is not impossible for foreigners to learn this other language and render it fluently. However, in the same way that it would take constant exposure to native-tongue speakers for one to perfect grammar, accent, idiom, usage and all of the other elements that make up language, so it would take ongoing exposure to *flamencos* at or from the source (that is, Spain) and to the culture of flamenco (whatever one perceives that to be) in order to perform as if ‘born to it’.

Certainly, the complex cultural contexts in which Gypsy children are introduced to flamenco are different from the professional training of flamenco dancers in other areas of Spain or the rest of the world. To suggest, however, that gypsies perform flamenco as a spontaneous expression of their blood runs dangerously close to the myth that African Americans are born with the ability to dance. It is a racist assumption that ignores the specificity of the cultural practice of flamenco. This assumption is further developed and reproduced by those flamenco artists,

Spanish and non-Spanish, who insist that 'true' flamenco (always the desired goal of any performance) can only be accomplished by people with a specific racial heritage (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 108).

This brings me to one of many conversations I have had with Eliezer Truco Pinillos (*La Truco*). La Truco is a Madrid-based teacher and mentor with whom I have established a professional relationship over the past 10 years and whose work forms a substantial part of *La Rosa Dance Company's* repertoire and teaching methodology. *La Truco* has danced since she was five years old – her first inclination towards this emerging as she listened to her father's flamenco vinyl collection. Her parents are *flamencos*: they are not professionals in the sense that they do not earn their living by performing, but flamenco has been part of their lives since childhood. Pepe 'El Truco', her father, comes from Toledo, a city just outside of Madrid, and is a *cantaor* or singer who learned his craft from his uncle. His parents were not *flamencos*. He still regularly attends a *peña* (private flamenco club) where he joins others plying his craft in an informal environment.

La Truco's mother, also named Eliezer, comes from Madrid. She is not a performer, but has lived in a flamenco environment all of her life, creating costumes, writing poetry and attending the *peña* and other flamenco events with her husband and two daughters. Her sons never chose to participate in flamenco activities despite the environment to which they were exposed. Neither Pepe nor Eliezer senior are Gypsies, nor Andalusians; yet exposing their children to flamenco by living as *flamencos* has had a direct effect on the chosen paths, and thus the identities, of their two daughters and more recently, one of their several grandchildren.

Having been exposed to flamenco from childhood through his grandparents and his mother, La Truco's middle son, 19 year-old Cristian Rubio Truco, decided at the age of 17 that he wanted to dance. His father, Bernardo Rubio Domingue, comes from Barbate, a small town near Cádiz in Andalusía, the home of the *Alegría*, one of the best loved flamenco *palos*. Bernardo's father was born of Gypsy parents, but his mother was *payo*, rendering Bernardo only part-Gypsy. He has not brought up his sons as Gypsies, neither fostering Gypsy

traditions, nor claiming his own Gypsy heritage to any degree. Thus Cristian was not 'born dancing'.

As a young man entering the flamenco world today, Cristian Rubio Truco, like many other emerging artists of his age, identifies strongly with Farruquito, a handsome young Gypsy dancer and heir to the world famous Farruco family dynasty, established as a force to be reckoned with by his grandfather El Farruco. He is the family's current star attraction. Cristian's aspirations of becoming a professional performer have been given a kick-start by virtue of the fact that his mother is the world-renowned teacher, choreographer and dancer, La Truco. Yet his trump card has been his 'Gypsy blood'. He has been accepted into the Gypsy fold by other young folk embarking on a career in flamenco, a cultural enclave into which *payos* (non-Gypsies), and *giris* (foreigners) are seldom accepted. In the Overview to *¡Que Gitano! Gypsies of Southern Spain*, Quintana and Floyd include a section entitled 'How do you get in?', in which they outline how personal introductions by individuals already accepted by Gypsies were the only way to gain access to the Gypsies' lives and stories, certainly at the time of their writing, which was in 1972. It is my personal experience that the few Gypsies that I have met and come to know since the late 1990s are fully assimilated into Spain's social and economic mainstream, while retaining the elements of their culture that they chose to retain, and sharing them with me with pride and generosity.

At an informal gathering after the performance in the restaurant section of Casa Patas, one of Madrid's most famous *tablaos*, Cristian Rubio Truco is welcomed into the circle of *gitanos* engaged in a *juerga* (jam session), while his world-famous mother, a star attraction at that very *tablaó*, but a *payo*, is simply overlooked (Truco, 2012). Is this racism, or elitism practiced by Gypsies? Boyer suggests,

Although people may derive pride or status from, for example, alliances with or some distant ancestry from royalty or the upper class, this never makes them fully fledged members of these high status groups. But having one low-caste ancestor, in caste or "race" ideologies, is enough for membership (Boyer, 2009, p. 298).

I propose that, due to the propriety over flamenco that is often attributed to Gypsies, for example in the UNESCO statement (UNESCO, 2012) that appeared at the beginning of this chapter, Gypsy identity would be classed as the 'higher' status group in this case.

Just as 'degrees of Gypsy-ness' may exist in Spain, in a discussion about degrees of 'blackness' in South Africa, Zimitri Erasmus suggests that being coloured means having to choose, depending on the circumstances, between classifying oneself as 'black' or coloured, or in other words, 'the privileged black and the 'not quite white' person'. (Erasmus, 2001, p. 14). In Gypsy or *payo* terms, Cristian Rubio Truco has the best of both worlds, and may pull the 'race' card to earn himself credibility in the flamenco world due to his *gitano* ancestry, yet benefit from the world-wide network of contacts that his *payo* mother can provide for him.

This notion of using the 'race card' is corroborated by studies conducted by Andréé Grau on intercultural theatre in the 1980s, which demonstrated how artists 'manipulated their identity according to circumstances' (Grau, 2007, p. 200). One artist would present himself either as an actor, a black dancer or a contemporary dancer depending on the requirement of the audition concerned. Similarly, she found that an audience attending a performance conducted by a group of black artists of various origins – for example, from the United States, Brazil, African countries or from the South Pacific Islands – perceived the performance as African, whereas performances where the skin tone of the artists varied were perceived to be 'intercultural' (p. 200). Grau states: 'What is important is that every individual has the right to claim multiple origins in accordance with his or her individual path, often shaped in part by socio-historical events, without being forced into any sort of ghetto' (p. 200).

In her paper entitled *An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance* (Kealiinohomoku, 1969), Joann W. Kealiinohomoku comments on her re-reading of the writings of several Western dance scholars from the 1960s, including Walter Sorrell and Agnes DeMille. From the perspective of the anthropologist rather than the dancer (as was her first reading of these writings), she found their writings to be 'rife with unsubstantiated deductive reasoning, poorly documented "proofs," a plethora of half-truths, many out-and-

out errors and a pervasive ethnocentric bias' (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 24). Walter Sorrell's<sup>93</sup> notions of 'racial memory' and 'innate' differences which are in the blood' are labelled by Kealiinohomoku as '...so outdated in current anthropology, that I (she) might believe his book was written at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rather than in 1967' (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 29).

She argues against Agnes DeMille's<sup>94</sup> description of primitive dance, stating:

As for 'innate' qualities, we have almost no real evidence. There is nothing to support claims such as 'bare-foot savages have an ear for music most Europeans lack' (DeMille 1963: 48). There is much we do not know about bodies and genetics and cultural dynamics, and in addition, we are especially ignorant about systems of aesthetics. It would be wiser for Western dance scholars to leave qualifying remarks and open-endedness in their discussion of these things, or else these scholars may have a lot of recanting to do (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 29).

This point of view is echoed by 19th century sociologist and anthropologist Emile Durkheim, (originally published in 1897), even then warning against the use of race as a criterion against which a social phenomenon might be measured.

[...] the sociologist must be very careful in searching for the influence of races on any social phenomenon. For to solve such problems the different races and their distinctions from each other must be known. This caution is the more essential because this anthropological uncertainty might well be due to the fact that the word race no longer corresponds to anything definite (Grau, 2007, p. 197).<sup>95</sup>

Cross-cultural differences may be attributed to 'genetically determined physical differences and learned cultural patterns' (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 29). Although physical genetic

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<sup>93</sup> Sorrell, W. *The Dance Through the Ages*. (1967) New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

<sup>94</sup> De Mille, A. *The Book of the Dance* (1963) New York: Golden Press.

<sup>95</sup> Durkheim, E. *Suicide: a Study in Sociology*, trans. Spalding, J.A and Simpson, G. (1968) London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. (1<sup>st</sup> eng transl. 1952; orig edn *Le Suicide: etude de sociologie* (1897) Paris: Alcan.

differences may manifest in dance techniques and styles of different cultural groups, facilitating, for example, the Masai's predisposition for jumping due to a typical Masai physique, there is no decisive evidence for the existence of innate qualities, such as rhythm or musicality within races or cultural groups (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 29).

To contrast Durkheim's cautionary paragraph above, Grau (Grau, 2007) also quotes the work of Lily Grove, whose 1895 publication entitled 'The Dances of Savages' carries racist, sweeping and patronising comments about African and African American dance cultures. Grau notes Grove's stance, quoting:

The dancing among savages may be considered a just indication of their character; it plays a very important part in their daily life, so important that there are races who have special dances for every day in the year and for every occasion in the day. There are people – some African tribes might be instanced – who could not live a single week without their dances. Nations which are in their infancy dance with the greatest of ease and pleasure; the Negro, for example, begins to skip at the mere sound of the most rudimentary music, even under the broiling sun (Grau, 2007, p. 198).<sup>96</sup>

Grau proposes that this attitude persists today in the manner in which African dance is treated as a singular, homogenous form of expression, and Africa is perceived as a country, rather than a many faceted continent with over 50 countries and 'hundreds of dance traditions and techniques' (Grau, 2007, p. 198). Spanish dance suffers a similar fate, with flamenco often being the only form of Spanish dance with which audiences are (or believe they are) familiar. The underlying assumption that all Spaniards or all Gypsies are born with rhythm 'in their blood' is comparable to saying that 'all black people can sing' or 'white men can't dance'. This stereotypical approach fails to acknowledge that individuals may be considered outsiders because they do not fit the moulds created for them by their viewers.

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<sup>96</sup> Grove, L. 'The Dances of Savages' in Grove, L. *Dancing* (1895). London: Longmans, Green & Co. p. 65-92.

Commenting on the work of C.K Stead,<sup>97</sup> where he expressed reservations on a work about Maori culture written by Pakeha<sup>98</sup> Keri Hulme, and questions the authenticity of her voice for Maori culture, Margery Fee warns that Stead's demand for 'unconscious' as opposed to 'willed' cultural elements is essentially a learned demand, gleaned from a set of information provided by 'white' anthropologists who have established their own parameters of Maori 'authenticity' (Fee, 1995, p. 243). This may parallel the demand for authenticity in flamenco performance, where Gypsy bloodline is the prerequisite criterion, excluding *Andalusian payos* and other Spanish *flamencos* as well as *flamencos* the world over who claim a flamenco identity.

Fee's warning continues:

The demand for 'authenticity' denies Fourth World writers a living, changing culture. Their culture is deemed to be Other and must avoid crossing those fictional but ideologically essential boundaries between Them and Us, the Exotic and the familiar, the Past and the Future, the 'Dying' and the Living (Fee, 1995, p. 243).

In a discussion regarding a resurgence of American minority groups to reaffirm their ancestral cultural identity to ensure 'cultural survival or revival', Kealiinohomoku suggests that many white Americans with no real attachment to their own cultures are claiming new cultural identities through 'discovery rather than through inheritance' (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, p. 58). This presents another possibility for identity. As South Africans, our only connection to the source of flamenco is through study with teachers in or from Spain and exposure to all things flamenco through electronic, film and print media. It is who we choose to identify with, Gypsies, or *payos*, that will determine to whose culture, styles and techniques we will attach ourselves; and the degree to which we treat the knowledge handed down to us with integrity and respect will determine whether we have appreciated or appropriated the cultural products made accessible to us.

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<sup>97</sup> In Fee, From 'Why C.K. Stead Didn't like Keri Hulme's *the bone people*: Who Can Write as Other?' *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 1 (1989): 11-32.

<sup>98</sup> *Pakeha* is one of two racial groups recognised in New Zealand and refers to Whites of European descent who live among the Maori.

### **The image of flamenco identity– national symbol of a nation divided**

Dances classified as 'indigenous' or 'traditional' are often sidelined in the categorisation of dance styles, falling outside of the category of Western Dance, which includes classical ballet and contemporary dance, regardless of the intricacy of techniques and the requirement of artistry to execute them (Grau, 2007). According to Kealiinohomoku, Western dance ideals incorporate pull-up, body lift, and bodily extensions (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 29). Flamenco complies with, and values highly, all of these ideals; yet, possibly due to the cultural, historical and regional origins of this form, it does not fall into the category of Western dance. Flamenco, like the Indian classical dance form *bharata natyam*, may be perceived to be inseparable from its socio-cultural origins (Grau, 2007, p. 197), and thus classified by some as indigenous, traditional or ethnic dance. From an anthropological perspective, ethnic denotes a group holding 'common genetic, linguistic and cultural ties, with special emphasis on cultural tradition' (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 30). Ethnic dance would thus reflect the cultural traditions of their constituent group (Kealiinohomoku, 1969, p. 29). The complexity of flamenco is that it is common to more than one cultural group with different linguistic and cultural ties and cultural traditions. However, according to Kealiinohomoku, classical ballet may be categorised as an ethnic dance form, in which case, flamenco too would be classified as such.

In her description of how two different practitioners of *bharata natyam* approach the dance style, Janet O'Shea proposes that 'multiple affiliations' and 'competing histories' provide the possibility of different perspectives to the form of *bharata natyam* (O'Shea, 2006, p. 139). She states: 'Since the early twentieth century, this dance genre has looked back into the past in order to find its rightful place. Inquiries into the past have legitimized different interpretations of form and history' (O'Shea, 2006, p. 145).

Social class (caste) and linguistic identity are contributors to the construction of national identity (O'Shea, 2006, p. 139). Spanish culture is made up of numerous regional, linguistic and socio-economic groups. Flamenco is just one of the dance forms that emerges from this landscape, yet is seen by many outsiders as Spain's national dance, largely due to General Franco's exploitation of the form during his years of leadership, as discussed in Chapter Two.

The concept of a single 'Spanish national dance' is a misnomer. Within Spain, dance culture is fragmented and the attitude towards flamenco in any of its forms, from traditional to commercial, varies from one Spaniard to another, depending largely on ancestry, social status and region of birth. My own experience is that, generally, Andalusians favour flamenco, while citizens from central to northern Spain tolerate flamenco, but largely favour the music and dance of their own regions.

One should also mention that in some regions such as Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque country, folk dance groups were formed in opposition groups to the Franco regime, for example, the Rey de Viana in Galicia, and the Verdaguer and Rubí *esbarts* groups in Catalonia (Mones et al., 2000, p. 152).

The ethnic dances of Spain including *folklorico*, flamenco, as well as *escuela bolera* represent Spain's rich and diverse cultural heritage, yet this very notion may be a factor reflective of the nationalist politics that divide Spain: Basque separatists, Catalan activists calling for independence from Spain, and racism against Gypsy 'outsiders' who settled in Spain as far back as the 15th century. So it is little wonder that even in terms of naming a national dance in the interest of national cohesion, the Spaniards cannot agree.

Out of all of the forms of Spanish dance discussed in Chapter Two, flamenco is likely the most recognisable across the globe, but as I will show, its recognisability is often mistaken, due to its absorption into the umbrella term 'Spanish dance'. Yet the sophisticated image it bears today was not always so. Dewaal Malefyt contests that 'In fact, earlier epochs of flamenco were far less equitable than today when relations between flamenco artists and audiences linked popular styles to social repression and artists to personal exploitation' (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 65). During the *Cafés Cantantes* epoch in the mid-19th century, working class flamenco artists played to the whims of the elite classes, where they worked under deplorable conditions and used female dancers as currency (p. 65). This statement is corroborated by Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, who state that

After they've danced, the female bolero and flamenco dancers come down to visit the consumers at their tables, to make them spend as much as they can, at

the orders of the café's owner [...] From table to table pouring *manzanilla* and more *manzanilla*, from table to table where there are foreigners and visitors, because the locals know the game and don't allow themselves to be exploited (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 7).<sup>99</sup>

Politics, particularly during the period during which General Franco and his fascist government held the reins, had a significant effect on flamenco identity. After the establishment of American military bases in Spain as a result of negotiations with the United Nations, Franco used flamenco as a marketing tool to attract tourism, portraying it as a 'symbol of Progressive Spain' (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 50). In the *tablaos*, the dance element took over from the song and the guitar, and the overt commercialisation of flamenco performance resulted in 'a growing association between prostitution and female flamenco dancers' (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 50).

The strong association of Gypsies with flamenco and nationalism, and the racism towards Gypsies that has prevailed in Spain since the time of the Spanish Inquisition, has some Spaniards viewing flamenco as an imported form belonging to Gypsies, and therefore not indigenous to Spain. The image of flamenco is often associated with heavy drinking, the taking of drugs, and, as mentioned earlier, prostitution. The labels furtively applied to Gypsies and Gypsy culture echo those attributed to the South African coloured community which, according to Zimitri Erasmus, live 'an identity that is clouded in sexualised shame and associated with drunkenness and jollity' (Erasmus, 2001, p. 14). In his article on French Gypsies, novelist John Updike (Updike, 2007) quotes musician Guy Bertrand describing the way many Gypsies are perceived across Europe:

It's not easy to work with Gypsies....They have no structure in their lives, no discipline, no vision, and hence they can't critique themselves, they can't develop. Musically they are as good at fourteen as they ever will be....In all the years I've known him, Moïse has never done a single thing to deepen or improve

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<sup>99</sup> Quoting from Alvarez, Á (1998). *El Baile Flamenco*. Madrid. Alianza Editorial.

or develop his music. All he's done is strut around for journalists, blowing his money, and making babies all over the world (Updike, 2007, pp. 484-5).

These are not identities that the coloured community or the Gypsies have claimed for themselves. They are identities that have been conceptualised and imposed by outsiders, and most likely passed down amongst those outsiders as racist stereotypes learned through cultural transmission.

Since the 1970s artists have worked hard to restore the image of flamenco identity, tainted by Franco's commercialism of the art form during the period from the late 1930s to the early 1970s, and racist notions about Gypsies that have prevailed for centuries. Flamenco works were incorporated into the repertoires of reputable companies such as the *Ballet Nacional de España*, and professional schools were established such as the *Conservatorio Profesional de Danza* in Madrid to train young dancers in the art of flamenco and other Spanish dance forms. This move to restore flamenco's integrity and reputation, however, may have contributed to the growing polarisation between flamenco purists and other flamenco practitioners who have chosen to see flamenco as a dynamic contemporary art form, rather than a relic of a tradition long past. It is ironic that many who call themselves flamencophiles or purists are American academics passionate about the preservation of the form (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 51). These scholars of dance history revert to the era just prior to the *Cafés Cantantes* epoch in the mid-19th century, in an attempt to reinvent the art form by rejecting what they refer to as 'acrobatics and "vulgar" sexual display of commercial productions' (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 51).

I would like to note a discrepancy of opinion between Heffner Hayes and myself regarding the turning point of the commodification and thus the changed technical and stylistic parameters of flamenco. The romanticised rewriting of Andalusian history, turning the clock back to the time of the existence of the *Cafés Cantantes* era to find 'authentic' or 'traditional' performance of flamenco, does not tie in with the reasons for its change. In my opinion, the very employment of flamenco artists in these *cafés*, shifting flamenco out of a private context into a commercial one, was the factor that brought about the stylistic and technical changes to the art form that have, since then, established a trend that has

continued to inform this dynamic style of what I would like to call contemporary flamenco dance.

### **Identity and status**

The identity and concomitant status attributed to flamenco, depending on who is looking at it, is vital to how it is valued by dance students, audiences and funding bodies, as these income sources are the lifeblood of flamenco practitioners. The status attributed to a performing art could affect the acceptability of an artist, piece or dance style, ultimately affecting the success of applications for funding and audience attendance (Grau, 2007, p. 201).

These conflicts to me are significant not so much at an ideational level, but for the pragmatic responses that ensue, giving different access to resources to different artists not because of the quality (or not) of their work but because of the way they are perceived by those granting the resources (Grau, 2007, p. 201).

The implications of this may be seen in the light of a practical example of my experience as a South African Spanish dance and flamenco practitioner. There have been no Spaniards running flamenco schools or dance companies in South Africa since Madame Luisa Gitanilla<sup>100</sup> stopped teaching in Johannesburg during the 1970s. Spanish diplomats to South Africa indicate their interest in the South African Spanish dance community to varying degrees. Over the period from 1990 to 2012, *La Rosa Dance Company* has had a mixed reception from Spanish ambassadors, cultural attachés and consuls general, ranging from active support (including financial assistance) and continuous contact over their periods of engagement, to total disinterest. At the annual Spanish National Day celebrations on the 12<sup>th</sup> October some Consuls General eagerly request the performance of specifically Spanish regional dances; some ask to see a flamenco performance; some are happy to see a range of styles; and others fail to request a performance of any kind, although well aware of the thriving Spanish dance community in Cape Town. At times, the inclusion of the word

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<sup>100</sup> Madam Luisa Gitanilla (Salamanca Spain 1920-1994) trained in classical Spanish dance and flamenco in Madrid. She came to South Africa in 1951, having performed in Mozambique (Acosta, 2010) and taught in Johannesburg until the late 1970s. She was a founding member of the Spanish Dance Society (Grut, 1981, p. 377).

'flamenco' in funding applications has been recommended, and at other times discouraged, depending on the ancestry, personal history or political stance of the diplomats in office at various times. This is a clear indication of the vulnerable nature of cultural identity, at least with regard to this form.

### **The real thing<sup>101</sup>**

There is no 'pure' black politics. There are no 'pure' black identities. There is no authentic black self (Erasmus, 2001, p. 25).

The term 'the real thing' appears in reference to Miles Orvell's fascination with the shift in turn-of-the-century American culture from imitation to authenticity in Tresa M. Randall's article 'Interculturalism and Authenticity in the Work of Uday Shankar' (Randall, 2003, p. 100) and in Donn E. Pohren's book entitled *The Art of Flamenco* (Pohren, 2005) where he compares two flamenco styles in terms of authenticity. It is evident that a range of factors may contribute to the perceived authenticity of flamenco performance: identity, culture, method of cultural transmission, tradition, geographical location, performance context and performance conventions.

Helen Thomas (Thomas, 2003) discusses four variations on the meaning of authenticity in the performance of music, originating from various textual sources, including the work of music critics Taruskin,<sup>102</sup> Tomlinson<sup>103</sup> and Kivy.<sup>104</sup> In the first, Thomas refers to the orthodox, historical approach, where authenticity requires the 'replication of the composer's intentions and the original sounds' using original instruments to recreate the sound that the original audience would have heard (Thomas, 2003, p. 128). Second, from Taruskin's perspective authenticity 'resides in the act of performance by the performer' who, as an artist independent of the composer, reveals his or her own authentic interpretation of the music (p. 128). Third, according to Tomlinson, authentic meanings lie in

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<sup>101</sup> Title borrowed from Daumal in Randall (Randall, 2003, p. 100) and Pohren (Pohren, 2005, p. 7).

<sup>102</sup> Taruskin, R. (1995) *Text as Act: Essays on Performance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>103</sup> Tomlinson, G. (1998) 'The Historian, The Performer, and Authentic Meaning in Music', in N. Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>104</sup> Kivy, P (1995) *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

a context outside of the performance, in the discourse that ensues as a result of hearing a piece (p. 128). Finally, Kivy holds that authenticity may be found in a range of factors (p. 129), including the adherence to the intention of the composer, the composer's practice of execution of the piece, the likely qualities of the sound heard by the audience in the lifetime of the composer and the performer's original performance practice. I concur with Kivy on the range of factors, but in my opinion, authentic performance of flamenco may be found in the practitioner's respect for flamenco vocabulary, rhythms and structures, mastery of flamenco techniques, improvisational skills and the ability to authentically access and transmit emotion.

Gareth Griffiths warns of the danger of making 'claims to an 'authentic' voice in 'The Myth of Authenticity' (Griffiths, 1995). He describes a dispute between two groups in Western Australia over the utilisation of specific tracts of land for mining, where both claim to be the authentic holders of the right to decide how the land may be utilised. While the claim to authenticity of one group is based on tradition, the claim of the other group is based on its proximity to the land.

Australian Aboriginal peoples may increasingly wish to assert their sense of the local and the specific as a recuperative strategy in the face of the erasure of difference characteristic of colonialist representation. But such representation subsumed by the white media under a mythologised and fetishised sign of the 'authentic' can also be used to create a privileged hierarchy of Australian Aboriginal voice which in practice represents that community as divided (Griffiths, 1995, p. 238)

It is Griffith's comment on the treatment by 'white media' of such situations that interests me, as it echoes the manner in which outsiders frequently write about the 'authenticity' of 'Gypsy flamenco', fostering the division that exists between the Gypsies and the *payos* that make up the flamenco community in Spain.

Tresa M. Randall (Randall, 2003) comments that this preoccupation with authenticity in performance may be characteristically American (Randall, 2003, p. 99). Randall refers to the

writing of Miles Orvell in his study of turn-of-the-century American culture, where he describes Americans' 'fascination with the "real thing"' (Randall, 2003, p. 100) as being a manifestation of society's reaction to a world that was becoming increasingly industrialised, producing mass imitations instead of authentic articles of value (Randall, 2003, p. 100). I believe that this may be a global phenomenon, a fascination with the exotic that romanticises marginalised cultures, elevating the place that they occupy in the cultural identity hierarchy at the expense of other, more measurable or tangible criteria for legitimacy and thus authenticity, for example, technical skill.

Heffner Hayes defines flamenco as follows:

The definition of 'tradition' in flamenco varies from context to context. For many practitioners of flamenco, 'pure' flamenco is performed exclusively by gypsies in southern Spain. For non-gypsy, or non-Spanish practitioners of flamenco, the category of 'traditional' flamenco refers to the study of the forms that emerged in Andalusia during the late 19th and early twentieth centuries (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 107).

The criteria for flamenco authenticity vary, depending on who is experiencing flamenco; some *aficionados* demand pure-Gypsy blood (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 107). Others will not consider anything but a 'private' performance, for example, at a *juerga* (jam-session) or a *peña* (private flamenco club), where they believe they are guaranteed to witness *duende*. It is implied that what they would see on a public stage is not conducive to the arrival of *duende* through the artist (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 51). Solo improvisation, as opposed to a choreographed solo or group work, is another criterion for authenticity as this, too, creates the space for the emergence of *duende* (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 108). Adherence to the codified system of vocabulary, technique and style either carry less weight with *aficionados*, or is the unspoken minimum requirement for authenticity; yet this is likely the most measurable criterion for replicating tradition.

Yet it is the concept of *duende* as the indicator of flamenco identity that, for some, appears to be essential to 'authentic' performance (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 52). Journalist and

aspirant flamenco guitarist Jason Webster's book *Duende: a Journey in Search of Flamenco* (Webster, 2003) describes his search for this 'quality' that remains elusive to him, as an outsider to the flamenco world. Famed playwright and poet Federico Garcia Lorca was fascinated with the subject of *duende*. I submit that this quality is not specific to flamenco but appears in all performing art forms and might be seen as an indefinable artistic quality that true artists manifest, touching their audiences in a profound way. Yet the 'exotic' nature of flamenco has created a certain mystique around this concept that has romanticised it to the point that artists sometimes appear to 'fake' it in order to be seen as authentic.

I have encountered flamenco artists who actively pursue *duende* as a means to legitimising their performances. The line between self-indulgence and total immersion in one's art is a fine one, and where the risk of contriving *duende* at the cost of the structures governing flamenco is very real. Wild gesticulation and facial expressions ranging from wide open eyes to pursed lips and furrowed brows translate to nought when the rhythmic and technical mastery of the form leaves something to be desired. I do not believe that *duende* is the means to an end; rather, it is a by-product of a masterful and committed performance experienced by the artists and witnessed by the audience, whatever the performance context may be. In my opinion, *duende* is not the only benchmark for authenticity, but neither is it the territory of an exclusive minority.

Heffner Hayes discusses at length the impact that film has had on *duende* in flamenco, and how, in the opinion of flamenco purists, 'relentless rehearsal' and staging for the camera

...robs the spectator of the opportunity to witness the spontaneous arrival of the *duende*. Once captured on film, the event can be reproduced endlessly through mass marketing techniques. This movement away from the 'original' moment of performance plays into the anxiety of authenticity held by purists (Heffner Hayes, 2000, pp. 52-53).

Included in Pohren's 2005 edition is his preface to the first edition of *The Art of Flamenco* (1962), where he wrote:

Throughout this book the reader will find constant reference to two basic poles of flamenco, the authentic-traditional and the popular-commercial. The main difference between these opposite poles lies in the types of innovations and creations that make them up: those of the authentic-traditional school always fall within certain well-defined bounds of good flamenco; those of the popular-commercial school are nearly always catchy and worthless, eagerly accepted by the popular public, and then quickly forgotten. In other words, the authentic-traditional flamenco has lasting value, the popular-commercial little to no value (Pohren, 2005, p. 6).

Pohren attributes flamenco authenticity not to performance, but rather to the performer's lifestyle, culture and geographic location.

Flamenco is not just a music of southern Spain, as is generally believed. More than that, it is a way of life that influences the daily activities of many southern Spaniards. One does not have to be a performer of flamenco to be a "flamenco" [...] A *flamenco* is anyone who is emotionally and actively involved in this unique philosophy. For this reason, no book is complete in dealing with the art of flamenco alone, for the art of flamenco is merely the outward expression of the flamenco way of life (Pohren, 2005, p. 9).

Pohren's fascination with flamenco culture sets *flamencos* apart from others not only geographically and culturally but also in terms of emotional capacity, inferring that if one does not live the lifestyle of a *flamenco* one is not capable of authentically expressing the emotion required by the art form. However, in the preface to the 2005 edition of the same publication, Pohren bemoans the state of flamenco:

"Evolution" is the key concept here, a term used by the *flamencos* to justify whatever changes they wish to impose. In very few instances such alterations have been welcome. In most, they have been highly unfortunate. The most drastic change has been the destruction of the very base upon which flamenco was constructed: its way of life. Flamenco was always a living

expression: Andalusia was permeated with it. [...] During the past forty years this living expression of flamenco has largely been swept away by the rush and noise of progress, and has been replaced by theatricality. Flamenco exists today nearly exclusively on stages throughout Spain and the world, and plays mostly to audiences little versed in the real thing (Pohren, 2005, p. 7).

Pohren's idea of 'the real thing' is a version of flamenco that fitted neatly into the Andalucía of the 1950s and 1960s. Flamenco's shift out of this context, as the result of social, political, technological and economic events, has resulted in much discussion as to the authenticity of its performance in modern times. But Pohren's perspective is based on the premise that flamenco is a way of life and not a performing art. As such, his disillusionment with the 'demise' of flamenco may equal the excitement of a dance practitioner interested in new and emerging forms of contemporary dance. It should also be noted that Pohren's frames of reference (flamenco in the 1960s and 1970s) are a far cry from what may have been danced during the *Cafés Cantantes* era, if evidenced only by the women's fashion of shorter skirts, permitting women to show and use their feet, and unconstructed tops, allowing radically different movement to that permitted by the corsetry worn in the 1850s.

In an effort to 'preserve' flamenco, attempts have been made by traditionalists to recapture flamenco from earlier times. According to Heffner Hayes:

It is generally understood among flamenco dance enthusiasts that even today "real flamenco" is not performed at the *tablaos*; it can sometimes be found in the classroom of a very old teacher, but more likely in the company of other *aficionados*, at a *juerga* (jam session) sponsored by a private flamenco club (*peña*). These flamencophiles attempt to re-enact the early days of the *cafés cantantes*. The conventions of performance attributed to that time serve as the standard by which the authenticity of the flamenco is measured. (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 41)

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the scarcity of evidence of what these performance conventions of flamenco were before and during the epoch of the *Cafés Cantantes*, when flamenco was consolidated by the 'bodily re-enactment through the repeated performances of a unique system of codified movements' (Buckland, 2001, p. 9) and recognised as a particular art form, leaves the parameters of authenticity open for discussion.

In her chapter on the resurrection of lost dance works, sociologist Helen Thomas quotes Lesley Main's<sup>105</sup> proposal that certain dances are best left in their traditional forms, particularly those that carry historical and geographical relevance, while other dances 'have a greater "universal" time reach in that they can have relevance for a contemporary audience' (Thomas, 2003, p. 122). I propose that the former relates to the example of *folklorico* that have retained the same formats, costumes and performance contexts for centuries. The latter could apply to flamenco. Despite a demand for authenticity, flamenco evolved, due to a range of issues including commodification, technological advancement and the inevitable effects of exposure to other contemporary developments in dance.

Thomas cites the work of László Felföldi<sup>106</sup> who comments that '...the drive towards nationalising cultures in the search for 'pure' local dance forms by educators, artists and politicians in Hungary has effectively rendered the folk dances archaic' (Thomas, 2003, p. 124). This situation is not unique to Hungary. In working towards the development of a Spanish national identity, General Franco's government created the *Sección Feminina de Coros y Danzas* or Feminine Division of Choruses and Dances, populated by women tasked with resurrecting and preserving the rich diversity of Spanish regional dance (Mones et al., 2000, p. 152). This politically created body resulted in a curatorship of Spanish regional dance that has preserved and archived the content of the work, thereby restricting instead of opening access to the material. Thomas proposes that this resulted in two different approaches to reconstruction: the former, authentic to the traditional form, the latter, an approach that is 'interpretive' of the spirit of the work. As flamenco is, in essence, not comprised of 'works' but of improvisations of specific *palos*, I propose that Thomas's notion

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<sup>105</sup> Main, L.(1995) Preserved and Illuminated, *Dance Theatre Journal*, 12,2 pp 14-15.

<sup>106</sup> Felföldi, L. (1999) Folk Dance Research in Hungary: Relations among Theory, Fieldwork and the Archive, in T.J Buckland (ed.) *Dance in the Field: Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*, London: Macmillan – now Palgrave Macmillan.

of reconstructing dance works could be extrapolated for the purposes of this dissertation to include the reconstruction of the flamenco dance form.

### **Authenticity and cultural contexts – permission to perform**

Cultural context provides a further criterion upon which authenticity might be based. By cultural context, I refer to the cultural norms that dictate who may perform and where a performance may take place. The effects of cultural change on the reputations of traditional dance styles among outsiders and among their own constituent practitioners is an area of research of Joann W. Kealiinohomoku, who compares the respective reputations of Balinese and Hawaiian dance in terms of their social organisation. I use her findings here to draw parallels with flamenco and the perceptions about it in the contexts in which it is performed.

Kealiinohomoku found that where Balinese dance is an activity pursued by people from all sectors of society, Hawaiian dance is exclusive, 'relegated to a select group of specialists' who may have come from the lower classes, but once appointed, are at the service of the chiefs (Kealiinohomoku, 1979, p. 49). Like Hawaiian dance, flamenco emerged as the artistic expression of working-class Andalusians for their own gratification but, once on the public stage during the *Cafés Cantantes* era in the mid-19th century, it became a form of entertainment performed by the working class for the upper classes.

Until this era, flamenco was originally passed down through families and entire communities participated in private performances at social events or at *peñas* (private flamenco clubs) as singers, dancers, musicians, *palmeros* (hand-clappers) and *jaleadores* (people who shouted out encouragement from the sidelines). With the advent of commodification in the mid-19th century, flamenco began to be offered at academies teaching the *escuela bolera* (bolero school) and *folklorico* (regional dance) (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 5). While this change broadened access to tuition in flamenco, it may have resulted in a perceived dilution of tradition and cultural transmission and taken away the mystery and exclusivity of access through family.

Pohren's first edition of *The Art of Flamenco* written in 1962 during Franco's regime, criticised the increasing commercialism of flamenco. (Pohren, 2005) From the 1930s with

General Franco's rise to power during the Spanish Civil war, to the late 1970s, the end of his dictatorship, government policy largely dictated the content of output of Spanish dance performance. According to Heffner Hayes:

Franco's victory within Spain and the subsequent defeat of then Axis powers placed the dictator in a sub-ordinate position to the United States in the global power order. In an attempt to re-build Spain in the wake of a devastating civil war, Franco appealed to the stereotypical associations with flamenco in the American and European cultural imaginations. The version of flamenco tailored to "tourist" performances emphasized a charming but non-threatening portrait of Spain. These productions toured the United States and were recorded in several Hollywood films. Franco's shrewd manipulation of the flamenco stereotype simultaneously generated a lucrative tourist industry and served to reiterate an internal order of power that placed Gypsies and Andalusians at the lowest rungs of the social ladder (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 23)

Performance contexts promoted by Franco focussed on attracting tourists and the establishment of *tablaos* (flamenco night clubs) to provide the context for this exercise, and make flamenco accessible to the general public. Timothy Dewaal Malefyt (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998) draws on gender theory to illustrate two viewpoints on authenticity in the performance of flamenco in terms of performance context. He compares his experience of two performances, one at a *tablaos* (as an outsider) attended by the general public, including tourists, and another at a *peña* (as an insider), attended by local *aficionados*.

Dewaal Malefyt's experience at the *tablaos* was an arm's length connection with flamenco. He describes the stereotypical flamenco kitsch decorating the walls that panders to the expectations of tourists, the distance between the stage (therefore the artists in the *cuadro flamenco*) and the audience, the lack of appropriate *jaleo* (audience participation) and the predominance of dance rather than song in the evening's line-up (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 66). Although he found the evening entertaining, it was clearly geared for tourists or

'outsiders' (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 67). The legacy of Franco's (ab)use of culture to boost tourism in Spain had evidently left its mark:

For *aficionados*, contrasting flamenco as a private local tradition with flamenco as a public national attraction is not arbitrary, nor without significance. By centering 'tradition' within boundaries of the familiar, the local, and the intimate, private flamenco in *peñas* complements but contrasts public flamenco performed 'for sale' to strangers, just as in gender symmetry the private of the feminine complements but opposes the public of the masculine. This mutual relationship of contrasts in flamenco becomes especially relevant when we look at broader issues of tourism in Spain (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 71).

Dewaal Malefyt maintains that the commodification of culture has the potential to either invigorate or destroy local cultural systems. By shifting the cultural endeavours of a community from the space of culture-for-the-sake-of-culture, to cultural produce for consumption, the idea of cultural unity and otherness or exclusivity may be enhanced but possibly at the cost of the integrity of the art from (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 71).

By contrast to the *tablao* experience, Dewaal Malefyt's visit to a *peña* offered him the experience of the 'insider'.

Against popular consumption, power relations, and display of flamenco 'outside' in public commercial settings, *peña* clubs are bastions for local flamenco tradition 'inside'. Situated within close contexts, away from tourists and commercial centres, *peñas* are locales that stress familiarity, intimacy, and social exclusivity as an unspoken feature of their *raison d'être* [...] By defining 'authentic' flamenco in enclosed spaces, through intimate relations, and in shared exchange, *aficionados* indirectly model their notions of tradition on inside or feminine modes of cooperative sociability and private space. During particularly charged moments in the *peña* members join together in song and dance that generate participation, synchronization, and

verbal exchange as a validation of their social unity. Members claim that at such times “authentic” (*el auténtico*) flamenco is transmitted to others, rather than being performed for others [...] In these close contexts cooperation and sentimental exchange create a performance sensibility by which they highlight themselves as the aesthetic standard of tradition. Since this degree of intimate involvement is expected from all present, “traditional” flamenco is remade continuously into a living performance form. Flamenco tradition thus becomes both reflective and reflexive of an “inside” reality they create for themselves (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 71).

As opposed to performing ‘for’ an audience and rather transmitting flamenco ‘to’ others, everyone at the *peña* participates, either in *cante*, *palmas*, *baile*, *toque* or *jaleo*. Seated in a circle, as opposed to in an audience seated in an auditorium, separated from the performers on a stage, participants are engaged - not in a performance - but rather in an experience, expressed through either joyous or profound song, with the occasional addition of a danced *letra* (sung verse) or two (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 69).

The stages at *peñas* resemble *Andalusian patios*, with little or no differentiation of levels between performers and other participants. This ‘ambience of equal exchange’ (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 70) encourages the cohesive nature of the event, facilitating a heightened synchronisation of timing and activities that unifies the participants.

Their collective participation encourages group solidarity in two ways: by creating a closed, level circle in performance, they not only stress equality as a model of their social structure, but since they depend upon each other to make their collective effort work they also encourage co-operative exchange (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 71).

It is little wonder that attendance by an ‘outsider’ at a *peña* is usually by invitation only. Accessibility is limited by the geographical location of *peñas* in *barrios* or suburbs as opposed to city centres; the architectural and design features of the building that house them, with no signage nor indication of what occurs beyond the inconspicuous entrances;

and the lack of windows through which curious passers-by might wish to look (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 70).

I have had only one experience of visiting a *peña*, which took place during my first solo visit to Madrid in 1993, so I cannot comment on what a 'normal' *peña* experience is like. In contrast to Dewaal Malefyt's, my attendance was not by invitation but rather in response to an advertisement for authentic flamenco seen in the *Guía del Ocio* (entertainment guide), and I recall paying an entrance fee that was no more or less than the fee I had paid at the world-renowned *Casa Patas*, a *tablaos* in Madrid. The 'performance' at the *peña* was delayed, and when it did happen, it was of poor quality. I had a sense of 'being had' as I, along with others in the audience, was a *guiri* (tourist). There was no dance at all, only guitar playing and singing; and there was certainly no *duende*! In retrospect, I think it is possible that this was in fact not a genuine *peña*, but rather a commercial tourist 'trap' cashing in on unsuspecting novices. I have subsequently learned that not seeing any dance at a *peña* is quite commonplace, and may simply be a case of no-one in attendance having the inclination to dance on that occasion.

Dewaal Malefyt's visit to the *peña* was by invitation. Having shared his deep connection to flamenco through his love of the music, his marriage to a Spaniard and his project based in Sevilla, after the first 'show' he was invited into the 'inner sanctum' for an even more private viewing (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 68). It is possible that the more he believed he was being treated as 'special' the more he valued the performance. There is no doubt that the intention of performances at *tablaos* and *peñas* are different. I have attended many *tablaos*, and some have been more satisfactory than others: in some, the artists manifested *duende*, while in others they appeared to have been far from it. I have also attended flamenco extravaganzas in Madrid performed by the 'hottest' young flamencos of their time - such as *Nuevo Baile Español* (now called Rojas & Rodrigues) in 2001, Joaquin Cortes in 2007, and Sara Baras in 2009 - and remained unmoved, while in a one-woman show in 2001 at Suristan, a dingy night club in Madrid, a young woman by the name of Fuensanta *La Moneta* blew the audience away. Her stockings had runs in them and her shoes were in need of repair - but she danced as though her performance would determine whether her family members would have food on their table the following day. Her commitment to her

performance ran to a point beyond her fingertips – her focus was compelling. I cannot be sure that she experienced *duende* that night, as only she would be able to confirm that, but that audience needed no more than she gave. The venue or performance context need not make a difference to the authenticity of a flamenco performance – it is the *intention* of the artist that renders it authentic.

Heffner Hayes sums up the authenticity argument in the concluding paragraph of her chapter entitled 'Blood Wedding: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Flamenco' (Heffner Hayes, 2000) as follows:

And, within flamenco, the notion of *duende* seems to be inextricably linked to the authenticity of the dance. Because the *duende* is a notoriously slippery and capricious character, it would make sense that it would not appear where you look for it. The practice of 'traditional' dance involves an attentiveness to the intended effects of a performance as well as a respect for the choreographic structure of the form. I would assert that the maintenance of a tradition involves the continuous reconstruction and reinvention of dance forms of the past. Rather than aiming for an exact duplication of dance vocabulary as it was performed at some 'originary' moment, contemporary artists invoke, respect, and manipulate traditional dance forms of the past. Flamenco dance is then perpetuated as a living tradition capable of assimilating innovation by its practitioners, instead of a museum piece that must be protected from contamination. The commitment to keep flamenco alive, infused with meaning, is a passionate decision. It marks the dance with a vibrancy and depth that betrays the arrival of the *duende*, the spirit of inspiration (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 61).

The manner in which flamenco is passed on to a new generation is vital to its perpetuation as a living tradition. Unpacking the bounds of cultural transmission will reveal what is required to ensure that this happens.

## Cultural transmission – the ‘politics and practice of dance preservation’<sup>107</sup>

Dance is a multi-faceted phenomenon that includes, in addition to what we see and hear, the ‘invisible’ underlying system, the processes that produce both the system and the product, and the socio-political context. (Kaepler, 2000, p. 117).

In *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*, Helen Thomas quotes Susan Manning’s distinction between ‘reconstruction and revival’ of dance. ‘The former mostly involves the notated score or film while the latter involves oral transmission from dancer to dancer’ (Thomas, 2003, p. 141). Although Manning is referring to the reconstruction of dance works of Mary Wigman and Martha Graham, I propose that this concept may be extended to incorporate dance styles, in this case, flamenco.

In her study entitled ‘Dance, Authenticity and Cultural Memory: the Politics of Embodiment’ (Buckland, 2001) dance historian Theresa Jill Buckland investigates how English folk dances are transmitted from one generation to the next. Her investigation focuses on the performers of ‘authentic tradition’ with respect to their social identity and locality, and looks at ‘local history as an embodied practice’ (Buckland, 2001, p. 2). Her findings reflect that the manner in which tradition is handed down affects the perceived ‘authenticity’ of the dance, begging the question as to who has permission to teach, who has permission to learn and which methodology may be used.

The perceived authenticity of a performance or teaching and learning opportunity may be seen to be directly reflective of the quality of training experienced by the performer appearing, or teacher delivering the class. The curricula vitae of artists and teachers that appear in printed dance programmes and dance training facilities’ marketing materials bear testament to this, where lists of their teachers provide an indication of their experience and thus their level of connectedness to authenticity.

In the case of flamenco, cultural transmission occurs in various contexts, given the conflicting histories of this dance style and the numerous possibilities that exist in terms of

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<sup>107</sup> Borrowed from Thomas (2003) p. 125.

flamenco identity. Proponents of the notion that authentic flamenco can only be performed by (Roma) Gypsies might be of the opinion that flamenco is not taught, but rather 'runs in the blood' (Quintana & Floyd, 1972). On the opposite end of the scale, others claim that flamenco can be taught, as it fits into the description of a codified system of movement underwritten by a cultural tradition that can be passed on through teaching or oral tradition (Heffner Hayes, 2003). These contexts will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter. For the purposes of this dissertation, and in order to draw lines of comparison between 'traditional' flamenco and the form that emerged and prevails in current times as a result of flamenco's commodification, I will refer to the former as *flamenco puro* (pure flamenco) in line with Heffner Hayes's naming convention (Heffner Hayes, 2000, p. 51) and the latter, *Nuevo flamenco* (new flamenco), in line with the naming convention in the modern public domain.

One of the motivating factors for the preservation of dance works and styles is the fear of losing a part of history and the tradition that accompanies it (Buckland, 2001, p. 12). With reference to traditional dance practices in England, Buckland points out that by the 1970s, the dispute as to whether specific dance forms were authentic or not had been laid to rest; what now became important was the authenticity of the person teaching or performing the dances. She uses the term 'embodied capital' to refer to:

...the distinction of the authentic person through knowledge and expertise acquired not through the inscribing processes of books, available to all, but through the physicality of dance, access to which was controlled (Buckland, 2001, p. 13).

It is the unique distinction of embodied practice and the integrity with which it is utilised that '...underlines the power of the performative and the continuing relevance of a mythic past in contemporary life' (Buckland, 2001, p. 13). The notion of a 'mythic past', echoed earlier in this chapter by a preoccupation with 'the real thing', is a factor which may affect the survival of cultural traditions that need to be nurtured in this rapidly and constantly changing world.

According to Andréé Grau, ‘dance training requires the acquisition of a technical vocabulary as well as physical practice...’ (Grau, 2007, p. 193). Flamenco dance training comprises the two aforementioned elements, and, in my opinion, two essential additional dimensions: first, an in-depth understanding of the rhythmic structures, song constructions and categorisation of the songs into the mood descriptors of *jondo* (profound), *intermedio* (intermediate) and *chico* (light), for which the dances are ‘written’; second, a profound understanding of the relationships required for the execution of a flamenco performance between the dancer, the *cantaor* (singer) and the musicians that rests firmly on an understanding of the *compás* (rhythmic structure) that governs each *palo* (rhythmic grouping or song type):

For a skilful flamenco dancer, improvisation provides the opportunity to display both mastery and abandon in performance. Even in the most spontaneous gathering of dancers who play *palmas* for one another as they trade solos, the codes for improvisation are strictly prescribed. Yet dancers find innumerable ways to play in and around, to interrupt and recombine elements of traditional flamenco vocabulary. The solo is a community event; the group provides a rhythmic foundation for the dance’s choreography; the participants shout out words of encouragement; they tease and dare the dancer to take risks in performance. The dancer can signal to speed up, slow down, dance in silence, or change rhythms, but all of these decisions depend on clear communication within the group through coded steps, gestures, or phrase lengths. The decision-making process may be spontaneous, contextually defined by the situation and the members of the group, but a successful improvisation makes sense through the invocation and subtle disruption of traditional choreographic codes (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 111).

By its very nature, *flamenco puro* is not an exact form – the codified system of technical vocabulary, style and rhythm provides the structure on which the dancer bases his or her performance (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 110). The improvisational, stylistic and interpretively individualised nature of solo performance renders the notation of any given performance redundant, as the need to replicate the performance does not arise, nor would it be

possible, given that *duende* is perceived to represent the pinnacle of performance, perceived to be the ultimate manifestation of the individual's improvisational skills and artistry. 'It [improvisation] can never be repeated in dance or writing as it was specific to that moment in time. The *duende* marks that moment of simultaneous plenitude and loss' (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 114). However, in order for the viewer to recognise the performance as flamenco, the integrity of the technical, rhythmic and stylistic elements of flamenco should be present.

In both flamenco and postmodern traditions, the performer refers to a 'map' of possible choices determined by the structure of the form. The 'map' must be recognised by a community of participants in order for the improvisation to 'make sense', but the 'map' does not definitively mark the entire terrain. Here is the paradox of improvisation: it is neither truly spontaneous nor fully choreographed. Performers learn to make rapid compositional choices based on their knowledge of a system of meaning. These choices encourage a dialogue within the community; the other performers make decisions in response to each dancer's contribution to the work. The dialogue (danced, written, spoken, sung, drawn or otherwise represented) among dancers and other participants in the work adds to the 'map' (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 106).

Kaepler suggests that these codified systems, or systems of knowledge are constructed through social and cultural means – 'created by, known, and agreed upon by a group of people and primarily preserved in memory' (Kaepler, 2000, p. 117). In her study comparing Polynesian traditional dance with the Broadway musical *Cats*, Kaepler (Kaepler, 2000) emphasises a necessity to understand a total culture in order to understand a specific performance.

In the case of *nuevo flamenco*, where dances are choreographed for groups and staged for public performance, the third-party choreographer's role is established and a means of recording the work may be necessary for the purpose of replication and re-staging at a later date. In *flamenco puro*, the dancer takes the role of choreographer and performer,

improvising the dance according to the parameters of the prescribed structures and interpretive parameters of each *palo*. Besides the Labanotation of certain steps common to flamenco and *danza estilizada* notated in isolation in *The Language of Spanish Dance* (Vittucci, 1990), I cannot imagine a case where notation conventions used in Western dance, for example Benesh notation or Labanotation, would be used for the recording of a complete *flamenco puro* 'choreography'. I believe that this may be due to the rhythmically complex nature of *zapateado* (footwork), the improvisational and thus unpredictable nature of this form and the effect of *duende* on the uniqueness of each execution of a dance. This would be an interesting area for future research.

In her work on the different methodologies employed by 'dance directors' in reconstructing works by American contemporary choreographer Doris Humphrey (Thomas, 2003, p. 134), Helen Thomas highlights the notion of 'first-hand knowledge of working with the original choreographer' and a 'line of access' to a work 'via her teacher and mentor', or access to 'the oracle' as referred to by music critic Taruskin<sup>108</sup> (Thomas, 2003, p. 136). Thomas cites Taruskin's proposal that the need to consult 'the oracle' is obsolete, as a music composer's intention is no longer available once he has passed on and that the preoccupation with rendering a 'historically authentic performance' is an invention of modernism and 'not a historical restoration' (Thomas, 2003, p. 126). However, she also cites Lesley Main's<sup>109</sup> perspective proposing that there is a benefit in working with dancers who have had 'direct, experiential bodily knowledge' of original works now under reconstruction, as they have had direct access to the choreographer. Main also insists that directors have a thorough knowledge of the style of the work as this element is not easily captured in a notational score. Having said this, she states that the notation of the works differed from one notator to another, as those notators who had performed the original work before were able to better capture the style required. 'In other words' Thomas says, 'they have a greater sense of authenticity' (Thomas, 2003, p. 136).

With reference to Main's comments on the benefit of drawing on the memories of first generation Humphrey dancers, it was established that, although someone who danced a

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<sup>108</sup> Taruskin, R. (1995) *Text as Act: Essays on Performance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas's interview with Main (1997).

piece 60 years prior might not have recalled the detail of the steps, she was still able to retain 'clues' to the intention of the choreographer; thus the artist's feelings about the piece would still have relevance (Thomas, 2003, p. 137). Thomas suggests that it is kinaesthetic memory that stays with the dancer (Thomas, 2003, p. 137). Thomas shares Labanotator Ray Cook's<sup>110</sup> approach to reconstruction thus:

...individual bodies change over time and the older or former generation of dancers will not have the technical competence that they once had when they were performing those now lost or forgotten dances. Despite this, it is almost always taken for granted that the dancers' experiential knowledge of the dances, which is contained in their movement memories, is potentially recoverable. That is, even though they can no longer do it, the knowledge of how it was done is contained within them and can be brought out in, say, the context of the rehearsal studio. In this way they become invaluable, authenticated resources for assisting the reconstructor or dance director to piece together parts of the lost dance which is to be resurrected, and/or for assisting the dancers who are to perform the work to bring their past roles to life in an authentic manner (Thomas, 2003, p. 137).

In relating the above to the transmission of flamenco, it is necessary to outline the various contexts that contribute to this dance form. I will refer to three different flamenco sub-cultures in order to cover this: Spanish Gypsy culture, the broader Spanish culture in the context of the *peñas*, and formalised tuition available to students of flamenco in Spain and across the globe.

According to Quintana and Floyd (Quintana & Floyd, 1972), Gypsies living in the caves of Sacro Monte claim that, due to exposure to the rhythms of flamenco from the moment of conception, Gypsy children are not 'taught' flamenco.

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<sup>110</sup> Cook, R (1990) 'Dawn in New York: Researching a lost Masterpiece', in *Proceedings of 5<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong International Dance Conference: International Conference on Movement Notation*, 4, Hong Kong: the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, pp. 44 – 52.

Look – here we don't have any academies, no-one to teach us the song or the dance. The only thing is that when we are pregnant, from the first day [of conception] we continue to work (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 94).

The authors comment on the curious fact that the Gypsy interviewee Isabel does not consider herself to be a teacher, despite the fact that it is she who has trained generations of the singers and dancers from within her community.

When they are only one or two months old, we lift them in our hands, up and down, and we work their hands, and snap our fingers....By the time they are a year and one-half, they start to put one foot in front of the other....to *zapatear* [to beat time with their feet], and by the time they are grown, the ones who are born for that, they know how. They are filled with the art. Once in a while, one is a great born artist – a real professional – who goes to America, or Madrid, or who has contracts in many places.....But this is a born artist from birth. No academies, nor does anyone teach them [professionally]. (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 94)

Helen Thomas (Thomas, 2003) relates a similar account in her analysis of traditional dances from Cebu City in the Philippines, where, according to the dancers, their dances had no 'special components' – they were simply part of a tradition and they simply 'made it up as they went along'. Upon analysis, however, it was found that there were indeed structures which, by all accounts were not consciously taught (Thomas, 2003, p. 88). I propose that the distinction between informal and formal or professional tuition be made here, as clearly tuition takes place, albeit of an informal nature. This form of cultural transmission is no exception to the norm and it is no surprise that only those identified with extraordinary talent make it in the flamenco world as this is true of many art forms. Quintana and Floyd propose that it is Isabel's own (and, I submit, depreciating) attitude towards her informal tuition methods that supports her claim of 'not teaching' (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 94).

The reality is that the more accomplished Gypsy dancers from Granada do receive more formalised tuition, possibly a process of natural selection. At the time of Quintana and

Floyd's writing, these children were often subjected to 'ruthless exploitation' by parents who saw them as a means to gaining economic freedom as 'marketable flamenco commodities' (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 95):

Cruelly treated, the training of these children is characterised by brutal beatings and tense hours of practice and performance. They rarely attend school and clandestinely move about the Sacro Monte in search of brief moments of rest. (Quintana & Floyd, 1972, p. 95)

Since the sweeping changes in political dispensations since the end of Franco's rule, the general awareness in the world in terms of human rights abuse and the increasing assimilation of gypsies into the mainstream of Spanish life has resulted in a shift in some of the past inequities and the concomitant hardships that accompanied them.

As stated earlier, in the mid-19th century, at the time during which flamenco was in transition between a private form of cultural expression and public, commercial performing art form, academies began to offer tuition in flamenco along with classes in *escuela bolera* (Zalagaz & Cachon-Zalagaz, 2012, p. 5). Spaniards of both Gypsy and *payo* descent continue to attend flamenco academies throughout Spain today. However, in my experience, the material taught in academies is of a technical nature, and not as much a cultural one, with classes filled to the maximum (sometimes as many as 40 people in a class) by rows of (mostly) foreigners at the receiving end of a formulaic delivery of technical exercises or an entire choreographed dance. Explanations about the structure of the *palos* and the roles of the guitarist and singer are not always given; most of the information shared revolves around rhythmic and physical, technical detail. It is my opinion that the suburban *peñas* are the disseminators of the cultural aspects of flamenco in present times, where families and neighbours share culture and tradition with their children.

Peñas formally began as a club system in the late 1950s and currently number around 350 clubs across Andalusia and in other parts of Spain where Andalusians have settled. Each club typically houses between 30 and 60 male and female associates, where members along with the local artists assemble to interchange

lore, discuss, debate, and practice flamenco among themselves. The clubs create an extended consortium, where members and artists from one peña exchange and visit among members and artists of other peñas. In this vein the preeminent dictionary of flamenco<sup>111</sup> claims that peñas have a 'mission' to uphold a flamenco tradition, and to 'save....the art within a pure line of positive evolution (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 69).

One of the few ways outsiders might claim legitimacy or authenticity as flamenco practitioners or holders of flamenco identity is through their pedagogic pedigree in terms of the teachers from whom they have learned the art.

Most of my personal experiences of studying flamenco in Spain and with Spaniards who have travelled to South Africa or London to teach have been in the format of the teacher, or his or her most experienced students, demonstrating in the front of the class, facing the mirror, while the students stand in rows behind and mimic the movements. Contrary to my experience in smaller classes in South Africa, instructions and corrections are mostly general rather than individual, and only the more promising students are given specific correction and occasional encouragement. Those dancers invited by the teacher to find their place near the front of the class have earned that privilege.<sup>112</sup> Tuition is delivered in Spanish, leaving non-Spanish-speaking foreigners to rely on their observational and intuitive skills to learn the technique and style being delivered. Each teacher, depending on his or her personal history and experience, place of birth or childhood learning, and lineage in terms of teachers, has a slightly different set of style and technique requirements. Maria Magdalena,<sup>113</sup> for example, focused on technical strength in each physical learning area of flamenco and *danza*

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<sup>111</sup> Blas Vega, J and Ríos Ruiz, M. (1990) *Diccionario enciclopédico ilustrado del flamenco*. Madrid: Editorial Cinterco.

<sup>112</sup> Maria Magdalena's *vueltas* (turns) class on Friday afternoons was a challenge for most of her students. One Friday in 1993, I happened to follow her *protégé* Belén Fernandez in an exercise for *giras* or *chenée* turns; when I stopped, the class applauded. Not understanding why they were applauding, a colleague explained that I had done more turns in the given time than Belén had done. This amused me, but on Monday morning, Maria invited me to stand at the front of her class, a position I (proudly) held on all of my subsequent trips to Madrid.

<sup>113</sup> Maria Magdalena was an institution at *Amor de Dios*, teaching technical classes for students of flamenco and *danza estilizada*. She stopped teaching around 2000. I took classes with Maria from 1993 to 1999 and I continue to draw on her exercises as the technical base of my teaching.

*estilizada* with dancers from both disciplines attending her classes, seeking improvement in their *braceo* (arm and wrist movements), *zapateado* (footwork), *vueltas* (turns) and *canstañuelas* or *palillos* (castanets). Where Maria insisted on extended but rounded arms with elbows well lifted for strong and defined movements and constantly worked on enhancing the dancers' capacities for arm movements taking place well behind the body, La Truco emphasises retaining the arms in front of the body, and dropping the elbows for softer, more fluid *braceo* (Truco, 2001 - 2009). The variety of individual styles and techniques taught by a range of highly regarded flamenco teachers at *Amor de Dios*, let alone the rest of Spain, is indicative of the complexity of assigning authenticity to any one performance or teaching style of this form.

Heffner Hayes echoes my experiences in her account of a class with Antonia Rojas:

I watch my teacher, her reflection, the other students, myself, and our reflection as I listen to the guitarists and the sound of hands clapping. The teachers' movements serve as a guide, an original sequence that is endlessly permuted throughout the classroom on different dancers' bodies. She watches, altering her decisions to serve as an example for ours. (Heffner Hayes, 2003, p. 109)

The cultural transmission of flamenco is not limited to any one specific cultural group. The famous Gypsy family *Los Farrucos* themselves offer courses in flamenco all over Europe and South America – Gypsy or not, they have become part of the commercial world of flamenco and seem willing to teach anyone who is willing to pay for tuition. The courses at the annual *Festival de Jerez*, held in the heartland of flamenco are attended mostly by foreigners passionate about the art form. *Amor de Dios*, the popular 'home' of flamenco in Madrid, has a largely international student base. The willingness of Spaniards, both Gypsies and *payos*, to teach is uncontested; however, the depth of what they teach, and how much of their culture they are prepared to share with foreigners is not quantifiable. I believe that the responsibility lies with the students to glean as much information as possible by immersing themselves in the culture and traditions of those from whom they learn.

The question 'Who may have the right to participate in flamenco, due to their cultural identity, nationality, context of performance, mastery of style, rhythm and techniques or pedigree of teachers?' remains open-ended. There is no definitive set of criteria prescribing legitimacy of flamenco performance. In my opinion, respect earned as an artist emanates from one's own respect for the form and its traditions, irrespective of the artist's descent or cultural heritage, which manifests through mastery of the form in creating and performing improvised and/or choreographic flamenco works.

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## CHAPTER 4: IN SEARCH OF COMMON GROUND

Research for this dissertation began three years ago when I felt the need to look for answers to questions about flamenco identity, authenticity and legitimacy in South African that had arisen over my past 20 years work as a flamenco artist, choreographer, teacher, and artistic director of *La Rosa*, a dance company whose technical and stylistic base vocabulary is flamenco. The artists that constitute *La Rosa* - choreographers, dancers, musicians and singers - are all South Africans who hail from a diverse range of cultures, ethnicities and socio-economic circumstances. In the eyes of some *flamencos* from Spain, we may be considered *guiris*, outsiders, pretenders to flamenco identity. To Spaniards who are not *flamencos*, we may be a curiosity, so far away from the source of this art form to which their only connection may be geographical. I am the blonde-haired, blue-eyed daughter of an Englishman and a white South African woman of Jewish heritage.

Like Heffner Hayes, I am a foreign flamencophile. I frequently forget this when I choreograph or conceptualise a new work. Spaniards I have worked with have told me that my work has merit, and that Spaniards themselves are not brave enough to risk the kind of work, with the kind of content that I include, for want of being accused of not sticking to what is considered authentic by audiences and funding bodies.<sup>114</sup> Ruiz commented that I am fortunate to be so far away from Spain, as the distance provides me with the space to use flamenco in an artistic and original way. Hayes corroborates these sentiments, stating,

Perhaps the flamenco subject has always “spoken” from the margins, through lyrics, musical ornaments and dance steps, but now more than ever, flamencos are “speaking” – generating new work, performing across the globe, talking about their work and the ideas that inspire them, so that the question of who has access to the “authority” of the “authorial voice” no longer assumes the muteness of the flamenco performer as the object of the colonial gaze [...] To be sure, most flamencos I know find the expectations of audiences whose

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<sup>114</sup> Conversations La Truco after watching a recording of my work *Elementos* in Madrid in 2001 and Joaquin Ruiz after working with me on *La Rosa's* production *Viaje Flamenco* in South Africa in 2007).

experience is limited to tourist venues extremely confining, parochial and sentimental (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 7).

Some of the South African artists who work at *La Rosa* are of Indian, Xhosa, Jewish and Koi San decent, and some carry racially mixed heritages that include Spanish, English, Dutch and other European ancestry. I have chosen flamenco, an art form rooted in a country in Europe, as the vehicle for my life's work. As such, some South Africans may see me as an outsider practising a eurocentric art form that has no relevance in the South African cultural landscape.

Is there a case for a legitimate flamenco identity outside of Spain, and more specifically in South Africa, notwithstanding the geographical distance from its place of origin, and the ancestry of its South African practitioners? I endeavour to answer this by locating myself, my company and my work within the subject matter of this dissertation, and investigating the possibility that I share a set of attributes, skills and experiences with *flamencos* whose identity is uncontested.

I have followed a combination of two methodological approaches, the first commencing many years ago in the form of an heuristic inquiry, a methodology developed by Clark Moustakas (Hiles, 2001). Psychologist Dave Hiles has adapted this approach by introducing the analysis of a limited number of texts to provide data for comparative analysis. I have further adapted this methodology by referring to a broad spectrum of texts that provide a foundation upon which my methodology stands.

The second, an ethnographic approach, which falls under the cultural anthropology umbrella and reflects the qualitative nature of the research, explains my role as the researcher, and method as a participant-observer. As a South African who claims flamenco identity, a reflection on my own trajectory along this path has been used as evidence to test my argument. Referring to her initial study of *bharata natyam*, dance anthropologist Janet O'Shea describes her process as:

...an ethnographic pattern of immersion in a situation [...] and the generation of interpretations from that experience [...] This period of research hinged on questions about choreographic priorities, repertoire, format of performances, training methods, criteria for the evaluation of student and professional dancers, and the “worldview” of the dance field (O'Shea, 2006, p. 127).

Like O'Shea, my approach to my own journey as a participant-observer is a reflection on my immersion in the world of flamenco from the age of 10, providing me with insight on how my experience of over thirty years, as a student of dance both locally and abroad; a performer in Dame Mavis Becker's<sup>115</sup> *Danza Lorca* and my own company, *La Rosa*; a teacher and international examiner of Spanish dance and flamenco; a choreographer and an artistic director. All of these have affected the construction of my own flamenco identity.

I have used Moustaka's 'Summary of phases of heuristic inquiry' (p.27-37) (Hiles, 2001)<sup>116</sup> to provide the framework for the documentation of my research methodology.

### **Initial engagement**

The task of the first phase is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications. The research question that emerges lingers with the researcher, awaiting the disciplined commitment that will reveal its underlying meanings (Hiles, 2001).

The initial engagement with the prospect of conducting this research arose out of an email (See Appendix 4) received from audience member Mr Alex Panzek, after he had seen *Heart of Sand*, a production staged by *La Rosa* at the Artscape Arena in Cape Town in May 2009. The piece deals with issues about our relationship with land as South Africans, the first and

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<sup>115</sup> Dame Mavis Becker (also known as Marina Lorca) born in Cape Town South Africa (1940-) Dancer, teacher, choreographer, founder member and senior examiner of the Spanish Dance Society; lecture in Spanish dance at the University of Cape Town School of Dance; awarded the *Lazo de Dama de la Orden de Isabel La Católica* by the Spanish government in 2000 for her contribution to the preservation of Spanish Dance. Becker was the Artistic Director of her own Spanish dance company *Danza Lorca* (1981 – 1995).

<sup>116</sup> Hiles cites Moustakas, C. (2001) Statement, Available at: <http://unioninstitute.edu/Faculty/FacultyGrad/Moustakas.html>.

the third sections relating to various pieces of legislation enforced by the South African government under the apartheid system,<sup>117</sup> for example *The Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950* affecting forced removals, and the *Land Act of 1913* denying blacks the right to land ownership. The second section described what land means to us – a source of life, and the resting place of the dead. Mr Panzek questioned several aspects of the production, including its subject matter, emotional content, design and structure. Although the issues of the stereotypes that exist around flamenco and the expectations of audiences based on those stereotypes had been the subject matter of numerous conversations with colleagues locally and from Spain, I had not been called upon to articulate my views in writing before. My written response to Mr Panzek's email illuminated for me the importance that I placed on these issues, and was the impetus for conducting this research.

### **Immersion**

The research question is lived in waking, sleeping and even dream states. This requires alertness, concentration and self-searching. Virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion (Hiles, 2001).

The immersion phase covered approximately a year, involving rigorous self-reflection and the simultaneous documentation of conventional research conducted on a broad range of texts including conventional history, Spanish dance and flamenco history, anthropology, ethnography and cultural theory. The self-reflection began with a recollection of my personal history in order to provide a context for my affinity for flamenco. I examined my relationships with the two key figures influencing my personal and professional life – my mother and ballet teacher, Barbara Holden, and my Spanish dance teacher, Mavis Becker,

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<sup>117</sup> The Apartheid system implemented by the South African Nationalist government in 1948 used racial classification as the basis for separating ethnic groups. Policies such as the Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950 and the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950 and the Immorality Amendment Act No. 21 of 1950 ensured that racial segregation was enforced at each and every level of existence, from where people lived, to where and how they were educated, to who they had intimate relationships with, and who they married. Racial classification was based on physical attributes such as skin tone, nostril width and degree of curliness of hair. South Africans were classified as White (pale skinned, straight haired and aquiline features; included Japanese and South Korean 'honorary-Whites), or non-white, which included Native or Bantu (Black - dark skinned, tight curls, wide nostrils and full lips), Coloured (skin-tone neither pale nor dark, rather somewhere in between, curly hair, wide nostrils or flat nosed; included Griquas, Khoi San, Malaysians and Chinese) and Asian (almond shaped or slanted eyes, straight black hair; referred mainly to Indians. The hierarchy of privilege, from highest to lowest was White, Asian, Coloured and Bantu. In this dissertation I have chosen not to use capital letters when referring to these classifications.

extracting those events and experiences that contributed to shaping my identity and skill as a dancer, teacher, choreographer and director. I researched their respective histories in dance, in order to gain some perspective on their experiences, and the impact that these had on our relationships. In the process, I encountered the history of Spanish dance (and thus flamenco) in South Africa, unearthing the foundation upon which my teacher had established her teaching and performance styles.

An in-depth study of texts illuminating Spain's cultural history as well as texts dedicated to the history of Spanish dance, in particular flamenco, have assisted me in locating my own trajectory, and the history of Spanish dance in South Africa within the categories of Spanish dance and within a relevant and comparable time-frame. I was able to track trends and events relative to Spanish dance in South Africa against what was happening in Spain at the time, a useful benchmark for measuring currency. Re-tracing my travels to Spain and my invitations to guest artists to work with *La Rosa* in South Africa, I noted the timing of the milestones that resulted in a shift in styles and technical level of the company, as a result of working with specific individuals.

With my research in mind, I observed my own teaching methodologies and noticed that they had changed over the years, largely influenced by working with Spaniards in South Africa, or on trips to Spain where I was exposed to flamenco's ever changing stylistic trends, fashions and technical developments. An exploration of cultural theory led me to an investigation of cultural transmission, adding to my awareness about what I have learned, the ways in which I have learned it, and the way that I, in turn, have taught what I have learned to my own students. I noted that parallel to this, the content and structure of *La Rosa's* productions after 1998 had shifted from the familiar formulaic structure reminiscent of Spanish dance productions from the 1960s to the 1990s, to an array of multi-disciplinary collaborations that contributed to an ever evolving repertoire, ranging from traditional *tablaos flamenco* stagings to *avant garde* grand-scale dance works.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for a full listing of *La Rosa's* work from 1990 to the present.

I looked to anthropology to explore the notions of identity, tradition, culture, stereotypes, race, ethnicity, status, authenticity and the concept of the insider and outsider in order to populate a list of criteria that could be applied to establish a basis for permission to practice flamenco. This inquiry resulted in a theoretical framework that provides evidence in support of my argument for the legitimacy of flamenco identity outside of Spain.

### **Incubation**

This involves a retreat from the intense, concentrated focus, allowing the expansion of knowledge to take place at a more subtle level, enabling the inner tacit dimension and intuition to clarify and extend understanding (Hiles, 2001).

Unaware that this process constituted an heuristic inquiry at the time, the adoption of my daughter in 2012 resulted in a forced period of incubation, during which research activity ebbed to the level of occasional reading and minimal teaching. Over this period I extracted myself from all of *La Rosa's* performance activities bar one, *Bernarda*,<sup>119</sup> leaving the rest in the hands of staff members. This opportunity to hold the position of outsider permitted me to reflect on the company's achievements to date, and my artistic and academic visions for the company and our training facilities going forward. My choice to collaborate with theatre director Geoffrey Hyland on this project allowed me to hold the view of both insider and outsider, as it afforded me the opportunity to see my work through the eyes of a colleague from a different discipline, opening up a range of skills and improvisational processes that expanded my limits of creative possibility.

The questions around identity and authenticity persisted, however, and resulted in an in-depth discussion at board<sup>120</sup> level regarding changing the company's name from *La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre* to *La Rosa*, incorporating the two entities of *La Rosa Dance Company* and *La Rosa Institute*, in an effort to more accurately reflect the identity and core activities of this company. The words 'Spanish Dance', and what they meant to us as a South African

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<sup>119</sup> *House of Bernarda Alba – a Dance Document*, was directed by theatre director Geoffrey Hyland, was performed at UCT's Hiddingh Hall in July 2011 as part of Directors and Directing, a conference hosted by the Gordon Institute for the Performing and Creative Arts at the University of Cape Town. The production was renamed *Bernarda* for its re-staging at the same venue in November 2011.

<sup>120</sup> As a company constituted under Section 21 of the Companies Act, *La Rosa* is a non-profit organisation and is required to comply with governance structures, such as an advisory Board, as stipulated by the Act.

company based in flamenco - one form of the catch-all genre of Spanish dance - were discussed at length. The final decision to re-brand ourselves as *La Rosa*, without limiting ourselves to Spanish dance, dance theatre or flamenco leaves us open to continue to explore our ever-evolving identity.

### **Illumination and Explication<sup>121</sup>**

This involves a breakthrough, a process of awakening that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition. It involves opening a door to new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge, or new discovery [...] (and) a full examination of what has been awakened in consciousness. What is required is organisation and a comprehensive depiction of the core themes (Hiles, 2001).

Resuming my research after a year, I had the opportunity to re-look at the data I had accumulated during the previous year, particularly in the context of *La Rosa's* re-branding. It became vital for me that my new learnings became manifest in my creative work. I approached the body of literature I had collected with the intention of deconstructing each piece, distilling it into meaningful fragments of information that could be synthesised into a table<sup>122</sup> that reflected the process of the construction of flamenco identity, and indeed, the proposed structure of this dissertation. This was achieved by a re-reading of all the relevant literature and extracting fragments pertinent to one or more areas of interest across all chapters. One of my most significant findings was that some sources related to several areas of interest, for example, a source on history revealed significant information about Spanish national identity, thus contributing to the discussion about the identity formation and the fragmented nature of national identity in Spain, a country with a diverse and rich cultural heritage. It generated parallels that could be drawn with South Africa's diverse racial and cultural heritage and the complexities that ensue when criteria for legitimate claims to identity are sought.

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<sup>121</sup>I have adapted Moustakas' structure, combining the phases he refers to as Illumination and Explication into one, as in reality the two occurred simultaneously.

<sup>122</sup>Refer to Appendix 5 for an example of a version of this table.

## Creative synthesis

Thoroughly familiar with the data, and following a preparatory phase of solitude and meditation, the researcher puts the components and core themes usually into the form of creative synthesis expressed as a narrative account, a report, a thesis, a poem, story, drawing, painting, etc (Hiles, 2001).

The outcome of my inquiry is twofold: the theorising of my praxis, in the form of this dissertation, and a new work entitled *Peña Flamenca*.<sup>123</sup> The challenge of incorporating the notions of identity and authenticity into my next production were resolved when I looked in the direction of my research to inform my work. My mandate was to stage a *flamenco puro* production as opposed to a *flamenco nuevo* theatre piece, as ‘this is what audiences want’.<sup>124</sup> My previous *flamenco puro* staging, *Sentimientos 2*,<sup>125</sup> had left the bitter taste of compromise in my mouth, as although it had earned well at the box office, it had left me artistically empty and my artists unchallenged. Although extremely well executed by dancers and musicians, it smacked of kowtowing to the whims of audiences too lazy to re-educate themselves about where and what flamenco is today. I posed the questions to myself ‘Who are we?’ ‘How do we tell our audiences who we are, without compromising the integrity of our art form; how do we strive for authenticity when our audiences base their expectations on stereotypes generated in the 1960s?’

My work was cut out for me, but the solution to the challenge lay in the tabulation of the information I had gleaned from the literature available to me (refer to 5). I chose to stage the new production in the context of a *peña*, the context that illuminates flamenco identity in its purest sense, with the ostensible absence of an audience, giving the artists a sense of an exchange of flamenco instead of a staged performance and the opportunity for the

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<sup>123</sup> *Peña Flamenca* was staged at the Masque Theatre in Muizenberg, Cape Town in August 2012.

<sup>124</sup> Loosely quoting Board members, intent on La Rosa building new audiences and retaining our loyal following, it has been argued that the contemporary nature of *flamenco nuevo* works such as *Bernarda* do not attract paying audiences in the same way that *flamenco puro* does, as the ‘traditional form’ of dancers, singers and guitarists in ‘typical flamenco’ costumes is what audiences expect to see when they hear of a flamenco performance.

<sup>125</sup> *Sentimientos 2* was staged at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town in November 2009, on the Main Programme at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown in July 2010 and at Pieter Toerien’s Montecasino Theatre in Johannesburg in February 2011.

artists to experiment with spontaneity and improvisation within a given flexible structure. The artists were required to make significant shifts in their mind-sets, performance styles and levels of responsibility, empowering them to learn their pieces through self- and peer-study and to take the risk of solo performance, the essential flamenco format. The concomitant rise in technical and performance skills of the artists was once again evidence of a milestone shift in *La Rosa's* way of working, a way which will inform our next production and our way forward over the foreseeable future.

### **Validation of the heuristic inquiry**

The question of validity is one of meaning. Does the synthesis present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience? Returning again and again to the data to check whether they embrace the necessary and sufficient meanings. Finally, feedback is obtained through participant validation, and receiving responses from others (Hiles, 2001).

This final phase is represented by the real time activities of finalising this dissertation for feedback and final submission. The validation of this research will only be measurable by the usefulness that this document may have for practitioners of any performing art who are regarded as outsiders seeking legitimacy at the source of their form and at home where they practice it.

## CHAPTER 5: FLAMENCO (R)EVOLUTION

The advent of globalisation brought about through travel, rapid and ever-changing advances in technology and the age of the Internet, has changed the face of flamenco in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ‘We can not ignore the effects of globalisation and how it challenges our notion of stable (sic) identities, unchanging traditions, or the processes that affect these changes. Fluidity and flux have become significant metaphors for the way we define our cultures and our world (Shapiro, 2008, p. 253).

One of the major factors contributing to flamenco becoming a world-wide phenomenon is that, since the late 1970s after the fall of General Franco’s regime, students flocked to Spain from every corner of the globe to study flamenco at studios such as *Amor de Dios* in Madrid, the studios along the Calle Rodrigo de Triana in Sevilla and the flamenco schools in Granada, Cordoba and Jerez. The circulation of flamenco films made by director Carlos Saura<sup>126</sup> from the early 1980s until as recently as 2010 has created access to this art form for new audiences across the world. Flamenco has once again become a product for export. But this time it is not merely included as part of a production marketing Spain as a diverse and culturally wealthy tourist destination for Americans ( as it was during Franco’s regime) but rather as the execution of a stand-alone art form produced and presented by *flamencos* as true artists. In 2004, Japan boasted 600 flamenco academies, with 80 000 Japanese flamenco *aficionados* participating in one or other element of flamenco practice (Shikaze, 2010). Flamenco festivals and courses are hosted on every continent; in Africa, South Africa has the largest flamenco ‘footprint’, while there is some interest in the form growing in Botswana<sup>127</sup> and Namibia.<sup>128</sup>

International touring and teaching have become the lucrative staple by which many *flamencos* earn their living (Truco, 2012), with many of their non-Spanish former students

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<sup>126</sup> Flamenco films by Carlos Saura include his collaborations with Antonio Gades *Bodas de Sangre* (1981), *Carmen* (1983) and *El Amor Brujo* (1986), as well as *Flamenco* (1995), *Sevillanas* (1992), *Iberia* (2005) and *Flamenco Flamenco* (2010).

<sup>127</sup> South African flamenco artist and teacher Rosana Maya (Roseanne Maile) has travelled to Botswana to hold a flamenco course.

<sup>128</sup> Spanish activity in the Namibian fishing industry has established a small Spanish community on the coast in Walvis Bay.

now running reputable studios and companies in cities across the world. These companies and studios are, in turn, creating new audiences, resulting in new students, some of whom will travel to Spain to join the ever-expanding circle in which flamenco flows. Given the global expansion of flamenco, it is likely that the ratio of Spaniards to non-Spaniards involved in flamenco may tip towards non-Spaniards. In 2004, out of an estimated 30 students in flamenco dance teacher Miguel Vargas's class, 22 were Japanese (Shikaze, 2010).

In Japan there are very few fans who make no attempt to learn one of the flamenco disciplines. Most take classes of one kind or another, usually dance classes. There are flamenco courses all over Japan. There are studios dedicated exclusively to flamenco, but there are also many classes given at community cultural centers or in rented studios. You could say flamenco is a pretty popular pastime. And many of the students come to Spain to complete their studies. That's how the famous flamenco studio Amor de Dios earned the nickname 'Amor de Buddha'. In the past, almost all of them came to stay in Madrid, but lately more Japanese stay in Sevilla than in the capital. Just in Miguel Vargas's class, for example, there are 22 Japanese. Most are women, aged between twenty and forty. They often leave their jobs to come here, and some even leave their husbands working in Japan and come out here with their children. They stay anything from a week... to several years. When they return to Japan, some turn their hand to teaching (Shikaze, 2010).

The sheer critical mass of non-Spaniards' participation in an art form that they have made their own (sometimes at great sacrifice and cost) indicates the seriousness with which flamenco is regarded by *flamencos* across the globe. This argues that a legitimate flamenco identity exists outside of Spain.

There is, however, a perception that some Spanish *flamencos* have little regard for the foreigners they teach and label them *guiris*, a derogatory term for foreigners coined by *flamencos*. In his 'Manifiesto' (Latorre, 2001), dancer, teacher, choreographer and flamenco

activist Javier Latorre berates these *flamencos*, cautioning them about taking their own 'Spanish-ness' for granted.

Those of us who give classes are the first to have the responsibility for initiating and directing our students, for the most part "guiris", a word from the FLAMENCO argot which is used in a derogatory sense, and which in my personal dictionary means: "a person who comes from afar and loves FLAMENCO", which is why I feel like just another "guiri". Also, I want to remind everyone that the majority of the students are guiris, since a large part of Spanish "professionals", apparently, have only to go out on stage one or two times in order to turn themselves into self-taught artists, and even choreographers (Latorre, Manifesto, 2001).

Latorre has uttered in print what many only talk about in the 'inner circle' of Spanish flamenco teachers and artists. I have suspected that Spanish artists with whom I have worked have felt this way, as I have heard them reflect on the flamenco work of other foreigners to me. I have always managed to find a way to be transparent about this with them, eliciting from them balanced and constructive feedback about my own work, where it is wanting and how to improve it, for which I am always grateful.<sup>129</sup>

Globalisation is not the only factor that contributes to the (r)evolution that flamenco has undergone since the 1970s. The manipulation of the flamenco language and syntax by a new generation of artists has changed the dimensions of flamenco, resulting in the coining of a new term to describe this contemporary version of an age-old form. Dewaal Malefyt, quoting Ángel Álvaro Caballero of the Spanish *El País* daily newspaper, says 'The experimentation and growth in flamenco has risen to such a national and international degree as to inspire the term "a new flamenco era"' (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 65). Indeed, *nuevo flamenco* is the term used to categorise the work of a new breed of *flamencos* who emerged in the later years of the 20th century, bringing a new approach to the art of

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<sup>129</sup> Eliezer Truco, Joaquin Ruiz and the late Javier Cruz have created extensive repertoire on and for my company, La Rosa. Their respective contributions on their visits to South Africa have paved the path that La Rosa has taken since 1999, most recently seen in the production *Peña Flamenca* (2012).

flamenco. *Nuevo flamenco* incorporates the fusion of musical styles, for example, jazz, use of musical instrumentation such as wind, string instruments and piano (Dewaal Malefyt, 1998, p. 65), and dance vocabulary, such as muscular contractions and joint isolations (Truco, 2001 - 2009), hitherto not included as authentic flamenco.

Randal's analysis of Indian dancer Uday Shankar's work provides a parallel that illustrates the current scenario for flamenco. She relays a quote by Shankar himself, published in the *Bombay Chronicle* (circa 1930s) in response to a critique of his work:

The traditions of Indian art have been changing from time to time, and it is impossible to fix upon a particular tradition prevailing at a certain time in the past and call that the only authentic Indian tradition. All that we could properly do [is] to adopt the best from the past and mold it to the requirements of our present-day life (Randall, 2003, p. 102).

This is precisely what 21<sup>st</sup> century innovators such as Israel Galván, Rocío Molina, Javier Latorre and Belén Maya have done. They break the mold through performances that re-contextualise flamenco in the contemporary staging of their works, yet they still 'qualify' as flamenco artists.<sup>130</sup> They use the style and vocabulary of flamenco dance in new, sometimes controversial contexts, pushing the boundaries around perceptions as to the legitimacy and authenticity of flamenco performance. To which criteria do we attribute their legitimacy – place of birth, national heritage, cultural heritage, or training? Or could it be due to their excellence (in every respect) as artists, regardless of any other unspoken parameters that may exist?

In his review in the *New York Times* of Israel Galván's performance of *La Edad de Oro* at the Joyce Theatre, Alastair Macaulay writes:

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<sup>130</sup> This statement is based on the fact that *nuevo flamenco* artists such as these are very frequently included on reputable flamenco platforms such as interviews for major flamenco websites and printed publications including *Alma 100*, to discuss the very contemporary nature of their work, and appear in Carlos Saura's flamenco film series listed in fn. 126.

He gives you - deliberately - the impression that traditional flamenco is too small to contain all he needs to do in terms of rhythm and drama [...]he steers clear of flamenco cliché [...] The title “La Edad de Oro” refers, as a program note reveals, to the widespread idea that in flamenco, as in other areas of art and life, there was once a golden age better than today [...] Mr Galván’s performance suggests at once that this era is impossible to revive, and yet a new golden age can be made today in new dance terms (Macaulay, 2011).

Galván is one of the many *nuevo flamenco* artists included in Spanish film director Carlos Saura’s latest addition to his series of flamenco films *Flamenco Flamenco* (2010). Galván typifies the renegade flamenco artist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, pushing rhythmic, stylistic and technical boundaries, yet conforming somehow to the bounds of recognisability, anchoring his contemporary flamenco choreography in the technique and *soniquete* (soundscape) of *zapateado* (foot beats) that govern flamenco (Dance Media, 2012). Heffner Hayes describes the work of Galván and his sister Pastora as performing

...radical experiments with flamenco structures [...] the “new generation” of flamenco artists inhabit and disrupt the stereotypical image of the flamenco dancer to articulate an authorial position that cannot be contained within a single category. However, they remain in dialogue with both purists and tourists, challenging and educating through their use of traditional vocabularies in hybrid productions of flamenco (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 165).

Their artistic risk-taking lies in the content of the dialogue to which Heffner Hayes refers: for their work to be understood and appreciated by audiences ranging from *aficionados* to tourists, they need to use a vocabulary and a syntax that is identified and recognised as flamenco and is understood by their audiences from across that broad spectrum. The language they use gives flamenco a specific voice. Fluency in that language adds a dimension to practitioners who claim flamenco identity, giving them a voice of authenticity and therefore legitimising their performance.

Rocio Molina is another artist who fits into the category of *nuevo flamenco*. In an interview with Flamenco-World.com, Saura describes the young Molina<sup>131</sup> as an artist 'who dances in a way unthinkable in flamenco a few decades ago' (Flamenco-World Magazine, 2012). Her performance of *Vinática* at the Gran Teatro in Cordoba's guitar Festival in 2011 (Molina, 2012) clearly shows her contemporary take on flamenco. She is costumed in a wrap-around dress over knee-length leggings; she uses a stage set; she demonstrates a unique dance style that is clearly recognisable as flamenco (as it bears the technical and rhythmic structures of flamenco and is performed to flamenco music) but stands apart stylistically from other flamenco performers in its exploration of contemporary additions and dramatic interpretation. Heffner Hayes describes Molina thus:

Few dancers arrive on the scene and catapult themselves into the inner circle of flamenco artists, but Molina has shown a singular determination to accomplish her vision in a short period of time. Perhaps what is most astonishing about Molina is not her incredible technical abilities, which are truly extraordinary in terms of the speed of her footwork and turns, the plasticity of her torso and the expressiveness of her hands, but the kinds of artistic risks she undertakes at such a young age (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 180).

To the *aficionado* what might be perceived as artistic risk may not be understood by ordinary audience members, whose expectations of flamenco fit into the stereotypes efficiently created by General Franco in the 1950s and 1960s. Breaking down these stereotypes by educating audiences about the possibilities of flamenco performance, and creating new ways of staging flamenco without compromising its integrity, may move towards acknowledging a legitimate flamenco identity outside of Spain, and particularly in South Africa.

Javier Latorre rattles the cages of purists with his outspokenness about the state of flamenco in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Latorre, Manifesto, 2001). In response to an interview question (Latorre, 2002) regarding the audiences' reaction to his flamenco comedy

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<sup>131</sup> Molina was born in 1984.

*Rinconete y Cortadillo* (after the novel of the same name by Cervantes), staged at the *Generalife* (theatre) in Granada in 2002, Latorre comments,

It was hard to get around the preconceived ideas. I knew that if the public in the *Generalife* liked this, then it would be sure success in any other theatre, because this is one of the most difficult places in the world to satisfy the public. They laughed where they were supposed to, they enjoyed the production, and they applauded for seven minutes (Latorre, 2002).

Latorre's initial reservations were based on the fact that the *Generalife's* regular audiences were used to attending ballet performances with serious themes (Latorre, 2002). *Rinconete y Cortadillo* was Latorre's attempt at moving away from the tragic themes typical of flamenco stagings to a light-hearted take on life through flamenco. Instead of the musicians and singers taking a back seat, as it were, they were now required to interpret roles as part of the narrative. The production fused dramatic art and pantomime with a range of dance genres including flamenco, classical and contemporary techniques and styles. Given his traditionalist audience, this flamenco production carried enormous risk. This type of venture into the unknown is what keeps flamenco alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the onus is on producers, directors and choreographers to ensure that, in creating their fusions and collaborations, they honour the structures, techniques and features of the form of flamenco in the process.

I had the privilege of studying with *nuevo flamenco* artist Belén Maya in Sevilla early in 1999. Her unique, contemporary analyses and delivery of familiar flamenco vocabulary had a profound influence on my work as a choreographer, impacting on a watershed production by *La Rosa Dance Company* entitled *Renacimiento* or re-birth, and the new direction that *La Rosa* would take. In an online platform for *flamencos* to discuss their work (Maya, 2010) Maya, one of the foremost 21<sup>st</sup> century flamenco dancers who truly straddles the cultural divides that permeate the world of flamenco, begins her statement 'Flamenco is.....' thus:

... flamenco has finally been able to join the international contemporary dance circuits and other hitherto inaccessible places like museums, factories, the

street...Flamenco has become recognised as a contemporary artform and that's very important (Maya, 2010).

Maya's profile on her agent's website (Sonakay, 2012) reads like a *flamenco's* dream. She was born of world-renowned Gypsy flamenco parents Mario Maya and Carmen Mora while they were on tour in New York. Her father, having been employed by Pilar Lopez<sup>132</sup> at an early age, had learned about 'theatricality and stylisation for the flamenco dance' (Pohren, 1988, p. 387). Mario's experience in theatre with Lopez and his studies in contemporary dance in America with the likes of Alvin Ailey and Alwin Nikolais, may well have influenced the fact that his daughter, Belén, was trained in a range of dance forms from contemporary to classical and flamenco. Maya senior used his creativity to voice his preoccupation with themes of repression, victimisation and marginalisation of Gypsies, according to Pohren a grim and somewhat one-sided portrayal of Gypsy life (Pohren, 1988, pp. 386-7). Ironically, Maya senior's work, although intended to contribute to the preservation of Gypsy culture, was indicative of a clean break from Gypsy tradition in terms of presentation, in that it was choreographed rather than improvised and was presented as a staged narrative as opposed to a spontaneous response.<sup>133</sup>

Belén's exposure to her parents' work, to international travel and education and the acquisition of English as a second language, contributes to her work, which although contemporary in terms of staging, stylistic vocabulary and intention, respects the flamenco form. She still works in *tablaos*, performing what may be considered the more traditional version of flamenco, but sees her career as the creation of innovative works. She states:

If we open up our lungs to the other forms of art and customs, flamenco will always have the privilege of being an island to conquer at the international level. Because in its vehemence it encloses the mysterious secret of the mystic, the wild and the untamed. Through its veins rushes the strength of beasts, the sluggishness of rivers and the relentless fire of the bowels of the earth. But if we

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<sup>132</sup> Pilar Lopez was a famed flamenco dancer and company director, famed for producing well-known male flamenco dancers such as Mario Maya, Jose Greco and Antonio Gades.

<sup>133</sup> Maya snr. May have been the first Gypsy to do this.

close ourselves and do not look around us, it will always be an ancient, decadent, bucolic, rigid artform... (Maya, 2010).

Maya's reference to mysticism highlights the concept of *duende*, a factor that is frequently held as the cornerstone of authenticity by *aficionados*. In her statement on 'A lie' (with respect to flamenco) Maya provides her list (of lies) as follows:

That you have to seek the magic of duende, that flamenco (and duende) are only there at night and at parties, that you have to be pretty, and have black hair to be a *bailaora*, that you have to be Spanish to devote yourself to flamenco professionally, that technique is cold...and so many others (Maya, 2010).

This statement negates many of the stereotypes associated with flamenco and opens up a world of possibilities for *flamencos* outside of Spain and on the periphery of mainstream perceptions around this art form. It supports a case for a different set of criteria that might lend legitimacy to the performance of flamenco by South Africans and other foreigners across the globe who are passionate about this genre.

Maya's statement on 'A Wish' reflects the universal state of funding available for dance. She posits:

I wish patrons, producers and investors would appear in flamenco that creates companies so that it stops being a slave to politics and subsidies. I wish the money earmarked for culture and dance would stop being wasted and someone with a good head on their shoulders without an ego would appear who would invest in intelligently and for us artists, with a vision for the future. I wish the seeds would be sown now for upcoming generations of *bailaores* and *bailaoras*,<sup>134</sup> by means of training centres, festivals, scholarships...and that people would stop seeking instant success and easy money (Maya, 2010).

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<sup>134</sup> *Bailaores* and *bailoras*: the direct translation is 'male and female dancers'

Maya's reference to sustainability and her comment regarding the politics associated with funding speaks to the plight of performing arts companies in South Africa grappling with being outsiders, given the stigma of eurocentricity attached to forms they have chosen to practice, for example flamenco dance, classical ballet and opera. It also speaks to the culture of instant gratification that challenges the sustainability of performing arts companies that wish to exist beyond the professional life-spans of their founders. These are some of the issues facing *La Rosa* today that make this company an outsider within the cultural landscape of South Africa.

*Nuevo* artists remain in the flamenco fold, despite their breaks from tradition on several fronts. This is not based on compliance with unspoken parameters that set the markers for authenticity (as discussed in Chapter Three), but rather as a result of their unique artistry, impeccable technical skill and depth of understanding of flamenco. No matter how great the risks they take, their work is a manifestation of their continued respect for flamenco and the heritage it carries. Flamenco identity outside Spain is measured against stereotypical benchmarks that are not true markers for authenticity, such as hair colour, heritage and family name, rendering legitimate claims to flamenco identity by outsiders tenuous. A new set of parameters needs to be articulated in order to grant outsiders, such as South Africans, access to flamenco identity and to enable them to firmly establish themselves as flamenco practitioners in their own right, in their own countries, regardless of bloodline, heritage or location.

## CONCLUSION: FLAMENCO FEET ON SOUTH AFRICAN SOIL

The purpose of this dissertation was to interrogate the notion of flamenco identity and to dispel the myths and stereotypes associated with this dance form. By doing so I intended to establish a case for the acknowledgement of a legitimate flamenco identity in South Africa. In the introduction I defined flamenco in an attempt to familiarise the reader with the rules and structures of this form. In Chapter One I listed the resources I have consulted to support my argument while Chapter Two was an account of the history of Spanish culture from ancient times, with the focus on the history of flamenco up until present times, giving the reader a context for the following chapters. Chapter Three established the theoretical framework on which my findings and recommendations are based, while Chapter Four described my heuristic approach to this inquiry. Chapter Five presented the reader with a discussion on the evolution of flamenco and the emergence of *nuevo flamenco*, with a view to presenting alternatives for the criteria according to which the legitimacy of flamenco performance might be measured. While the preceding chapters illuminated the outsider position of South African flamenco practitioners when compared with insider Spaniards (be they Gypsies or *payos*) this final chapter describes a second space of otherness that exists for South African *flamencos*, as well as my findings, recommendations and concluding thoughts.

The possible reasons for the otherness that exists for South African *flamencos* emerge for a number of reasons, and from various sectors of the South African population. Firstly, on a seemingly superficial level, the term 'flamenco' is foreign to many South Africans: it is often mispronounced as 'flamingo'<sup>135</sup> or referred to as *the flamenco*, like *the salsa* or *the tango*. In fact, the form is frequently confused with salsa, Latin American and tango dance<sup>136</sup> and the words 'Latin flavour' are often used in reviews by critics, as though flamenco falls under the umbrella of Latin dances. This is possibly a simple case of a need for audience and public

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<sup>135</sup> Although this is not the only time that I have heard the confusion between 'flamenco' and 'flamingo', this amusing anecdote illustrates it well: having been invited to participate in a parade for the Cape Town Carnival in 2012, La Rosa prepared a group of learners for a short, repeatable performance which was to take place at intervals during the procession along the way. Last minute preparations by the Carnival organisers delayed our ability to approve the costumes they had designed. On arrival, our dancers were presented with pink and white leotards, skimpy white 'tails' and a headdress resembling enormous pink beaks. Flamingos.

<sup>136</sup> New students often ask if they need a partner to learn this form.

education, with flamenco dance not yet carrying the critical mass in terms of participation that other dance forms such as classical ballet, contemporary dance and Latin American dance styles enjoy in this country.

However, building critical mass requires resources; and access to resources requires recognition of one's legitimacy to practice by public funding bodies and national education structures. A number of black South Africans scarred by South Africa's colonial history view art forms such as classical ballet and opera as eurocentric and question the reasons why South Africans, particularly those who were disenfranchised by the previous government, should participate in performing arts that do not reflect South Africa's own indigenous cultural heritage. This is exacerbated by the fact that during the apartheid era (1948 -1993), only those art forms perceived as eurocentric, such as classical ballet and opera, were supported by public funding (Grut, 1981, pp. 196-197), while indigenous cultural practice and performance was reserved for the tourism industry and 'modern dance' relied on box office takings for their survival.

Currently, public funding agencies such as the National Arts Council increasingly question why ballet, opera and flamenco companies should be publicly funded, assuming that most such companies are run by governance structures headed up by white directors with black dancers used as a 'front for political correctness' (NAC Meeting, 2012),<sup>137</sup> regardless of the companies' histories, policies and succession plans. By virtue of its geographical nomenclature, Spanish dance is grouped with other Western performing art forms; because of how it has historically been presented in South Africa, flamenco is grouped with Spanish dance. This presents a very real challenge for South African flamenco companies seeking to legitimise their work and thus their flamenco identities in this country.

Further, the manner in which flamenco was presented historically in South Africa and across the globe (particularly during the 1950s and 1960s) set the tone for the white, middle-to – upper-income audience's expectation of variety, frivolity and lots of colour. Exposed only to that era's popular review-style 'Spanish dance' presentation format which juxtaposed

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<sup>137</sup> Refer to Appendix 6.

flamenco with other Spanish dance forms, the South African audience of the 1960s has become the (older) paying theatre-going audience of today. This audience prefers a mix of dance and music forms rather than an entire evening of flamenco performance (Neiman, 2012). An outline of the history of Spanish dance and thus flamenco in South Africa will establish the context for how this predicament arose.

### **A taste of Spain in Africa: 1800s to 1960s**

According to Marina Grut, Spanish dance formed a part of South Africa's dance landscape from as early as 1838, when a comical *fandango* (a regional dance from Huelva in Andalucía in the South of Spain) was performed in Cape Town as part of a larger programme (Grut, 1981, p. 14). In 1848 the French *Corps Dramatique*, a troupe of French professional dancers who had been working in Mauritius, performed several ballets as well as the *Bolero of Cadiz* and the *Cachucha*, 'the dance made famous in Paris by Fanny Elssler,<sup>138</sup> Marie Taglioni's greatest rival' (Grut, 1981, p. 14). However, it was not until 1939<sup>139</sup> that flamenco is recorded as having been performed on South African stages, when African Consolidated Theatres brought Spaniard *La Joselito*, her guitarist Juan Relampargo and pianist Pedro Vallribera to perform in Cape Town. *La Joselito's* repertoire included flamenco dances such as *tangos*, *farruca*, *zambra* (a particularly Gypsy *palo*), some *danza estilizada* choreographed to the music of Spanish classical composer Isaac Albéniz,<sup>140</sup> *folklorico jota* (from the regions of Aragon and Zaragoza) and *fandangos* (Grut, 1981, p. 38). The trend set by La Argentina in the 1920s to present a range of Spanish dance styles persisted over the next 50 years beyond Franco's regime, and was to impact on flamenco's perceived lack of independence as an art form outside of Spain until the late 1970s, after the demise of fascist rule.

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<sup>138</sup> Austrian Fanny Elssler and Italian Marie Taglioni were two of the many ballet dancers from the Romantic period (19<sup>th</sup> century) who incorporated Spanish dances from the *escuela bolera*, such as the *Cachucha*, into their repertoires (Grut, 2002, p. 91).

<sup>139</sup> In 1939 Community Concerts Associated brought American Spanish dancer (and sister of La Meri) Carola Goya (Grut, 1981, p. 38). Although Grut states that she performed a wide variety of dances, Goya most likely performed 'Spanish dance' or *danza estilizada* pieces rather than flamenco, as she had been trained by Otero, a *bolero* and *folklorico* teacher from Sevilla, and she was accompanied by a pianist, rather than a guitarist. Another American born student of Otero, Adrina Otera, performed in Cape Town in 1947 and 1948 (p. 43).

<sup>140</sup> Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909).

The fact that Grut's *The History of Ballet in South Africa* (1981) is the only source<sup>141</sup> documenting Spanish dance and thus flamenco in South Africa up to the 1940s is indicative of the (seemingly unlikely) close connection between classical ballet and Spanish dance. This closeness came about due to a number of factors. First, in the 1930s it was the norm for South Africans wanting to pursue a career in dance to travel to London to study. As Grut states, 'In those days most South Africans learned every type of dancing they could when they went to London to study. The age of specialisation had not yet arrived' (Grut, 1981, pp. 189-190). Grut's reference to 'the age of specialisation' is of interest, given that she uses the collective term 'Spanish dance' to refer to at least four distinctive, specialised dance disciplines that fall under this term: *danza estilizada*, *escuela bolero*, *folklorico* and flamenco. Although the apartheid era had not yet dawned, by 'most South Africans' Grut is referring to white ballet dancers from relatively well-heeled backgrounds and the means to travel with the exception of a few coloured dancers such as Johaar Mosaval<sup>142</sup> and David Poole,<sup>143</sup> who managed to get to London (Grut, 1981, p. 34 & 43) regardless of their racial background or social status. Mosaval had danced with EOAN Group,<sup>144</sup> an initiative begun in Cape Town in 1934 by Englishwoman Helen Southern-Halt.<sup>145</sup> The EOAN Group provided an array of cultural pursuits from opera to ballet for Cape Town's coloured community in District Six, with dance classes offered by teachers from Cape Town's white suburbs.<sup>146</sup> Mosaval went on to study at the University of Cape Town's Ballet School,<sup>147</sup> subsequently receiving a bursary to continue his studies overseas, and eventually becoming principal dancer with the Royal Ballet in London (Grut, 1981, p. 34).

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<sup>141</sup> Ziegler's Mercedes Molina documents from the 1940s to the early 1980s, and focuses on Molina more than others.

<sup>142</sup> Johaar Mosaval (1929-) Born in District Six, Cape Town. Mosaval returned to Cape Town after an illustrious career in London, and was the first coloured dancer to perform in a state-funded Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) Ballet at the Nico Malan Opera House in Cape Town (1977) (Grut, 1981).

<sup>143</sup> David Poole (1925 – 1991) was born in Cape Town. He studied dance at UCT's Ballet School and was awarded a bursary to study at the Sadlers Wells School (now known as the Royal Ballet School) in London. He worked extensively abroad, and some years after his return to South Africa, in spite of his classification by the apartheid system as coloured, in 1970 Poole became the Artistic Director of CAPAB Ballet. In 1973 he became the principal of UCT School of Dance, and retained the role of artistic advisor to CAPAB Ballet (Grut, 1981, pp. 400-401).

<sup>144</sup> EOAN comes from the Greek word Eos, meaning 'dawn' (Grut, 1981, p. 34).

<sup>145</sup> Today, Southern-Halt's intentions might be deemed racist and patronising, as, although her purpose was well intended, it was aimed solely for the benefit of coloured people at the exclusion of all others. Southern-Halt had previously 'worked in schools to achieve clearer speech among Coloured people' (Grut, 1981, p. 33).

<sup>146</sup> As a pupil of Eve Horwitz, my mother assisted with the tuition of dance at the EOAN Group in the 1940s.

<sup>147</sup> UCT Ballet School was founded by Dr Dulcie Howes in 1934.

What is of particular interest is the common denominator in the dance education of most of the pioneers of Spanish dance in South Africa, Elsa Brunelleschi. She was a classically trained dancer who taught in London from the 1920s until at least the 1960s.<sup>148</sup> Brunelleschi taught 'Spanish dance' which included *escuela bolera* (Grut, 2002, p. 3), *folklorico* and *danza estilizada* (known at that time as 'classical' Spanish dance) and some flamenco.<sup>149</sup> Grut's first encounter with Brunelleschi indicates how highly Brunelleschi valued classical ballet training, a discipline not required for the study of flamenco<sup>150</sup> but highly beneficial to the study of *escuela bolera* and *danza estilizada*:

Many generations of South African dancers, starting with White [Helen B] and Howes [Dr. Dulcie], were to study with Brunelleschi. Most of them went to study Spanish dance, but I remember my first meeting with her. She thumped her chest and said: "I also teach ballet because, you see, I am of royal blood. I am a pupil of Cecchetti,<sup>151</sup> not the pupil of the pupil of the pupil of Cecchetti – but the pupil of Cecchetti, I am of royal blood!" (Grut, 1981, p. 39).

As Table 6.1 indicates, traces of Brunelleschi's classical influence on South African Spanish dance may be found from the 1930s to the present, as all the Spanish dance and flamenco companies operating in South Africa today have at least second generation links to Brunelleschi. Besides their studies with her, some South Africans studied with Lalagia (also in London), for example Hazel Acosta<sup>152</sup> and Geoffrey Neiman, as well as in Spain, (with various teachers) especially from the 1950s.

Grut names Ivy Conmee, a former pupil of Brunelleschi (Neiman, 2012) and a Johannesburg-based Royal Academy of Dancing (RAD) ballet dancer, teacher and examiner, as the first

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<sup>148</sup> Despite several enquiries, I have been unable to ascertain when Brunelleschi retired from teaching.

<sup>149</sup> Ascertained from conversations with Geoffrey Neiman (Neiman, 2012), Mavis Becker (Becker, 2012) and Hazel Acosta (Acosta, 2010).

<sup>150</sup> I now believe that my own ballet training hampered my understanding of flamenco, although the manner in which I was taught ballet benefited me in developing my own methodologies for teaching flamenco. For example, while the technique turn-out evidenced in ballet is used in *danza estilizada* and *escuela bolera*, in flamenco the legs and feet are usually parallel.

<sup>151</sup> Italian Enrico Cecchetti developed a specific technique of ballet training in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Grut, 2002, p. 110).

<sup>152</sup> Hazel Acosta studied mostly with Lalagia in London.

person to ‘teach authentic Spanish dance’ in Johannesburg (Grut, 1981, p. 161). Conmee was instrumental in establishing the RAD in South Africa, and also initiated the establishment of the Spanish Dance Society in 1965, which offered a syllabus incorporating all forms of Spanish dance. The details of this society will unfold further on in this chapter; the importance of mentioning it at this juncture is to bring to the fore the connection between classical ballet and Spanish dance in South Africa, and the perception of Spanish dance as one cohesive dance form, rather than several independent ones. Grut continues: ‘Had it not been for the South African ballet heritage on which Spanish dance teachers base their approach to the teaching of this dance form, the syllabus could not have evolved as efficiently as it has’ (Grut, 1981, p. 185).

Another factor contributing to the close connection between Spanish dance and classical ballet was the fact that Spanish dance was introduced by Dulcie Howes into the curriculum of the University of Cape Town’s Ballet School (now called the UCT School of Dance) in the early 1940s, where ballet students were taught ballet, Spanish dance and national dance (Hungarian, Polish and Russian folk dances), with the focus on ballet. This range of dance styles enabled the dancers to be able to execute the many and varied *divertissement*<sup>153</sup> included in ballet works since the 1900s, for example, *Coppélia* and *Swan Lake*.<sup>154</sup> As mentioned earlier, renowned romantic period ballet dancers such as Fanny Elssler and Marie Taglioni had included Spanish dances such as the *Cachucha* into their repertoires from as early as the 1800’s (Grut, 2002, p. 91). Included in the list of lecturers in Spanish dance at UCT Ballet School are Jasmine Honoré (1949-1955 and 1975-1990), Elizabeth Coombes (1955-1956), Marina Keet (1956-1975), David Poole, who replaced Keet for the two years she lived in Sweden (Grut, 1981) and Mavis Becker (1990 - present). Many of UCT Ballet School’s graduates went on to teach or perform Spanish dance in different parts of South Africa (refer to table 6.1 for more detail).

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<sup>153</sup> *Divertissement* – a French term for entertainment or amusement, referring to the Acts of ballets that featured a range of styles. For example, in *Swan Lake*, Spanish, Hungarian, Russian and Polish dances are performed.

<sup>154</sup> In the early 1900’s, having been based in neutral Spain for part of the First World War (Bennahum, 2000), Serge Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes* incorporated elements of Spanish Dance into its repertoire.

Spanish dancer Luisillo's<sup>155</sup> country-wide tours of South Africa during the 1950s and 1960s did much to build an audience for Spanish dance in this country. His company's repertoire consisted of the staple common to most large companies touring the world during Franco's regime: *danza eslitlizada*, *folklorico*, possibly some *escuela bolera*, and some flamenco. Luisillo's production style, including 'classical Spanish dance', was easily accessible for the white, ballet-oriented South African audiences. He also took an interest in and nurtured South African dancers, possibly due to the standard of dance he witnessed in 1953 in Mercyne Mavros, a young ballet dancer from Cape Town who had been studying Spanish dance with Elsa Brunelleschi in London (Ziegler, 1983). Luisillo contacted Brunelleschi in desperate need of replacing a dancer in his company *Luisillo Y Teresa Ballets Espagnols*, which was performing on the French Riviera at the time. Brunelleschi sent Mavros. On joining Luisillo's company, Mavros adopted the stage name Mercedes Molina, and went on to become one of the most prolific exponents of all styles of Spanish dance in South Africa over the next 30 years. Ziegler comments:

On the day she joined Luisillo and Teresa, Mersyne had changed not only her name, but her entire heritage. From then on she would be Mercedes Molina from Triana<sup>156</sup> – On the very shores of the Guadalquivir River – according to the biographical notes in programmes, she had her elementary dance lessons in Sevilla, then went to London to further her studies at the Royal Academy and with the famous teacher, Elsa Brunelleschi (Ziegler, 1983, p. 34).

In truth, Molina's training happened in South Africa and later, London; she had not even set foot in Spain prior to her time with Luisillo's company. Given this pretence in the name of authenticity, it is little wonder that South Africans have struggled to form legitimate

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<sup>155</sup> Luisillo (1929 – 2007) was born Luis Perez Davila in Mexico. He worked in Carmen Amaya's company in 1948 and established his own company shortly thereafter (Ziegler, 1983, p. 19). Luisillo was known as a 'Spanish dancer' rather than a flamenco dancer; he is mentioned, but not listed in Pohren's *Lives and Legends of Flamenco*.

<sup>156</sup> Triana is the historical Gypsy quarter of Sevilla on the opposite side of the Guadalquivir River to the Cathedral.

flamenco identities abroad and in this country, unable (or unwilling) to claim flamenco as part of their true, South African identities for fear of being labelled 'inauthentic'.<sup>157</sup>

Luisillo visited South Africa for the first time in 1957, and three times subsequently during the 1960s<sup>158</sup> (Ziegler, 1983). Other South African dancers who worked for Luisillo in his new company (*Luisillo and His Spanish Dance Theatre*, formed in 1955) include Geoffrey Neiman, known as 'Enrique Segovia', Rhoda Rivkind 'Luisa Cortes', Mavis Becker 'Marina Lorca', Hazel Clarkson (who became 'Hazel Acosta'<sup>159</sup> after marrying her first husband, Emilio,<sup>160</sup> also a dancer in Luisillo's company), Sherrill Wexler 'Charo Linares', Margaret Gilmour 'Margarita Moran', Theo Dantes, Bernie Lyle 'Bernardo Soler' and Marilyn Sher (Grut, 1981).<sup>161</sup> Although he was not the only Spaniard to tour to South Africa (Antonio toured here in 1959) (Ziegler, 1983, p. 18), the frequency of Luisillo's visits bears testament to his popularity in the country. Grut states,

Luisillo, who was to have an amazing influence on Spanish dance in many countries, had a profound effect on South African dancers. He made Spanish dance the second most popular dance form practiced, after ballet [...] Luisillo influenced the South African dance scene not only in the standard of production but also in the way in which he compiled a programme and choreographed ballets. He lifted this folk art onto a higher theatrical plane (Grut, 1981, p. 51).

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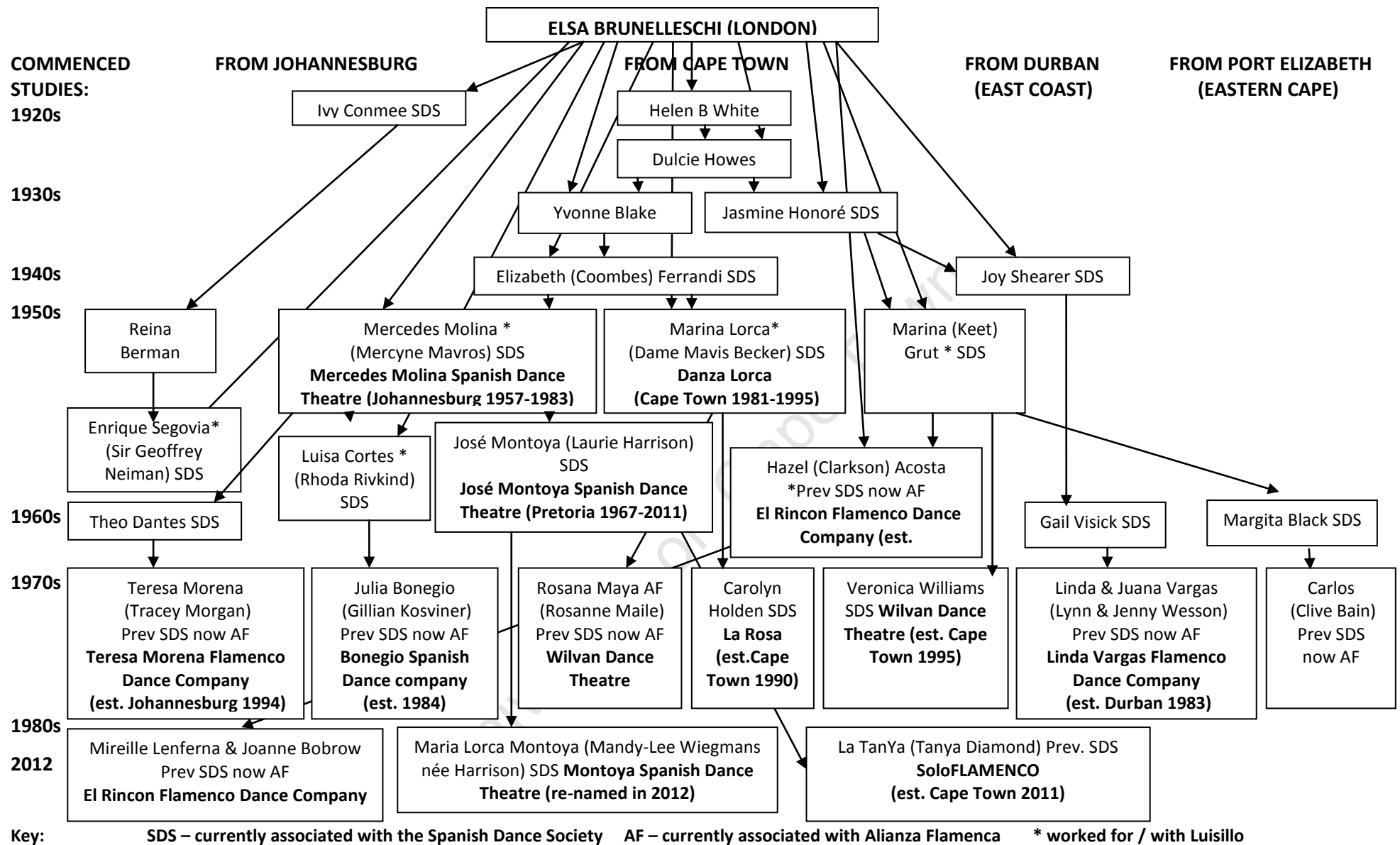
<sup>157</sup> From 1990 to 2005 I used the name 'Carolina Rosa', given to me by guitarist and friend Santiago Luna, as having a Spanish name was the norm amongst South African Spanish dancers. It still forms a part of my curriculum vitae, but since 2005 I reverted to calling myself by my given name. It was at this time that I also stopped colouring my hair dark; I was reclaiming my authentic identity. Some of my dancers have chosen to take Spanish names, and others not, for example, some black male dancers have Spanish names for the purposes of *jaleo*, but do not use them in print for programmes. Spanish artists working with the company have been amused by this tradition, a convention that is not unique to South Africa; I have met *flamencos* from several countries who adapt their given names to fit an idea of flamenco culture.

<sup>158</sup> Luisillo performed in South Africa in 1957, 1961, 1965 and 1966.

<sup>159</sup> Hazel Acosta (né Clarkson) was born in Cape Town in 1942. Acosta was a dancer, teacher, choreographer, former senior examiner of the Spanish Dance Society, co-director of the *Mercedes Molina Spanish Dance Theatre* (1980 – 1983) and is a founder member of *Alianza Flamenca* (1994).

<sup>160</sup> Emilio Acosta (1941 -) is a Spaniard of Gypsy descent who had come to South Africa with his wife Hazel Acosta in 1968. Emilio never received formal dance training. A member of the *familia* Fernandes, he learned by watching older members of his family dance (Acosta, 2010).

<sup>161</sup> A predominance of Jewish names in the list of successful Spanish dancers in South Africa may have something to do with flamenco's links to Jewish heritage, or could be attributed to the fact that it was common in the Jewish community to expose children to artistic pursuits such as ballet, which was closely connected to Spanish dance in South Africa, particularly from the 1960s.



**Table 6.1. A genealogy linking London teacher Elsa Brunelleschi and South African Spanish dancers since the 1930s, to the artistic directors of existing South Africa Spanish dance and flamenco companies. Please note: Brunelleschi may have been one of several Spanish dance teachers with whom dancers studied, especially from the 1950s. Information gleaned from Grut (1981), personal recollection and conversations with dancers.**

I disagree with Grut's referral to Spanish dance as a singular 'folk art', as it is an umbrella term for at least four distinctive dance disciplines, as stated throughout this dissertation. Like La Meri,<sup>162</sup> Grut measures the status of this 'folk art' against ballet, subscribing to the hierarchy that governs where 'ethnic art' and 'high art' may sit (Kealiinohomoku, 1969). Grut implies that the way Luisillo staged Spanish dance 'elevated' it from its original 'lower' context of (in the case of *folklorico*) the *plaza* (village square), and (for flamenco) the *peña* or *tablaó*. In my opinion, despite the fact that they contributed substantially to the increased popularity of Spanish dance across the globe, aiding Franco's intention of using dance as a means to market Spain as a tourist destination, by 'elevating' Spanish dance forms out of context, Luisillo and others like him, (for example, José Greco) compromised the authenticity of these forms. By doing so, I believe he compromised his own legitimacy as a practitioner of any of the forms falling under the term 'Spanish dance'.

During the 1960s, the period during which Spanish dance was gaining popularity in South Africa and other countries outside Spain, the South African nationalist government's apartheid policies ensured that black and coloured children in South Africa had little chance of participation in extra-mural dance activities. Due to the Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950, former occupants of District Six in Cape Town had been moved to separate locations on the Cape Flats, reserved for coloured people. Here poverty was rife, and access to facilities such as dance studios and theatres was all but non-existent.

Coloured children had a marginally better chance of participating in formal dance lessons if they had the means to attend classes offered by the EOAN Group, initially situated in District Six. Promising students from the EOAN Group were offered places at the UCT Ballet School, and some, like Mosaval and Poole, achieved excellence internationally, while others qualified as teachers and remained active in the local community performing arts sector. As the cost of travel from the Cape Flats to the city centre became prohibitive (Williams, 2012) and progressively fewer coloured people lived near District Six, the EOAN Group eventually moved to Athlone, a suburb on the outskirts of privileged southern suburbs of Cape Town known as Rondebosch and Claremont, which were reserved for occupation by whites. In

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<sup>162</sup> In Chapter One, La Meri is quoted as saying 'For this art is born of a folk, and that very folk, being ignorant, are unaware of the importance of artistic integrity (La Meri, 1948, p. 85).

1969 Joseph Stone donated a substantial sum for the construction of an auditorium in Athlone,<sup>163</sup> establishing a base for the EOAN Group who were seen to represent<sup>164</sup> coloured performing arts in Cape Town. During the 1970s Spanish dance was taught at the EOAN Group by Dicky Jaffer, by way of the Spanish Dance Society's syllabus (Grut, 1981, p. 34).

Spanish dance's 'Cinderella status' to ballet in the 'hierarchy' of dance forms (Grut, 1981, p. 51) suggested that dancers who demonstrated a talent for dance, but did not have the normative body shape or the arched feet required by the stringent physical parameters demanded by ballet, were presumed to have the potential to 'do nicely at Spanish'.<sup>165</sup> Contemporary dance for children was relatively unknown during the 1960s, and while 'modern dance'<sup>166</sup> and tap dancing were popular,<sup>167</sup> ballet students were generally directed towards Spanish dance because of its perceived closeness to ballet (as discussed earlier in this chapter). This is in sharp contrast to the reputation held by flamenco during the 1950s, when it was seen as tainted due to Franco's manipulation of the performing arts and its association with prostitution.

### **Building Audiences through Partnerships – Spanish dance and the Performing Arts Boards in the 1970s**

Based on my research methodology of heuristic inquiry, I have chosen to incorporate narrative and anecdotal material of my own experience. While I draw on history and theory to frame this dissertation, my own experience as a *flamenco*, artistic director of a dance company devoted to the form, and as teacher of flamenco and a curriculum developer, my unique position is integral to the argument.

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<sup>163</sup> Joseph Stone Auditorium, now the home of the EOAN Dance Company.

<sup>164</sup> Some people classified as 'coloured' rejected the notion of classification and saw the EOAN Group as a racist structure catering for only one 'group' of people (Williams, 2012).

<sup>165</sup> This is my recollection of my own mother's words regarding my potential as a dancer. Barbara Holden was my ballet teacher from 1969 to 1980.

<sup>166</sup> Holden (snr) was a member of the International Dance Teachers Association that taught a modern dance syllabus in South Africa, drawing on the techniques of American modern dance icons Martha Graham, Lester Horton and Jazz dance exponents of the time such as Luigi.

<sup>167</sup> Cape Town hosted dance Eisteddfods from as early as the 1930s in Ballet, Modern (previously known as Musical Comedy) and Tap. During my youth flamenco was included in the Ballet Eisteddfod under the small catch-all category of Spanish Dance.

My point of entry into the world of Spanish dance, and thus flamenco, came at the age of 10. I attended the performance of triple bill programme in December 1972, directed by Marina Keet<sup>168</sup> at Artscape, or what was then known as the Nico Malan Opera House.<sup>169</sup> It was presented by CAPAB Ballet<sup>170</sup> which, along with the Nico Malan, formed part of the Performing Arts Board of the province of the Western Cape,<sup>171</sup> a structure set up by the South African Nationalist government of the time. Until as late as 1974 (Grut, 1981, p. 229), admission to the Nico Malan was reserved for white audiences and white artists only, limiting the exposure to productions of ballet (then including Spanish dance), opera, theatre and music to a fraction of the South African population, and impacting on the country's potential to develop audiences and enhance the skills of performing arts practitioners across all race groups.

The programme I saw in 1972 consisted of three Spanish dance pieces. The first was Keet's version of *Misa Flamenca* (Flamenco Mass), performed to orchestral music (composed by José Torregrosa) by the CAPAB Ballet dancers, with guest Spanish dance artists Mavis Becker and Hazel Acosta. The second piece, entitled *Fiesta Manchega* (Manchegan Festival) was in the *folklorico* style of Manchega, a province in the central region of Spain. Using orchestral music based on traditional Manchegan music and composed by Jacinto Guerrero, it was

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<sup>168</sup> Marina Keet, now known as Dame Marina, was born in Calvinia, South Africa (1934-) She is a dance historian, choreographer, producer, founder member and senior examiner of the Spanish Dance Society and former lecturer in Spanish dance at the University of Cape Town School of Dance. She was awarded the *Lazo de Dama de la Orden de Isabel La Católica* by the Spanish government in 1989 for her contribution to the preservation of Spanish dance.

<sup>169</sup> The Nico Malan Theatre Centre opened in 1971 at the height of the apartheid era. Now known as Artscape, it was the permanent performance venue for the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) and was a state funded entity housing companies for ballet, opera, music and theatre (Grut, 1981, pp. 227-8), all of which reinforced eurocentric norms for the South African performing arts.

<sup>170</sup> CAPAB Ballet was formed in 1963 out of the University of Cape Town Ballet Company started by Dr Dulcie Howes in 1934 (Grut, 1981).

<sup>171</sup> The South African performing arts councils were set up in 1963 for the purpose of establishing provincial boards 'to administer companies for opera, ballet, theatre and music' using state funding made available through national and provincial administrations (Grut, 1981, p. 196).

performed by members of the ballet company, and featured the late Phyllis Spira<sup>172</sup> as the soloist.<sup>173</sup>

The sharp contrast between the third piece in the triple bill and all I had ever known dance to be, touched me deeply. Entitled *Cuadro Flamenco*, and based on the format of a *cuadro*, the piece was directed by Gypsy Emilio Acosta. The featured guest artists in the *cuadro* were dancers Mavis Becker, Hazel Acosta and Emilio Acosta, guitarist Pablo Navarro (the late Paul Evans) and Spanish *cantaor* (resident in Johannesburg) Andrés Paez (CAPAB, 1972). All of them, with the exception of Paez, directly or indirectly were to have an impact on my future as a young dancer, teacher and choreographer. In contrast to the orchestral musical pieces that accompanied the ballet, to which I was accustomed, the strains of the *toque*, the rawness of the *cante*, the *soniquete* of the *zapateado* and *palmas*, and the natural spontaneity of the *jaleo* caught my attention. Somehow this shy 10-year old was bitten by that intensity so characteristic of flamenco. Although it was the first time I had heard and seen flamenco music and dance, it struck a resounding chord within me, drawing me in, and irrefutably directing me towards what would ultimately become the vehicle for my life's work.

Considering dance as a career in South Africa in the 1970s was the reserve of the privileged few: only white ballet dancers with the required physical attributes were employed by the ballet companies set up by the provincial arts councils. Contemporary, Spanish dance and commercial African song and dance companies<sup>174</sup> fell outside the auspices of governmental structures, operating as privately funded entities where they could. Passionate about dance as a youngster, having been raised by a professional dancer and teacher, I learned from an

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<sup>172</sup> Phyllis Spira (1943 – 2008) was born in Johannesburg. She had been trained in ballet and Spanish Dance by Reina Berman in Johannesburg, and had performed with the Mercedes Molina Company in 1958 before joining the Royal Ballet in London in 1959. She became *Prima Ballerina Assoluta* of CAPAB Ballet, now known as Cape Town City Ballet.

<sup>173</sup> An assumption exists that training in ballet is an excellent basis for all Spanish dance forms; I disagree with this, as when I travelled to Spain to study, I learned *folklorico (jota)* with Pedro Azorin at Amor de Dios, who had to 'undo' my *jota* style and technique, which had been hampered by classical training rather than enhanced by it. For example, as in flamenco, the technique of turn-out prevalent in ballet is not necessary for *jota*, where the legs and feet are usually parallel.

<sup>174</sup> Contemporary companies such as *Jazzart* and *Sonya Mayo*, the *Mercedes Molina Spanish Dance Theatre* and the companies established for the performances of African music and dance productions such as *Ipi nTombi* which was created for tourism and white audiences. This is reminiscent of Franco's (ab)use of flamenco for the purposes of marketing Spain to foreigners, discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

early age the discipline required in order to succeed. I also learned relatively early that, despite my love of ballet, I would not become a ballerina.<sup>175</sup> Although she discouraged me from pursuing a career in performing or teaching dance, my mother's desire for me to find my niche in a form that would be more accessible to me, given my body-type, was satisfied by that visit to the theatre in 1972. However, for her, it came five years too soon. She promised that once I had passed my RAD Elementary ballet examination at the age of 15, I would be free to start classes in Spanish Dance. On the day my certificate confirming my examination results arrived in the post, I enrolled for Spanish Dance classes with Mavis Becker and commenced my studies with her in 1977.

At the same time as my own introduction to dance in the 1970s, coloured students in the Western Cape were being exposed to ballet through the Department of Coloured Affairs (established in 1958), one of the tools created by the nationalist government to perpetuate apartheid policies by ensuring the separation of education facilities for coloured and black learners from those of their white counterparts.<sup>176</sup> Coloured and black students wishing to pursue tertiary qualifications in dance were accepted at the University of Cape Town's Ballet School on the proviso that they applied for permits. For instance, in 1971, Veronica Williams,<sup>177</sup> enrolled at the UCT Ballet School under the permit system, and commenced her studies in Spanish dance with Marina Keet and subsequently Jasmine Honoré. Post-apartheid, Williams is an examiner for the International Spanish Dance Society and director of Wilvan Dance Theatre.<sup>178</sup>

Due to sanctions imposed on South Africa for its apartheid policies, foreign artists became increasingly reticent about touring South Africa. Sustaining the 'Western' performing art forms such as ballet and opera that were valued highly by South Africa's white population

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<sup>175</sup> My mother had intimated early on in my training that my body would never be 'right' for ballet, and so she encouraged me to be realistic about my dreams of a career in dance. This attitude persists in ballet to this day in South Africa.

<sup>176</sup> The Bantu Education Act, Act 47 of 1953 governed the separate (and inferior) education of Black learners and students. Coloured Education was controlled by the Department of Coloured Affairs.

<sup>177</sup> Williams's introduction to dance at the age of three at the EOAN Group in District Six resulted in a passion which, after many years of not having access to facilities, was re-ignited by her attendance of ad-hoc evening ballet classes at UCT in 1968. Williams was encouraged to enrol as a full-time student by Dr Dulcie Howes. Williams' philosophy on life rejects her racial classification as 'coloured'.

<sup>178</sup> Until 2011, Wilvan was based in the coloured area known as Kensington but was open to students from all racegroups.

became the responsibility of the performing arts boards. The partnership between Spanish dance and the performing arts boards had its heyday during the first half of the 1970s, when CAPAB Ballet, PACT Ballet, NAPAC Ballet and PACOFS<sup>179</sup> staged full Spanish productions, using ballet dancers from their own companies with guest appearances by Spanish dancers, as in the case of CAPAB Ballet, or providing the financial backing for a Spanish dance company to present a season with their own dancers, as in the case of the Mercedes Molina Spanish Dance Theatre.<sup>180</sup> Typical of this period, productions were structured along the lines of those presented by Luisillo on the 1960s, most of them including at least two of the Spanish dance forms, for example, *danza estilizada* and flamenco. By 1975, funding constraints resulted in Spanish dance no longer being included in programming by the performing arts boards, leaving Spanish dance companies and artists with the very real choice of continuing without the financial assistance of the provinces, or folding. The Mercedes Molina Spanish Dance Theatre continued into the early 1980s, with Geoffrey Neiman, Rhoda Rivkind and Hazel Acosta contributing to the artistic direction thereof after Mercedes' death in November 1978. The company closed in October 1982.

Although her comment refers specifically to Spanish dancers in Cape Town, Grut sums up the climate for Spanish dancers throughout South Africa in the early 1980s thus:

They have no company and are not supported financially, thus they dance at great personal cost, and all teach or work at some other profession to earn their living. Nevertheless, they manage to perform one or more seasons a year to the delight of the audiences they have won. Many of these dancers are married and have families; it is no easy task to run a studio, keeping house and family going, and give a fresh seemingly effortless performance after gruelling rehearsals fitted in at odd hours of the day or night. Yet the Spanish dancers somehow do this. They are judged by press and public alike on the same level as professional

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<sup>179</sup> CAPAB, the Cape Performing Arts Board; PACT, the Performing Arts Board of the Transvaal (now Gauteng), NAPAC, the Natal Performing Arts Council (now KwaZulu Natal) and PACOFS, The Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State.

<sup>180</sup> Mavis Becker's *Danza Lorca* enjoyed occasional support from the Provincial Arts Councils of the Western Cape and Orange Free State into the 1980s.

companies that rehearse regularly all day, six days a week.' (Grut, 1981, pp. 57-58).

### **Dreams and Realities: Spanish Dance in South Africa in the 1980s**

During the next decade two project-based, privately-funded Spanish dance and flamenco companies emerged in South Africa: Mavis Becker launched *Danza Lorca* in July 1981, presenting programmes which included all forms of Spanish dance; and Hazel Acosta started *Rincon Flamenco* in 1987, focusing solely on the performance of flamenco. In 1981, whilst studying law at the University of Cape Town, I was cast in *Impresiones 2*, a *Danza Lorca* production scheduled for staging at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch. Becker had established a working relationship with José Antoñio Ruiz, then principal dancer, and twice subsequently, the Artistic Director of the *Ballet Nacional de España* (mentioned in Chapter Two), who appeared as guest artist and choreographer in my debut performance with Becker's company, early in 1982. The experience of working with Ruiz was pivotal in my dance career and shaped my choices over the next five years. I changed from a degree in Law to a Bachelor's degree in Psychology in order to fulfil my own need to study and perform dance and my mother's need for me to have 'something to fall back on' (Holden, Interview, 2010), given her own experiences and resultant fears for my future. Ruiz's way of working echoed my mother's. His attention to detail in every aspect of his work, and the way he developed artistry in the dancers with whom he was working, had me view Spanish dance in a way that I had only experienced with ballet previously, through witnessing the teaching styles and artistic product delivered by my mother and the late David Poole, the artistic director of CAPAB Ballet at the time. In my experience, Holden senior, Poole and Ruiz had in common the ability to draw out each dancer's individual ability to interpret roles while maintaining the intention of the choreographer, thus nurturing the dancer's growth as an artist. Although Ruiz's style was not *flamenco puro*, the notion of the possibility of my own artistic individuality stayed with me and further fuelled my love for Spanish dance and flamenco. I was privileged to have had further opportunities to perform alongside Ruiz in *Danza Lorca* productions in 1984 and 1995.

Well aware that if I planned to have a career in Spanish dance it would need to be through my own efforts, as there were now no full-time professional Spanish dance companies to

employ me, I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Cape Town in 1983 and was employed in various industries over the next two years, including advertising, television production and recruiting. In 1985 my mother established *The Dance Centre* in an effort to create a learning facility that offered a selection of dance forms including ballet, contemporary, tap, Spanish, and drama classes. I seized the opportunity to teach, and earned my first teaching qualification, the Spanish Dance Society's *Instructor de Baile*, in 1986. As in the 1970s, most of our students were from privileged backgrounds with a large Jewish contingent attending classes, possibly due to legacy of the previous generation of Jewish South African Spanish dancers such as Mavis Becker. In 1987 the Dance Centre faced financial challenges, and a decision was taken by my mother to close its doors. While my mother re-opened her studio elsewhere, I ventured out on my own, wanting to establish my own identity in the dance world. I sought part-time employment as an office worker to cover my living costs, and opened my own studio, *Estudio de Baile Español*.

I continued to perform with Becker's company through the 1980s and was cast mostly in regional and classical dance roles, as these were my perceived areas of strength, given my classical dance training. In the mid-1980s I chose to further my studies in dance teaching with Clive Bain.<sup>181</sup> Bain had worked extensively in Spain with Antoñia Granados's company, performing works in all of the Spanish dance forms. Not having been trained as a ballet dancer, Bain's strength was flamenco, the very style that had drawn me in, and had, as yet, remained elusive to me as a professional performer. Focussing on the development of my flamenco style and technique, I completed my Spanish Dance Society teaching qualifications under Bain's tuition, earning my *Profesor de Baile* in 1989.

For many years I shared Mercedes Molina's dream of Spanish dance in South Africa being elevated from the status of a pastime or hobby to a profession. In 1958 Molina declared, 'If South Africa can have ballet dancers like [Nadia] Nerina and choreographers like [John] Cranko, I can see no reason why we cannot also turn out international Spanish dancers' (Ziegler, 1983, p. 5). *The Mercedes Molina Spanish Dance Theatre* had attempted to run as a full-time company in Johannesburg during the early 1980s, but this was short-lived due to

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<sup>181</sup> Clive Bain, also known as *Carlos*, is a former examiner of the Spanish Dance Society and was one of the founding members and currently *profesor consultor* for *Alianza Flamenca*.

limited access to funding. In 1990, when I believed that my students had reached a level at which further exposure to a regular, professional performance environment was required in order for them to progress I launched *La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre*.

### **La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre: 1990 – 1999**

*La Rosa* was run as an ad-hoc, part-time company as it was initially not financially sustainable, but demonstrated from the outset a strong professionalism which it maintained through a consistent work ethic held by the dancers and management. As Artistic Director of *La Rosa* since 1990, my approach to flamenco has been one of trial-and-error, with each new work staged by *La Rosa* being a fresh enquiry into the identity of my company, its artists and its repertoire. Heffner Hayes's experience as outsider/insider echoes mine when she states, 'Writing and dancing the history of another culture from a position of relative privilege, I am simultaneously outside and inside, named and not named. (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 12). My process in terms of artistic choices over the past 22 years has been an attempt to establish *La Rosa's* identity as a South African flamenco dance company. This, at times, has felt foreign and even fake.

*La Rosa's* inaugural season, *Celebración de España*, opened on the 1 March 1990 at the Nassau Centre in Newlands, Cape Town. The formulaic approach to the content of the programme was informed by my experience as a student of the Spanish Dance Society, requiring proficiency in all aspects of Spanish dance, and as a dancer in Mavis Becker's company, *Danza Lorca*. In retrospect, it was reminiscent of the tried and tested recipe for Spanish dance productions I had seen before: the opening group piece item, a piece or two in the *danza estilizada* style, one of these performed by the leading soloist, sometimes incorporating short pieces of *escuela bolera*. This would have been followed by a piece performed by smaller groups from the *cuerpo de baile*.<sup>182</sup> Thereafter, the male and female soloists might perform a duet, and a regional dance piece using the entire *cuerpo de baile* closed off the first half. The second half of the programme either took the form of a narrative 'ballet' or a 'flamenco scene', depending on whether flamenco musicians and a singer were available. This formula was similar in content and structure to that of the

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<sup>182</sup> *Cuerpo de baile* is the *corps de ballet* or chorus.

commercial Spanish dance companies<sup>183</sup> operating mostly on the Southern and Eastern coasts of Spain, Franco's legacy of the commercialisation of Spanish dance persisting into the 1980s. In order to work in these companies, dancers were expected to be proficient in all aspects of Spanish Dance, with few opportunities for cutting their teeth as soloists, as the *bailarín* or *bailarina* of the company (usually the owner) was the star, and there was no room in a programme this diverse for others to come through the ranks as soloists.

In 1990 I also took my first study trip to Spain at the end of a short tour of Austria with *Danza Lorca*. Although I attended a week-long course in all forms of Spanish dance in Sitges on the East Coast of Spain, it was a single class with the legendary Maria Magdalena at *Amor de Dios* at the end of our stay in Madrid that turned my world around, and provided me with the motivation to return in 1993. Maria's energy and attention to detail and her rigorous exercises honing the techniques essential to mastering the form became the one of the cornerstones of my teaching methods in the years ahead.

My daytime office job supported my passion, but it also affected the pace at which I could make the changes that I believed would enable me to raise the standard of Spanish dance in South Africa comparable to the level I had seen in Madrid. *La Rosa's* second season *Sueños* (Dreams) was staged at the Little Theatre at UCT in 1992. The content and structure of this production changed little from the one before except that, in an attempt to introduce an element of authenticity, a local singer with an interest in flamenco who had dabbled in opera was employed as *cantaor*. The employment of an untrained *cantaor* was an unsuccessful exercise - and a lesson in patience and quality control - that exposed my scant knowledge of the art of the *cante*. This impressed on me the need to develop this aspect of flamenco performance in South Africa.

I made my first solo trip to Spain in 1993. At *Amor de Dios*, I immersed myself in Maria Magdalena's technique classes, and took flamenco classes with renowned teachers Ciro, Carmela Greco and La Tati, and *jota* classes with *Maestro* Pedro Azorin. It was with La Tati

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<sup>183</sup> Rosana Maya (born Rosanne Maile) worked for the company *Paco Mundo y Maria Velasquez Clasico Español* in Spain in the early 1980s and confirmed that this was the formula of many such companies at the time (Maile, 2012).

that I ‘found’ flamenco for the first time; she was the first person with whom I studied flamenco who was *not* trained in some form of ‘classical’ dance.<sup>184</sup> This suggested new possibilities for my teaching in South Africa, opening my eyes to how much more there was to learn about flamenco, especially about the world of the *cante*, which was non-existent in South Africa, bar occasional performances in the 1970s by Molina’s company. I also realised that I was not alone, and that possibly 20% of the students in my classes were foreign. Works by Greco and La Tati found their places in *La Rosa*’s repertoire, and were performed for the first time in *Alegría* at the Nico Malan Theatre in 1994.

In 1996 I expanded my study destinations in Spain and took three of my senior dancers<sup>185</sup> with me, working in Sevilla in Andalucía with Manolo Marín and his assistant Javier Cruz, and returning to Madrid to revisit the teachers I had worked with before. For the first time, the burden of having to retain everything that I had learned became a responsibility shared amongst four people. This gave me time to focus on more detail in an attempt to absorb style and technique rather than content alone. I became exposed to *nuevo flamenco* for the first time, in the form of music (available on compact disc) that was not available in South Africa. The music of flautist Jorge Pardo, the ‘band’ Ketama and guitarists Manolo Sanlúcar and Vicente Amigo who partnered with orchestras and classical composers, expanded my view of flamenco music, removing some of the limitations I had placed on my own work in terms of musical accompaniment. Echoing Heffner Hayes’s experience, ‘As I became invested in the tradition as a scholar and practitioner, I realised that I was implicated in perpetuating assumptions that had a material impact on the artists I admired and the tradition I loved’ (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 2). I realised that, in order to establish myself and my company as legitimate practitioners of flamenco, I needed to risk breaking away from the conventional formulaic structures embedded in my work.

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<sup>184</sup> La Tati was the child prodigy of the famous La Quica, the Madrid-based teacher and mother of Mercedes Leon. La Tati hung around La Quica’s studios, having been spotted performing at neighbourhood festivals by La Quica. At the age of nine, when La Quica needed a replacement teacher, La Tati, who had been observing her classes from the sidelines, volunteered. The incredulous La Quica took La Tati under her wing, and by the age of twelve she was performing professionally at the *tablaó La Zambra* in Madrid. La Tati teaches flamenco at *Amor de Dios* today (Pohren, 1988, p. 400).

<sup>185</sup> Nicole Cornfield, Lexi Parolis and Jocelyn Brashaw.

Later in 1996 *La Rosa's Recital Flamenco* was staged at the Theatre on the Bay in Camps Bay, Cape Town, in an all-flamenco show featuring Spanish guest artist Angel Rojas.<sup>186</sup> It incorporated *Nuevo flamenco* music sourced on my recent trip to Spain, with choreography inspired by the new and dynamic styles recently learned. This was the first time that *La Rosa* had ventured away from the formulaic 'review' format that had prevailed in the presentation of Spanish dance in South Africa since the 1950s.

Perhaps because *La Rosa* was established towards the tail-end of the apartheid era, the demographic make-up of the company included white and coloured dancers since its inception, leaning towards a white majority, with some coloured dancers making up the minority. A conscious move to redress the historical imbalances prevalent in Spanish dance in South Africa resulted in an application to the Arts and Culture Trust to assist with the establishment of *La Rosa's* first development project in 1997, when five young women from Dance for All<sup>187</sup> in the township known as Gugulethu started their training with *La Rosa* in Spanish dance. This initiative increased to several off-site projects over the years, and *La Rosa* currently teaches flamenco to more than 100 children from disadvantaged communities weekly.<sup>188</sup> All of *La Rosa's* male dancers and several of the women (including one of the original five young women) hail from these initiatives. Many dancers from the townships demonstrate a compelling affinity for flamenco, despite challenges of learning an already foreign dance form in their second language. *La Rosa* soloist Luvuyo Simandla, a young man from Gugulethu, claimed his flamenco identity while in his teens, determined to master the form despite starting classes later than his peers. Simandla has subsequently qualified as a teacher and has forged a clear flamenco identity both as a teacher and as a performer.

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<sup>186</sup> Rojas's father died during the run of *Recital Flamenco*; he returned to Madrid mid-run, and was replaced by his colleague and friend Carlos Rodrigues. Miguel and Carlos had recently launched their company *Nuevo Ballet Español*, now called *Rojas & Rodrigues*. Classically trained, their work was a hybrid of *danza estilizada* and *Nuevo flamenco*.

<sup>187</sup> Dance for All is an organisation that was established by Philip Boyd and the late Phyllis Spira to spread the teaching of ballet beyond the white suburbs and into the impoverished black townships on the periphery of Cape Town.

<sup>188</sup> *La Rosa* currently teaches weekly classes in association with Likwezi in Nyanga East, Dance for All in Gugulethu and Athlone, Chris Hani High School in Kayelitsha, The Amy Biel Foundation in Gugulethu and Alicedale Primary School in Athlone. Athlone is a coloured township, while the others mentioned here are black townships.

Until 1997 *La Rosa* sourced funding through private benefactors. In 1998 *La Rosa's* first season fully funded by the Distell group, was staged at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch, with guest artists from Sevilla: dancer and choreographer Javier Cruz, *cantaor* Juan Luis Vega 'El Maera' and guitarist Miguel Angel Serrano Corrales. Although this production contained *danza esitilizada* in the form of my own choreography to Ravel's *Bolero*, *Nuevo flamenco* to an extract from Manolo Sanlucar's *Tauromagia* and a narrative work that I created to Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, this was the first time that *La Rosa's* performance of flamenco was accompanied by a *cantaor*. El Maera's Gypsy presence added a new dimension to my experience. (I had never worked with a Gypsy or a *cantaor* before.) His contribution reaffirmed for me the necessity of developing the *cante* in South Africa, as it was, after all, the 'mother' of flamenco before the dance took over in the 1850s. Cruz's demanding choreography and technical drive were pivotal to the significant shift that took place in *La Rosa's* work ethic, in which professionalism was uncompromised. His work is a cornerstone of *La Rosa's* repertoire today.

#### **Brushed by Flamenco Nuevo: 1999 - 2010**

A second study trip to Sevilla, and my third to Madrid, took place early in 1999, this time with 10 of *La Rosa's* dancers, resulting in a shift of a different kind. Although I returned to some of the teachers with whom I had become familiar, I ventured into new territory, studying in Sevilla with two up-and-coming stars, who were to become trend-setters in the world of contemporary flamenco: Belén Maya and Eva Yerbabuena. These *Nuevo flamenco* artists' fresh styles and new techniques for the use of body and arms, superimposed on the traditional techniques that had formed my base, shifted the realm of possibility for me yet again, this time in terms of choreography. This shift was accompanied by my first hearing of a new recorded flamenco sound: *Nuevo flamenco* for piano, composed and played by David Peña Dorantes (Dorantes, 1998). Inspired on our return from Spain, the staging of *Renacimiento* (Renaissance) at the Baxter Concert Hall, UCT in 1999 represented the 'rebirth' of *La Rosa*. The production incorporated the elements of live guitar and *cante*, juxtaposed with the pre-recorded music of Dorantes. Cruz's second appearance with the company ensured that the technical level attained in 1998 was improved upon. It set the tone for *La Rosa's* way forward, energising me to consider the possibility of a sustainable, full-time company.

A major factor in the study of flamenco is the mastery of the structure of flamenco songs: the ability to perform as a soloist requires a deep understanding of the relationship between the *cantaor*, the dancer and the guitarist. Up until this time, I had been the only soloist in the company due to my extensive experience as a performer and my travels to Spain. None of *La Rosa's* dancers had yet experienced performing solo with a *cantaor*. *La Rosa* celebrated 10 years in 2000 with *flamenco en curso...* at the Baxter Studio. This milestone season marked renowned dancer and choreographer Joaquin Ruiz's first season with the company, accompanied by *cantaor* Joaquin Escudero and guitarist Amir Hadad, all from Spain. This season also had the first soloist emerge from the ranks of the company, the initial step towards a conscious decision to spread the responsibility of 'principal dancer' to a number of soloists.<sup>189</sup> From 2000 to the present, *La Rosa* has presented 24 seasons requiring solo flamenco performances, creating regular opportunities for *La Rosa's* dancers to hone their skills. The development of soloists has therefore become of paramount importance to the company's practice,<sup>190</sup> and today, solo performance is the overriding criterion for admission to the company.

### **New Frontiers: 2001 – 2012**

A study trip to Spain in 2001 brought me into contact for the first time with Eliezer Truco Pinillos (*La Truco*). Her distinctive flamenco style, using contractions, isolations and releases common to contemporary dance, caught my eye. What set *La Truco* apart from other flamenco teachers was that, besides Maria Magdalena (whose focus was the development of technical skill), she was the only flamenco teacher I had encountered in Spain who had developed a methodology to teach her own style and techniques to her students.<sup>191</sup> (The teachers I had studied with until this time taught choreographies – steps and sequences –

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<sup>189</sup> Nicole Cornfield, also known as Nuria del Campo, was the first soloist to emerge from *La Rosa's* ranks. The need for a soloist to be able to follow the *cante* and structure his or her dance accordingly required much effort, given the fact that there were no *cantaors* to work with in South Africa. Nicole was the most experienced of *La Rosa's* dancers in this aspect at the time, having studied in Spain for a longer period than others in the company.

<sup>190</sup> *La Rosa's* Three-Year Vocational Training Programme (in the process of applying for accreditation as a Diploma in Dance and Theatre practice) is designed to train students for soloist performance in flamenco.

<sup>191</sup> *La Truco* took four years to formulate her style, standing in front of a mirror and analysing her movements, breaking them down, and then reconstructing them for the purpose of teaching them to her students (*Truco, Conversations* in April 2012). This methodology has been incorporated into the *La Rosa* Three-year Vocational Training Programme to provide students with a range of flamenco styles on which to draw in order to develop their own unique flamenco styles.

without sharing details of their style or how it might be achieved.) My ongoing studies with La Truco enabled the seamless inclusion of her choreography into *La Rosa's* flamenco repertoire from 2001 until the present. La Truco worked with the company in South Africa in 2002 on *Fronteras* at the Spier Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch, and in April 2012, funded by the Embassy of Spain, created an entire production for the company which is to be staged early in 2013.

At the turn of the millennium, flamenco artists in Spain were experimenting with new directions for flamenco, with a plethora of fusions and contemporary stagings happening at festivals and in theatres throughout Spain, as well as on stages in Europe, North America and the United Kingdom.<sup>192</sup> *La Rosa's* works since 2001 have also consisted of a diverse range of presentation styles and concepts, including a number of fusions, experimental pieces and collaborations.<sup>193</sup> With the increasing development of *La Rosa's* young coloured and black African flamenco artists, new works began to interrogate African and South African identity and social issues, while others explored, fused with and incorporated other dance and theatre disciplines to expand the company's repertoire and the skill set of *La Rosa's* artists. Some pieces were more satisfactory than others, both from my own perspective as artistic director, and from that of our audiences.

The first draft of *Ewebeelde/Imágenes* (Images) was staged at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (Little Karoo National Arts Festival)<sup>194</sup> in Oudtshoorn and the Bloemfees in Bloemfontein in 2001, with a cast made up only of dancers. It was based on *Ewebeeld*, a collection of poetry by Afrikaans<sup>195</sup> poet Joan Hambidge, whose poetry inspired dance pieces that were set to the rhythms of traditional flamenco *palos*. This production was re-

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<sup>192</sup> The *Festival de Jerez* (since circa 1996) and the *Biennial de Sevilla* (since 1980) are two examples of platforms for new flamenco works. The annual Sadlers Wells Flamenco Festival in London attracts artists ranging from *flamenco puro* to *Nuevo flamenco*. Similar festivals are held in other major cities, for example Amsterdam and Toronto.

<sup>193</sup> Please refer to Appendix 3 for a full account of works presented by La Rosa from 1990 to 2012.

<sup>194</sup> For the remainder of this dissertation the anagram 'KKNK' will be used when referring to the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees.

<sup>195</sup> Afrikaans is a hybrid language rooted in Dutch, the legacy of settlers who arrived at the Cape in 1652. It was the language of the oppressive Nationalist government, and instilled fear and loathing. It was the root cause of the 1976 student uprising in Sharpsville in Johannesburg, when black youths demonstrated against having to study at school in the language of the oppressor. This issue is further complicated by the fact that it is a living language, still spoken by the majority of the coloured population living in South Africa today.

staged at the Artscape Arena as part of the double-bill programme *Elementos*, in June-July 2002. This time, the *Ewebeelde* dance pieces were set to the formats and tunes of traditional flamenco *cantes*, and sung by actress and vocal artist Nicole Holm, accompanied by flamenco guitarist Bienyameen Camroodien, cellist Robert Jeffery and percussionist Robert Davids. A simple set consisting of wooden boxes created opportunities for dynamics and dramatic effects. The piece received a mixed response from audiences and critics, with some audience members unable to relate to the fusion of Afrikaans language with Spanish culture. Attending a rehearsal towards the end of our creative process, Hambidge affirmed my interpretation of her work, informing me that the majority of the poems we had chosen from her collection were written while she was in Spain!



**Illustration 6.1. 'In die kas, in die kas, sal almal netjies pas' (in the cupboard, in the cupboard, everyone will fit neatly in the cupboard): A scene from *Ewebeelde/Imágenes* at the Artscape Arena, Cape Town in July 2003 with Lourenza Fourie, Jocelyn Brashaw, Kim Banda and Moira Barkley.**

*Misa Flamenca* staged at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre, Stellenbosch in 2002, saw the second visit to South Africa by Joaquin Ruiz, accompanied by guitarist Juan Soto and

*cantaores* José Parrondo and José Salinas. A far cry from the production of the same name that had touched me deeply in 1972, this production was created in collaboration with Cape Town City Ballet (formerly known as CAPAB Ballet) and the Heavenly Voices Choir, a community-based choir from the township of Gugulethu on the Cape Flats, led by vocal coach Nolufefe Mtshabe. This time, the combination of African voices (although singing in Spanish and Latin) with flamenco song and dance resonated more easily with audiences. Ballet dancers were required to call on Spanish dance skills acquired during their student days to facilitate a seamless merge of styles and disciplines. The strong masculine presence in this production (due to the ballet company's participation, and that *La Rosa* was made up of mostly female dancers at that time) and the audience's response to their performance illuminated for me the need to develop our own male talent. Once again, the staging of a production shifted the way *La Rosa* worked, as a 'Male Dancer Fast Tracking Programme' was added to our development initiatives.



**Illustration 6.2. Soloist performers Ndumiso Tafeni (front) and Thandolwethu Sam (back), beneficiaries of La Rosa's Male Dance Fast Tracking Programme, performing Joaquin Ruiz's *Farruca*.**

Post 1994, the South African Provincial Performing Arts Boards were dismantled and structures were set up which created access to arts funding for all. The National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC) was established as the distributing agency for the Department of Arts

and Culture, and later, the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund was formed to disburse funds available from the National Lotteries Board. During 2001 I committed to changing *La Rosa* from an ad-hoc company into a professional, full-time entity, which would enable me to live my dream of sharing flamenco with young South Africans from marginalised communities who, otherwise, might not have had access to this art form due to a lack of resources and facilities. I resigned from my day job as an accountant, and commenced setting up a non-profit company. In 2002, *La Rosa* received company funding for the first time from the National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC),<sup>196</sup> enabling us to set up premises in studios conducive to a professional environment, and employ a small staff. We continued to receive company funding from the NAC until 2011, and project funding from the National Lotteries Distribution Trust fund until the present, enabling us to expand our development initiatives and initiate a tertiary three-year vocational training programme (2006 – 2012).<sup>197</sup>



**Illustration 6.3. Abigail Volks (Chana Vega) and Lee Williams (Lisa Ventura) in Indian/flamenco fusion piece choreographed by Carolyn Holden of *La Rosa* and Savitri Naidoo of Vadhini Indian Arts Academy, in *Viaje Flamenco*, performed at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch, 2007.**

Fusion of flamenco with Indian dance styles, particularly *kathak*, is common among flamenco artists, due to the historical and rhythmic connections between the two forms. *La*

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<sup>196</sup> *La Rosa* had previously received project funding from the NAC.

<sup>197</sup> An application for this programme's accreditation as a Diploma in Dance and Theatre Practice by the Council for Higher Education is in progress.

*Rosa's* first venture into collaboration with Indian dancers was initiated by Alfred Hinkel, former Artistic Director of *Jazzart Dance Theatre*, who facilitated workshops with flamenco (*La Rosa*), contemporary (*Jazzart*) and Indian (*Vadhini Indian Arts Academy*) dancers, to create *Angika Bhavam* for Danscape at the Artscape Theatre in 2004. Due to the natural fluidity and ease of this experience, Savitri Naidoo of *Vadhini* was invited by *La Rosa* to collaborate on two pieces using *bharata natyam* and *kathak* for *Viaje Flamenco* staged at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch in 2007, and re-staged at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town in 2010. *Viaje* was a practical exploration of the routes and roots of flamenco, showcasing the cultural influences of a range of dance and music styles from an historical perspective. It featured flamenco choreographed by La Truco to Sephardic music; a *folklorico* piece originally staged by Spanish company *Iberica de Danza* and re-created by guest artist Joaquín Ruiz for *La Rosa* which incorporated steps and styles from Aragon, Galicia, the Basque region and Asturia; and a *rondeña* from Andalucía, choreographed by Ruiz. *Flamenco puro* pieces, also choreographed by Ruiz, included a *soleá*, a *farruca* and an *alegría*.

I choreographed the first Indian/flamenco piece in *Viaje* to a composition inspired by *neuvo flamenco* guitarist Vicente Amigo, with Ronan Skillen playing the Indian *tabla*.<sup>198</sup> *La Rosa's* flamenco dancers, wearing saris over their flamenco dresses, were coached in hand, eye and head *mudras* of Indian dance, which were employed to stylise the choreographed flamenco steps, while Savitri Naidoo's Indian dancers were required to adapt their steps to the rhythms of flamenco. In the second piece, soloist Joaquin Ruiz and Olica Maniran<sup>199</sup> performed a 'duel' using the rhythmically complex footwork of flamenco and *kathak*, celebrating the commonalities between these forms and cultures. Despite the fusion of the two forms, each retained the essence of its own form, with technical and stylistic norms clearly evident. The fusion of Indian classical dance styles with flamenco was well received by audiences and critics.

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<sup>198</sup> A *tabla* is a set of drums used in Indian music.

<sup>199</sup> In the 2010 re-staging of *Viaje Flamenco* at the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town, the soloist in the *kathak* piece was male dancer Serveshan Kumar.



**Illustration 6.4. *Fronteras* choreographed by Carolyn Holden of La Rosa and Maxwell Xolani Rani with African drummer Masande Narwehe, *cantaor* Talegon de Cordoba, and dancers Alexandra Parolis (foreground) and Kim Banda.**

African dance has been fused with flamenco since the 1990s, when Hazel Acosta and Mavis Becker both created works in collaboration with African dance practitioners, incorporating African dance vocabulary.<sup>200</sup> *La Rosa* pieces *Fronteras* (performed at the Spier Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch in 2002, and at the Tesson at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg in 2004), the African excerpts from *Viaje Flamenco* (performed at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in 2007 and at the Artscape Theatre in 2010,) and the full-length work *Kutheth' Ithongo*, which means 'Through Dreams they Speak', (performed at the Artscape Arena in 2007) all incorporated African dance and music to varying degrees. In all three of these works, created in collaboration with African dance choreographer Maxwell Xolani Rani,<sup>201</sup> the process entailed choreographing a sequence in one form, deconstructing that sequence into component parts, and then reconstructing the elements in the style of the other form to create a new dance vocabulary and language. While *Fronteras* was well received, the other two were not. *Kutheth Ithongo* was a narrative work – an experimental collaboration with

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<sup>200</sup> Hazel Acosta choreographed *Tierra Nuestra* for Dance Umbrella 1991, Johannesburg. Mavis Becker wrote *Flamenco de Africa* for the MNet Film Awards event in 1994.

<sup>201</sup> Rani is a UCT lecturer in African dance.

Xhosa<sup>202</sup> playwright and theatre director Mandla Mbothwe, with a narrator, a full stage set, a musical director, a musical ensemble consisting of flamenco musicians and Xhosa singers, and two choreographers as explained. Although it succeeded in carrying a message of acceptance and reconciliation, the attempt at fusing too many elements resulted in (con)fusion. The concept was too far removed from the flamenco stereotype in terms of language, costume, mythology, symbolism and customs to suit our usual (largely white) audiences, who found it challenging to connect flamenco vocabulary with the Xhosa narrative. The flamenco element was drowned by the African idiom. This was a valuable lesson for me, given my desire to stage narrative works in order to use flamenco as an agent for reconciliation and tolerance.



**Illustration 6.5. *Kutheth 'Ithongo* (Through Dreams They Speak) at Artscape Arena in Cape Town, 2007, directed by Mandla Mbothwe and choreographed by Carolyn Holden and Maxwell Xolani Rani.**

The African dance section at the end of the original staging of *Viaje Flamenco* stimulated the question of authenticity: juxtaposed with flamenco and *folklorico* was a mix of Southern African dance styles, and not those from the Moorish origins of North Africa, and the connection between the forms was questionable. In the second staging in 2010, a North

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<sup>202</sup> Although the Xhosa tribe originated in the Eastern Cape, the majority of black people in the Western Cape Province are Xhosas.

African opening scene and a penultimate flamenco dance to Berber music, in my opinion, represented the African presence in Spanish culture more appropriately.

Although narrative pieces had been included in repertoire since *La Rosa's* inception, it was my collaboration with theatre director Geoffrey Hyland<sup>203</sup> that held the greatest learning curve for me as a choreographer and artistic director. In 2005 I realised a long-held dream of staging a full-length work by Federico Garcia Lorca. Funded by the Distell Foundation and the KKNK, *Blood Wedding*<sup>204</sup> was staged across the country from 2005 to 2006 and won two awards at the KKNK. Despite its artistic merit and success, it was one of the least satisfactory experiences for me as a choreographer: I chose to collaborate on this project with Hyland and contemporary choreographer Adele Blank,<sup>205</sup> and had a vision of creating yet another new language of dance by fusing contemporary with flamenco, a trend permeating the flamenco world at that time. But Hyland's vision was to create the fusion by making astute casting decisions and using his trademark Japanese staging devices (such as whitened faces) to neutralise the identities of the dancers. As a result, the audience and critics could hardly tell which dancer was from which company. Believing that I had again capitulated to a voice of greater authority by failing to express my unhappiness with music and casting choices, I decided to sharpen my own directorial voice. Hyland was to partner me on this journey in 2006 in the capacity of advisor and ultimately, colleague.

The xenophobic attacks across South Africa in 2008 inspired me to interrogate what land means to South Africans, using flamenco. *Heart of Sand* staged at the Artscape Arena and the KKNK in 2009, was born out of this enquiry. Determined to learn from my less-than-satisfactory experience during *Blood Wedding*, I invited Hyland as my mentor for this project, and Blank as my co-choreographer, clear in my vision and purpose for this piece. For the first time, I actively conducted research for a piece, not merely relying on what I already knew. *Heart of Sand* was the first opportunity for me to look at my own identity through my work, revealing a part of myself that (possibly due to my Jewish heritage) related to the

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<sup>203</sup> Hyland is an associate professor at UCT Drama Department.

<sup>204</sup> *Blood Wedding* was staged in 2005 at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre and at the KKNK, in 2006 at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg and early in 2008 at the Artscape Theatre for the Suidoosterfees (Southeaster Festival).

<sup>205</sup> Adele Blank was the founder of *Free Flight Contemporary Dance Company*.

experience of being robbed of land, dispossessed and forcibly removed. The plight of Gypsies in Spain since 1492, subjected to draconian laws enforced by the Spanish Inquisition, was not far removed from the conditions for blacks, Indians and coloureds created by South Africa's apartheid regime. For the first time I used my work as a vehicle to express my own sadness in response to the 2008 xenophobic attacks and the past injustice to millions of South Africans, but also to celebrate my national pride at being part of the voice of a new South African nation.

Having had the experience of *Blood Wedding*, my dancers were better equipped to cope with the dramatic demands of the piece, and I was in a space to direct with clarity. I used improvisation - that technique so important to flamenco - to workshop sections of the



**Illustration 6.6. *Heart of Sand*, Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees, April 2009.**

piece, co-facilitating the sessions with Blank, harvesting those pieces we liked, and working them into the storylines of the three sections.

The dancers were encouraged to find new ways of moving by accessing their emotions, with Blank introducing the elements of contemporary dance and coaching where necessary to retain the integrity of the contemporary techniques. A narrator (who also danced) played the antagonist; recital of snippets of legislation blended with text, which was extracted from a selection of Lorca's poetry. Costumes by Dicky Longhurst portrayed the connection to earth – roughly textured and muddied with sand, not particular to any singular culture but reminiscent of how Gypsies, Jews and Africans might have dressed while fleeing from one place to another. Feedback for this piece ranged from 'world class' in (the words of contemporary dancer Mamela Nyamza) to 'disappointing'.<sup>206</sup> This sums up how perceptions of flamenco have been informed by the commercial presentation format of this art form, and how reticent audiences are about flamenco being used for social comment.

A third collaboration with Hyland in 2011 produced *Bernarda*, an adaptation of Lorca's *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*. From the outset my role was clear: I was the choreographer. For the first time I really understood that I could hold several roles in a production but needed to manage the boundaries between director, choreographer and artistic director. Learning this, I was able to give Hyland the feedback I believed was appropriate in my roles, take direction in my role as choreographer and release myself from taking on any more than I needed to. Hyland steered the project of choosing music for this piece, selecting mostly from Yo-yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. The rules and structures of flamenco, so ingrained in my being, needed to be re-interpreted, using flamenco vocabulary, but adapting the rhythmic structures to suit the music chosen. As we had done in *Heart of Sand*, extensive improvisation techniques were employed, this time more formally under the guidance of Hyland. Here again the dancers were encouraged to use familiar vocabulary, but deconstruct and reconstruct it according to Hyland's direction. *Bernarda's* heightened theatricality was enhanced by the dramatic skills of actor Andrew Loubser playing the role

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<sup>206</sup> I have included (as Appendix 4) my response to an email sent to me by a loyal audience member who was deeply disappointed by this production, accustomed as he was to seeing *La Rosa's* previously more traditional fare.

of Bernarda's mother, the senile María Josefa. Hyland used this narrative role as the device for *segues* between dance pieces. Loubser's *butoh*-like movements were combined with flamenco stylisation through use of *braceo*, *muñecas* and the flamenco *bata de cola* (tail-skirt). Playing to small audiences, at UCT's Hiddingh Hall in July and November 2011, and at Centenary Hall at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in July 2012, *Bernarda* received standing ovations at nearly every performance. Despite the artistic merit<sup>207</sup> of this piece, its unconventional use of flamenco for social comment has not yet reached the psyche of the conservative broader South African dance audience.



**Illustration 6.7. Andrew Loubser as Maria Josefa in *Bernarda* at UCT's Hidding Hall, November 2011.**

An opportunity to present a commercially viable production without compromising the integrity of my work presented itself in August 2012. Having researched flamenco extensively for this dissertation, and having become preoccupied with the words 'authenticity' and 'identity', I needed to find out for myself what these words meant in the

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<sup>207</sup> Javier Latorre, Belen Maya, La Truco, Pastora and Israel Galvan, and Joaquin Ruiz have all ventured into this territory since the 2000s with varying degrees of commercial success.

context of my company. For me, it came down to each individual in the company owning flamenco as a part of his or her own identity, shifting the responsibility for authentic performance across the whole company, instead of it resting in my hands alone. I had found evidence for the existence of an authentic flamenco identity in South Africa, and this was my first opportunity to test my findings. Drawing on flamenco repertoire accumulated over the past 12 years, I assigned each dancer the task of learning one or two pieces (using video recordings of past productions) and making it his or her own in terms of style and presentation for the new production. Dancers were responsible for coordinating their costumes within the brief I provided. My job was to direct this process, ensuring that each artist had the best chance of succeeding. I chose how the programme would run and how the stage would be set up, in the format of a *peña*. Only one of my dancers had ever attended a *peña* in Spain; thus performance in this context required a substantial shift for the dancers, in that they were required to bring more of themselves to their work, never leaving the stage, and not simply performing for an audience, but rather participating in an informal, 'authentic' flamenco experience with others. The informality of the setting encouraged authenticity of self amongst the artists, rather than performance, with frequent opportunities for *jaleo* and informal vocal exchanges (in the languages of their choice) contributing to the ambience onstage. Despite the fact that this no-frills production presented a context unfamiliar to South African audiences, the overwhelming response from audiences and critics affirmed my choices, with only one or two from the generation of the 1960s audience wanting more 'performance'<sup>208</sup> from the dancers.

*Peña Flamenca* is the artistic manifestation of my research over the past three years and the start of a new way of working for *La Rosa*. It has assisted me in drawing conclusions about my research, and has informed me as to the value of this research as a flamenco practitioner. It has contributed to the rekindling of passion for this art form in performers and audiences alike.

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<sup>208</sup> By 'performance' I mean exaggerated (contrived) facial expression and eye contact with the audience.

## **At Home in the World: A case for acknowledging a legitimate flamenco identity in South Africa**

Flamenco is an art form, a culture, and aesthetic, a tradition, and an industry. The demands of the marketplace play a key role in determining which artists receive support, the extent of this support and the kind of work that is produced in different venues. Flamenco audiences have curiously strong opinions about what they expect to see on stage, whether they are aficionados or uninitiated to the art form. These expectations are conditioned through a host of cultural practices. This account of flamenco privileges the elements of the production behind the production, the material circumstances that create the art form, even (or especially) the ugly realities of commercialism (Heffner Hayes, 2009, p. 9).

I believe that Heffner Hayes is speaking of flamenco audiences across the globe. Given our distance from Spain, and the challenges that face South African flamenco practitioners discussed earlier, we are outsiders both in Spain and in South Africa. The perceived impossibility of South African *flamencos* ever achieving legitimacy in the eyes of South African audiences and public funding bodies, reaching a level comparable with that set by their Spanish counterparts, seems like a real one. Although the *bolero*, and not flamenco, is accepted as Spain's national dance, flamenco is an ambassador for Spanish culture, and, like bullfighting and paella, is synonymous with things Spanish. This cultural recognition that flamenco has earned throughout the world attracts sufficient media support in Spain to warrant the hosting and live coverage of flamenco competitions with significant value in terms of prize money and status. This generates competitive edge, encouraging young dancers to participate in the art form with disciplined dedication, cognisant of the promise of achievement, employment and economic viability as a performer or teacher.

Although technical skill and knowledge about flamenco is clearly present here, in order for flamenco identity to achieve legitimacy in South Africa, the art form needs to be fostered and developed by attracting more students across the broad demographic spectrum of our country. This will produce more teachers, dancers, guitarists and singers, and create the critical mass of participation in the art form that warrants a cultural infrastructure that

supports, accepts, acknowledges and celebrates the form because of performance excellence by its South African practitioners, rather than because of its roots, embedded so deeply in the cultural heritage of a foreign country.



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## APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF SPANISH TERMS

SPANISH	ENGLISH
<i>aficionado</i>	enthusiast
<i>alegría</i>	joy - a flamenco <i>palo</i> that arose in Cádiz
<i>a palo seco</i>	unaccompanied
<i>baile</i>	dance (noun)
<i>bata de cola</i>	flamenco tail skirt
<i>braceo</i>	arm and wrist movements
<i>brazos</i>	arms
<i>Cafés Cantantes</i>	singing cafés which staged flamenco performances in the 1800s
<i>cantaór and</i>	male singer and female singer
<i>cantaora</i>	
<i>cante</i>	flamenco song
<i>castañuelas</i>	castanets – also known as <i>palillos</i> (little sticks)
<i>chico</i>	light - referring to the flamenco song category
<i>compás</i>	meter or grouping of rhythmic beats within a given <i>palo</i> , e.g., the <i>palo</i> of <i>Alegría</i> has twelve beats to a <i>compás</i> with accentuation on the beats 3,6,8,10 and 12
<i>cuadro bolero /</i> <i>cuadro flamenco</i>	picture or picture frame - refers to the rectangular arrangement seen in <i>Cafés Cantantes</i> and <i>tablaos</i> of <i>bolero</i> or flamenco artists seated on the sides and across the back of the stage
<i>cueva</i>	cave
<i>cuerpo de baile</i>	<i>corps de ballet</i> or company chorus
<i>duende</i>	a term peculiar to flamenco - refers to the 'spirit' of inspiration that overcomes the dancer, manifested in performance
<i>escobilla</i>	little brush - referring to the <i>zapateado</i> section of a or a dance
<i>entrada</i>	entrance
<i>escuela bolera</i>	bolero school
<i>falseta</i>	the unsung verses of a flamenco performance that feature the dexterity and artistry of the guitarist
<i>finca</i>	country house
<i>flamenco/flamenca</i>	practitioner of flamenco
<i>gitano</i>	gypsy
<i>Ida y vuelta</i>	there and back - referring to the <i>palos</i> influenced by songs brought back to Spain by soldiers and sailors travelling between the port of Cadiz in the south of Spain and the Americas in the 15 <sup>th</sup> and 16 <sup>th</sup> centuries
<i>intermedio</i>	Intermediate - referring to the flamenco song category
<i>jaleador</i>	person executing <i>jaleo</i>
<i>jaleo</i>	intermittent calls of encouragement given by performers and audience members
<i>jondo</i>	profound /deep - referring to the flamenco song category
<i>juerga</i>	flamenco jam-session for music, song and dance
<i>letra</i>	sung verse
<i>llamada</i>	a call or signal from the dancer to the guitarist and singer informing them of the dancer's intention to start, end or go into the next section of a dance
<i>muñecas</i>	wrists/wrist circles
<i>palmas</i>	rhythmic hand clapping
<i>palmeros</i>	people who execute <i>palmas</i>
<i>palo</i>	wooden sticks - refers to flamenco song groupings
<i>payo</i>	non-gypsy Spaniard
<i>peña</i>	flamenco club
<i>pitos</i>	rhythmic finger snapping

<i>silencio</i>	silence - refers to the unsung part of an <i>Alegría</i> where the dancer is accompanied by the guitarist, or a section where the dancer performs unaccompanied, or a <i>palo seco</i>
<i>soniquete</i>	rhythmically complex and detailed soundscape created through percussive sounds such as <i>zapateado</i> , <i>palmas</i> and <i>pitos</i>
<i>tango</i>	one of the flamenco <i>palos</i> (also called <i>tango gitano</i> ), possibly part of the ' <i>ida y vuelta</i> ' group
<i>toque</i>	touch – referring to flamenco guitar playing
<i>zambra</i>	one of the flamenco <i>palos</i> and refers to flamenco performance spaces used by Gypsies in Sacromonte, Gradada
<i>zapateado</i>	flamenco footwork

University of Cape Town

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## APPENDIX 3: LA ROSA PERFORMANCE PROJECTS 1990 – 2012

Extract from *La Rosa's* generic documents used for funding proposals

DATE	PERFORMANCE	VENUE
<b>2012</b>		
August	<i>Peña Flamenca</i>	Masque Theatre
July	<i>Bernarda</i>	National Arts Festival Fringe Centenary Hall, Grahamstown
<b>2011</b>		
November - December	<i>Bernarda</i>	Hiddingh Hall
October	<i>Season of Emotions</i> (Chor: Zethu Mtati and Naiemah Eksteen)	Baxter Dance Festival, Baxter Theatre
October	<i>Flamenco Puro</i>	Aardklop Festival : KykNET Gimmies (Potchefstroom)
July	<i>House of Bernarda Alba: A Dance Document</i> (Dir. Geoffrey Hyland)	GIPCA Conferance: Directors and Directing: Hiddingh Hall
April	<i>Sentimientos</i>	Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees SANW-videolokaal (Oudtshoorn)
March	<i>Carmen</i>	Cape Town Opera, Artscape Opera House & Playhouse Theatre (Durban)
February	<i>To Whom Shall I Leave My Voice</i>	Dance Umbrella: Dance Factory Johannesburg
February	<i>Sentimientos</i>	Pieter Toerien's Montecasino Theatre (Johannesburg)
January	<i>Celebración Flamenca</i>	On Broadway, Cape Town
<b>2010</b>		
December	<i>Celebración Flamenca</i>	Oude Libertas Amphitheatre
October	<i>Flamenco Puro</i>	National Theatre of Namibia (Windhoek)
September	Corporate Repertoire Launch	Woodstock
September - November	<i>Rhythms vannie Kaap: Youth Ensemble Rural Road-show</i>	Vredendal, Malmesbury, Bredasdorp, Okiep, Woodstock
August	<i>Alegrías</i> (programme item)	Artscape Theatre Artscape Schools' Festival gala
August	Student choreographies and commissioned piece <i>To Whom Shall I Leave My Voice</i>	Baxter Dance Festival: Baxter Theatre
August	<i>Farruca</i> (programme item)	Dance For All Gala: Artscape Theatre

June	<i>Sentimientos 2</i>	National Arts Festival (Main programme) Victoria Theatre, Grahamstown
June	Pantsula/Flamenco Fusion piece included in <i>South Africa – My Country</i>	WC Dept of Education: Artscape Theatre
February	<i>Viaje Flamenco</i>	Artscape Theatre
<b>2009</b>		
November	First Graduation Performance of the Vocational Training Programme.	Theatre in the District
November	Students' Performance in the programme for UCT School of Dance's 75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Baxter Theatre
October/November	<i>Sentimientos 2</i>	Artscape Theatre
September	<i>Duende</i>	GIPCA & UCT School of Dance: Hiddingh Hall
September	Various student and professional works	Baxter Dance Festival: Baxter Theatre
September	<i>Solo Flamenco</i>	Voorkamer Fees: Darling
August	<i>Tangos</i> (programme item)	Artscape Schools Arts Festival: Artscape Theatre
June /July	<i>On The Edge</i> (student production)	Theatre in the District (1 performance) and National Arts Fringe Festival: Centenary Hall – Grahamstown
May-September	<i>Recycling Rhythm</i> ( Educational School Tour)	Around the Western Cape
May	JazzArt's <i>Danscape</i>	Artscape Theatre
May	<i>Heart of Sand</i>	Artscape Arena
April	<i>Heart of Sand</i>	Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees: Oudtshoorn: Suid-Kaap Kollegesaal
<b>2008</b>		
December	First Graduation Performance of the Vocational Training Programme.	CTCB studios at UCT school of dance.
August	<i>Heart of Sand</i> (first draft – choreog: company dancers)	Baxter Dance Festival: Baxter Theatre
August	<i>Alegrias</i> (programme item for Youth Ensemble)	Artscape's Schools Arts Festival: Artscape Theatre
July	<i>Tapas</i> (Youth ensemble)	Artscape's youth collaboration: Artscape Theatre
June	Jazzart's <i>I am Cinnamon</i>	Artscape Theatre
April/May	<i>Esencias Flamencas</i> (Flamenco Essences)	Bridge House Theatre (Franschhoek) and On Broadway
April / September	School Tour: Flamenco (Collaboration)	Around the Western Cape

April	<i>Flamenco Unplugged</i>	Eden District Tour – George and Mossel Bay
April February	<i>Flamenco Unplugged</i> <i>Flamenco Unplugged</i>	West Coast Jol! – Langebaan Artscape’s Rural Outreach Project’s performances in Bredasdorp
February	<i>Esencias Flamencas</i> (Flamenco Essences)	Oude Libertas’s 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season
<b>2007</b>		
November/December	<i>Flamenco Unplugged</i> (Student production)	Zula Bar
November	<i>Flamenco Unplugged</i> (Student production)	Artscape’s Rural Outreach Project’s performance in Vredendal
October	<i>Rondeña</i> and <i>For the Love of Dance</i>	Western Province Dance Teachers Association’s 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Showcase: Artscape Theatre
August	<i>Mas que nada</i> and <i>For the Love of Dance</i>	Baxter Dance Festival: Baxter Theatre
August	<i>For the Love of Dance</i>	Artscape’s Schools Arts Festival: Artscape Theatre
June	Jazzart’s Danscape: <i>For the Love of Dance</i>	
May	<i>For the Love of Dance</i> in Dance for All’s <i>That’s Entertainment</i>	DFA Gala: Artscape Theatre
May	<i>Kutheth’ Ithongo</i> (they speak through dreams)	Artscape Arena
March/June	<i>Kutheth’ Ithongo</i> (Educational Schools Tour)	Around the Western Cape
March	<i>El Flamenco del Futuro</i>	Cape Town Festival: Joseph Stone Auditorium
February	<i>Viaje Flamenco</i> (Flamenco Journey)	Oude Libertas Amphitheatre
January	Members of <i>La Rosa</i> ’s Development Initiatives participated in Bryan Coetzee’s <i>Move!</i>	Artscape Theatre
<b>2006</b>		
September	<i>Jazz Flamenco Jazz</i>	On Broadway
August	<i>Rulz Brok’n</i> (Student work) & <i>Woven Threads</i>	Baxter Dance Festival: Baxter Theatre
June	Studio Showcase: <i>El Flamenco del Futuro</i>	Joseph Stone Auditorium
April	<i>Route Expressions</i>	Artscape Arena
March/June	<i>Imagenes</i> /Intro to Spanish Dance (Educational Schools tour)	Around the Western Cape
March	<i>Flamenco Puro</i>	Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees: ABSA Club Al Capone
January	<i>Blood Wedding</i>	Suidoosterfees – Artscape Theatre

<b>2005</b>		
December	<i>Flamenco Puro</i>	OBZ Café Theatre
September/October	<i>Carmen</i>	Cape Town Opera: Artscape Opera House
August	<i>Blood Wedding</i>	Nelson Mandela Theatre, Johannesburg Civic
August	<i>Resonancia Revisited</i>	Baxter Dance Festival: Baxter Theatre
March/July	<i>Persecución</i> (Educational Schools tour)	Around the Western Cape
May	<i>Flamenco Puro</i>	OBZ Café Theatre
May	Jazzart's Danscape : <i>Dicen de Mi</i>	Artscape Theatre
March	<i>Blood Wedding</i>	Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees: ABSA Burgersentrum (Oudtshoorn)
March	<i>Colores del Cabo</i>	Cape Town Festival: Artscape Theatre
January	<i>Blood Wedding</i> in collaboration with Free Flight Dance Theatre (Adèle Blank) and directed by Geoffrey Hyland.	Oude Libertas Amphitheatre
<b>2004</b>		
August/December	<i>Tablao Flamenco</i>	OBZ Café (Observatory)
November	Jazzart's Danscape : a collaboration piece <i>Angika Bhavam</i> with Vadhini Indian Arts Academy and Jazzart Dance Theatre.	Artscape Theatre
September	Excerpts from <i>Canciones</i>	Suidoosterfees: Brimstone Theatre (Peninsula Technicon Campus)
August	Extracts from <i>Canciones</i>	Cape Town WOW Festival: Artscape Arena
April/May	<i>Fronteras</i>	Tesson Theatre, Johannesburg Civic.
March	<i>Canciones</i>	Cape Town Festival: Artscape Theatre
<b>2003</b>		
October	<i>Sentimientos</i>	On Broadway (Green Point) and at Elsies River Civic Centre
July/August	<i>Tablao Flamenco</i>	On Broadway (Tableview)
June/July	<i>Elementos</i>	Artscape Arena
March	<i>Fronteras II</i>	Artscape Arena and at Elsies River Civic Centre
<b>2002</b>		
December	<i>Fronteras – Triple Bill</i>	Spier Summer Festival: Spier Amphitheatre
September/October	<i>Flamenco Vivo</i>	On Broadway (Green Point) and at Elsies River Civic Centre

August	<i>Fronteras</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
February	<i>Misa Flamenca</i>	Oude Libertas Amphitheatre
<b>2001</b> November/December	<i>Illusion Flamenca</i>	On Broadway (Green Point)
September	<i>El Mar</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
May	<i>Fusion Flamenco</i>	On Broadway (Green Point) and at Elsie's River Civic Centre
April	<i>Ewebeelde/Imagenes</i>	Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees Nederberg Dansteater
<b>2000</b> September	<i>Misa Flamenca</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
July	<i>Flamenco en Curso... *</i>  FNB nomination for Renacimiento  FNB Vita Award for Best Choreography 1999/2000 for <i>Flamenco en Curso...</i>	Baxter Studio and On Broadway (Green Point)
<b>1999</b> September	Lecture Demonstration for Cape Town Opera: <i>Carmen</i>	Artscape Opera House
June	<i>Renacimiento</i> extract	Cape Town Dance Indaba Baxter Theatre
June/July	<i>Renacimiento *</i>	Baxter Concert Hall
June/July	<i>Renacimiento</i>	Standard bank National Arts Festival: Grahamstown
<b>1998</b> September	<i>Resonancia *</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
June/July	<i>Temperamentos II</i>	Baxter Concert Hall
June/July	<i>Temperamentos II</i>	Standard Bank National Arts Festival: Grahamstown
February	<i>Temperamentos</i>	Oude Libertas Amphitheatre
<b>1997</b> September	<i>Persecucion *</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
<b>1996</b> May	<i>Recital Flamenco</i>	Theatre on the Bay
<b>1995</b> September	<i>Reflejo *</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
March	<i>Jazz, Ritmo y Blues</i>	Johannesburg Dance Umbrella: Wits Theatre

<b>1994</b> September	<i>Jazz, Ritmo y Blues</i>	Cape Town Dance Indaba: Baxter Theatre
February	<i>Alegria</i>	Artscape Theatre
<b>1993</b> October	Spanish Week: dance programmes and lecture demonstration	Victoria and Alfred Waterfront
<b>1992</b> August	<i>Sueños</i>	The Little Theatre
<b>1990</b> March	<i>Siguiryas</i>	Johannesburg Dance Umbrella: Wits Theatre
March	<i>Celebracion de Espana</i>	Nassau Centre, Newlands

\*Denotes Nominee for most outstanding choreography in a contemporary style for the Annual FNB Vita Choreographic Awards at the Cape Town Dance Indaba (no longer active)

**La Rosa has also done many corporate events, charity events and school lecture demonstrations over the 22 years since it was founded.**

## APPENDIX 4: HEART OF SAND EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

**Copy of my response to the email sent to me by audience member Alexander Panzek after seeing *La Rosa's Heart of Sand* (Artscape Arena, May 2009)**

Dear Alex

Thanks for your detailed email - it is always helpful to receive feedback of this nature - I appreciate the time you have taken to do this. I have responded below, as your comments arose, and I hope that by doing so, I can give you some insight on this production.

La Rosa has never aimed to present Flamenco in only one dimension - and, like the people that run companies overseas, we use this art form as a vehicle to express a wide range of human experience, not limited to "feel good" emotions, as this would be giving a one dimensional take on life.

See below for my comments  
Looking forward to seeing you in the audience again soon!

Regards  
Carolyn Holden  
Artistic & Managing Director  
La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre

Unit 202, Buchanan Square  
160 Sir Lowry Road  
Woodstock

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Cell: 083 255 9772

-----Original Message-----

From: Jim Rockford [<mailto:rockford66@yahoo.com>]  
Sent: 24 May 2009 01:47 AM  
To: [studio@larosa.co.za](mailto:studio@larosa.co.za)  
Cc: [taurighere@gmail.com](mailto:taurighere@gmail.com)  
Subject: Heat of Sand - critics allowed?

Hi La Rosa, dear Carolyne

Trust all is going well, please allow me to share some of my thoughts with

you after seeing you play "Heat of Sand" today.

Honestly, I used to be really impressed by La Rosas plays, which were unique, colorful and professionally choreographed. I guess, this is why I took the time to write this email.

**[Carolyn] I'm glad you did!**

I truly love the the combination of flamenco dance movements, coupled with oriental rhythm and African art elements, filled with so much color, beauty and happiness.

This " Heat of Sand", hope you don't mind my saying so, did not impress me at all. **[Carolyn]** However, it has stimulated some thought!

I missed most of the "feel good elements". It might be hard, but sadly I did not enjoy it for one moment right from the beginning of that odd "STILL DARK MOVEMENT" thing. What did it express? **[Carolyn]** Loss, displacement, frustration.....a deep sadness, felt by many people, the world over.

**[Carolyn]**

**[Carolyn]** This was not a "feel good" production - it was put together with the intention of bringing to light the deep emotions that we, as human beings, have around our attachment to Land - a difficult area for many South Africans, even after 1994. The xenophobic attacks on foreigners last year stimulated this train of thought. As an artist, I was inspired to take a deeper look at something that moved me. Man's inhumanity to man is not a "feel good" topic. And I cannot ignore it.

**[Carolyn]**

First of all, it was really depressing **[Carolyn]** agreed - it is a depressing , and often hopeless topic - although we did "break" this one two occasions

to loud at times from the back round **[Carolyn]** We did have some technical issues around balancing the sound at that venue, and if we do this again, will aim to improve that

**[Carolyn]**

voice and without any beauty and color, so much expressed otherwise in **[Carolyn]** I'm sorry that you saw no beauty. Again, it was not my intention, this time, to "entertain" as much as "move" the audience. Personally, I love the costumes,

and thought them appropriate for this theme. They were meant to reflect hardship and a connection to Land.

**[Carolyn]**

former La Rosa's plays.

**[Carolyn]** *I would hope that we, as a company, will never fall into the trap of choosing "safe" subject matter every time we do a production - you are not alone.....several people had this opinion - and then there were those that commended us on taking dance to another level. Some said it was the best things we've ever done, and called it world class. I have learned that we cannot please all of the people all of the time. And I respect your opinion.*

That, of course might have been intended by the directors because of the

"Heat of Sand and political aspect" of the play, however I felt that this

particular subject did not suit a flamenco play in any regard. Or does it?

**[Carolyn]** If you take the history of flamenco, and understand that it is a genre made up of many ethnicities and cultures (Indian, Arabic, Sephardic (Jewish), North African and Iberian), and that the gypsies were treated in Spain during the time of the Spanish Inquisition, and even in more recent times, much the same as people of colour were treated in South Africa - yes.....the subject matter ties right in. In my opinion, flamenco is merely a dance language that happened to arise in Spain, but it arose out of these cultures, and remains the property of no one "people" or geographical location. It belongs to anyone that chooses to master it (as does classical ballet, which arose in France and Italy), and can be used to tell anyone's story. This production, although situated in South Africa and performed by South Africans, could apply to any of several regions of the world, and times in history where people were displaced forcibly. Being reminded of this is often difficult for us to acknowledge - but it happened, and still happens today. I'd like people not to forget.

So, I was trying hard to find a connection here, but unfortunately I could not

Frankly, with all due respect to the excellent performance of all dancers,

musicians and singers, since when is flamenco in any aspect related to the

"South African land reform", that I really didn't grasp at all?

**[Carolyn]** I hope my explanation has clarified this for you to some degree.

Or if it was related, it failed to leave an "educational mark" on me. What I could see though, was the relationship "man and land", but what should it tell me in connection with the flamenco dance, poems and lyric? Sadness and frustration?**[Carolyn]** Lorca's deeply emotive poetry was the link between the events and the human emotions tied to the events - Lorca's life was taken by fascists who wanted him silenced - he was outspoken and died for that.

May I add here, that it does indeed leave the "Heat and Sand" impression on me, sadly only related to the fact that most of the dancers customs were dark or mouse grey accompanied by make up smeared all over their faces. Again, expression of Darkness and Sadness. **[Carolyn]** already commented above.

In any case, I hope that I am not being outed for my honest critics, **[Carolyn]** Not at all! although I am fully aware that it might come a bit of a shock to you, as you from La Rosa have been working hard to make this play happen. **[Carolyn]** No, as I said, we received a diverse range of comment. And we all benefited tremendously from the process of putting this piece together.

It should more so be seen as an attempt to debate this particular opinion and do not be discouraged or even offended by it. **[Carolyn]** I am not offended at all, neither discouraged.

Nevertheless, I do hope to see a more vibrant, colorful and positive spirited play from your wonderful guys in the future again. **[Carolyn]** You will do.....we're at Artscape at the end of October with a "colourful" more traditional piece.

At the end of the day, who needs darkness, sadness and grim at the moment, or at any time wanting to relax and see a play? **[Carolyn]** If you had read any of the pre-publicity you may have not been so taken aback...we at no time told people that this would be a 'light' experience.

In my view, flamenco shouldn't be dark and sad (only at times), it should be full of colors, happiness, love and drama - as you have been able to illustrate in other great performances before. **[Carolyn]** And I respect that....however, it's not my view. The lives and times of Flamenco's are often really dark. Unfortunately the commercialisation of this art form has moved it from protest art, full of lament, to commercial "entertainment". And my purpose is to put this into perspective, and to educate our audiences to understanding that it is not one dimensional.

All the best with your future endeavors **[Carolyn]** Thanks Alex

With kind Regards

Alexander

Alexander Panzek  
providing students with cozy and safe student accommodation in  
Cape Town  
Observatory, Vredehoek/Walmer Estate

Phone : 072 576 9618  
[rockford66@yahoo.com](mailto:rockford66@yahoo.com)

## APPENDIX 5: WORKING DOCUMENT: TABULATION OF INFORMATION GLEANED FROM RESOURCES

Version #3 (July 2012) of a working document created to guide the writing process

### DISSERTATION OUTLINE

*(please note that this list is just a guideline for me – the order of the content within the chapters will change as I work through each section)*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION – (TITLE?)

**Orientation** - Problem statement / argument:

Definition of Flamenco

Flamenco is performed across the globe – as a South African practitioner (dancer, teacher, artistic director & choreographer) do I have the right to participate?

**Rationale** - why this is important; what matters here? My purpose is to establish the notion of a South African Flamenco Identity – a flamenco sub-culture - that may go some way to legitimize the performance of Flamenco by South Africans (and other outsiders) provide evidence for arguments for who has the right to perform Flamenco, and what criteria might be used to decide this?

#### 2. CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW (TITLE?)

**Literature review of historiography** – what I've read by others to compile evidence for criteria

**Literature review of theory** – what I've read by others to compile evidence for criteria

#### 3. CHAPTER 2 – FLAMENCO ROUTES / ROOTS

Categorisation of Spanish Dance

**History** of Flamenco

The affect of Politics on flamenco and Perceptions pertaining to Flamencos image along the way – all references to pre-Franco, Franco's time and Post Franco; ref to J Keal. Re Hawaiian dance – cultural 'slut', sex, tourism and commodification / marketing tool

Funding – my writing and that of Grau etc.

#### 4. CHAPTER 3 – THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION (from Grau quote)

**Theoretical Framework** – what others have said about

Cultural Memory – whose culture? Spanish? Gypsy? Andalusian? Buckland – English Dance – rights and privileges of Participation Pg 13

Cultural Identity – Debunking Bloodlines –Gypsies and Flamenco - is it really blood or is it exposure to 'the language'

Cultural Transmission (Boyer)

Ethnicity

Feminist Theory - Insider / Outsider

Gender stereotypes – lots in MHH; SDS syllabus re boys work

Authenticity / Legitimacy

Basis of Rights & granting Permissions – ‘controlled access’, embodied practice  
Lived Experience of local culture – ethnography?  
Dancing across Identity – Cooper Albright Article  
Notion of ‘invented tradition’ – Steingress & O’Shea in Buckland

5. **CHAPTER 4 – COMMON GROUND**

**Research Methodology (recipe – ingredients, method)** – what was my process; how I’ve gone about gathering information that might provide evidence for the selection of criteria that may be used to determine who has the right to perform flamenco (besides Theoretical Framework)

How I came to the decision to use this set of data – and how did I look at it, manner in which I’ve dealt with the data – why I’ve included / excluded anything – these are the people that were available – limitation / strengths

Research performed material

Case Study (Heart of Sand)

Interviews

**Data Analysis and Findings**

Deconstruction of the motivation behind - and processes and elements used to create Heart of Sand

Tying this in (or not) with the themes of the Theoretical Framework

6. **CHAPTER 5 – FLAMENCO (R)EVOLUTION**

The affects of

industrialisation – South of Spain to global commodity

pedagogy – Amor de Dios, Granada, Jerez , Biennial – world trade centres for Flamenco

globalisation – diasporic practice of flamenco – O’Shea – ‘at home in the world’ - Japan,

Germany - the world – by the very practice of teaching flamenco, something of what the teacher transfers is ‘lost’ and something ‘new’ is made by the student

economics – Japan

politics

technology

on the evolution of Flamenco

Belen May interview

Israel Galvan’s reviews

Pastora Galvan in MHH

Space for a 5<sup>th</sup> or further sub-category in classification of Spanish Dance

7. **CHAPTER 6–CONCLUSION: AT HOME IN THE WORLD – A CASE FOR ACKNOWLEDGING THE EXISTENCE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN FLAMENCO IDENTITY / SUB-CULTURE**

South African Flamenco identity / subculture – who’s doing what now? What ties us together? What separates us?

And does this sub-culture not form part of a Transnational Flamenco Network?

## UNPACKING IT ALL

### 1. INTRODUCTION

CONTENT	SOURCE	REFERENCE
Definition of Flamenco Anthropologists def of movement analysis System of knowledge	Hanna in Blacking et al Kaeppler Kaeppler	Pg 117
Flamenco is performed across the globe – as a South African practitioner (dancer, teacher, artistic director & choreographer) do I have the right to participate?		
<b>Orientation</b> - Problem statement / argument:		
<b>Rationale</b> - why this is important; what matters here? My purpose is to establish the notion of a South African Flamenco Identity – a flamenco sub-culture - that may go some way to legitimize the performance of Flamenco by South Africans (and other outsiders) provide evidence for arguments for who has the right to perform Flamenco, and <b>what criteria might be used to decide this?</b>		

### 2. CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

<b>Literature review of historiography</b> – what I've read by others to compile evidence for criteria		
<b>Literature review of theory</b> – what I've read by others to compile evidence for criteria		

### 3. CHAPTER 2 – FLAMENCO ROUTES / ROOTS

CONTENT	SOURCE	REFERENCE
<b>Categorisation</b> of Spanish Dance Definition / Classification of Spanish Dance	Mones et al Kealiinohomoku (Ballet)  Telethusa	Pgs 144, 151 Pg 45
<b>Categorisation of flamenco</b> Flamenco Puro Commercial vs Traditional  Gypsy vs “classical Flamenco” (I disagree) Purpose of flamenco Art for its own sake vs entertainment (context NB here)	MHH (BW) MHH (BW) Malefyt MHH (WW) Kealiinohomoku (Ballet) Kaeppler Malefyt	Pg 50 Pg 52 Pg 65 Pg 107 Pg 44 Pg 116 Pg 63
<b>History</b> of Flamenco Social History, Cultural History, traditional history Limitations of accurate records of original flamenco – stills vs filmed performances – ‘primitive’ Professionalization and codification of Flamenco Exploitation in Cafes Cantantes epoch Importance of Historical /historiographical approach – legitimises different interpretations of form and history Gender stereotypes & perceptions  SDS syllabus – phasing out of ‘men’s’ work The importance of historical narrative	Mones et al Linda Tomko in O’Shea Kealiinohomoku (Ballet)  O’Shea Telethusa Telethusa  Webcowgirl – Galvan review Telethusa UNESCO MHH  O’Shea	Pg 5 Pg 136 & 150  Pg 145 Pg 6 Pg 9-12  Pg 133

**4. CHAPTER 3 – THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION** (Buckland quote Pg 13)

**Theoretical Framework – what others have said**

CONTENT	SOURCE	REFERENCE
<b>UNESCO</b> statement		
<b>Definition of Culture</b>	Boyer	
Concepts of <b>authenticity, tradition</b> etc (intro to TF?)	Blacking intro	
How do we define <b>tradition</b> ?	O'Shea	Pg 145
What constitutes tradition? Is it the same for everyone?	O'Shea	Pg 125
Contrasting opinions – Conflicting Histories (!)	O'Shea	Pg 131
Varying historical narratives are offered to lend authority to each version	Thomas (3)	Pg 84
Lived traditions or ossification	MHH	
Heritage	O'Shea	Pg 133, 139
<b>Cultural Identity</b> – Debunking Bloodlines –Gypsies and Flamenco - is it really blood or is it exposure to 'the language' Ancestral Cultural Identity Innate abilities Linguistic and caste identity	Thomas (5)	Pg 142, 144
	Thomas (5)	Pg 143
<b>Racial</b> stereotypes	Kealiinohomoku in Blacking	Pg 58
Bloodlines (?)	Kealiinohomoku (Ballet)	Pg 6
	O'Shea	Pg 139
	Boyer	Pg 296, 298
	Erasmus	Pg 14
	Cooper Allbright	Pg 21
	MHH (WW)	Pg 108
	Fee	Pg 242
Pulling the race card	Erasmus	
Affective <b>Culture</b> – cultural manifestations e.g. dance	Kealiinohomoku in Blacking	
<b>Identity</b> – formation of	Erasmus	Pg84
Defining Terms	Thomas (3)	Pg 53
Group Identity	Vargas	
Dancing across Identity	Erasmus	
Conflicting identities	Kealiinohomoku in Blacking	
	Cooper Allbright	Pg 47, 58
	Shaprio	Pg 257 - 260
<b>Cultural Transmission</b> – translates to bloodlines?	Boyer	Pg 10
Pedagogy and permission	Buckland	Pg 12
Cultural memory	Buckland	Pg 11
By the very practice of teaching	Buckland	

flamenco, something of what the teacher transfers is 'lost' and something 'new' is made by the student Learning ancient hulas – transmission of Understand the culture to understand the art form System of knowledge Anthropological approach Not consciously taught	Kealiinohomoku in Blacking Kaeppler  Kaeppler Kaeppler  Tomas (3) Quintana & Floyd	Pg 60 Pg 117  Pg 117, 118 Pg 119  Pg 88
<b>Class</b> – social organisation, exclusivity Peasant / folk societies	Kealiinohomoku in Blacking Kealiinohomoku (Ballet)	Pg 48, 49, 60 Pg 7
<b>Ethnicity</b> Ethnic Dance – anthropologist's definition Does Flamenco qualify as an ethnic dance form? Markers for ethnic identity	Kealiinohomoku (Ballet) Kealiinohomoku (Ballet)  Thomas (3)	Pg 1, 2, 7 Pg 7  Pg 86
<b>National Identity</b> - The affect of Politics on flamenco and Perceptions pertaining to Flamencos image along the way – all references to pre-Franco, Franco's time and Post Franco; Exploitation Franco's time Cafe's Cantantes period Ref to Balinese dance & perception Funding – how 'they' see it – in Spain and here in SA	MHH ((BW)  Malefyt MHH Telethusa, Malefyt Kealiinohomoku in Blacking  Grau and me!	Pg 50  Pg 65  Pg 65 Pg 48
<b>Insider / Outsider</b> – feminist theory Local residence, gender Nationalism  Other	Malefyt Buckland Kealiinohomoku in Blacking Randall O'Shea Thomas (6) Carol Brown	Pg 64 Pg 8 Pg 49 Pg 100 Pg 129 Pg 148-9
<b>Authenticity / Legitimacy</b> Politics & practice of dance preservation Effect of pedagogy on legitimacy and authenticity  Flamenco Purists Exclusivity / social distinction The myth (or truth?)of the Duende	Erasmus Helen Thomas Buckland Cooper Allbright MHH (BW) Malefyt MHH (BW) MHH (WW) Malefyt Randall	Pg 25  Pg 9 Pg 24 Pg 51 Pg 63, 69 Pg 52, 61  Pg 71 Pg 99

Aura of authenticity Private local tradition vs public national attraction Authenticity – replication / reconstruction / arcaic? Politics & practice of dance preservation; performance museums Criteria for authenticity Definition of authenticity Permission Audience & intention Redundant in terms of flamenco because the essence of flamenco is different from that of Western Dance? Who can write as other?	Randall Randall  Thomas (5)  Thomas (5) Thomas (5)  Thomas (5) Thomas (5) Thomas (5) Thomas (5)  Fee	Pg 99 Pg 99, 103  Pg 121, 123, 134  Pg 125 Pg 141,142  Pg 129 Pg 121 Pg 128 Pg 130  Pg 242
<b>Basis of Rights &amp; granting Permissions</b> – ‘controlled access’, pedagogy & embodied practice Access – clubs Access – clubs / peñas Lived experience of local culture – criterion for inclusion	Buckland  Kealiinohomoku in Blacking Malefyt  Buckland	Pg 11  Pg 50 Pg 63  Pg 13
Notion of ‘ <b>invented tradition</b> ’ –	Steingress O’Shea in Buckland MHH (BW) O’Shea Bibliography – refers to <b>Hobsbawm</b> Thomas (3)	Pg 125 Pg 51 Pg 147  Pg 85
Myths & exoticisms - Carmen	MHH Malefyt	Pg 66
‘the real thing’	Randall Thomas (5)	Pg 100 Pg 122
<b>Performance contexts</b> Peña vs theatre / tablao Community vs public display	Mones et al Malefyt Malefyt	Pg 154 Pg 63 - 73 Pg 66
<b>Stereotypes &amp; the image of flamenco</b> ref to– cultural ‘slut’, sex, tourism and commodification / marketing tool – image, flamenco cliché / kitsch and stereotypes commercial vs traditional	MHH (BW) J Keal. Re Hawaiian dance chapter Macaulay – NY Times (Galvan review) Crisp – Financial times (Galvan Review) Malefyt	Pg 49, 58    Pg 63, 64
Understanding and <b>respecting the form</b> – refs to pedagogy  Reconstruction vs revival	MHH (BW) MHH (WW) MHH (WW) Thomas (5) Thomas (5)	Pg 54 re Escudero Pg 106 Pg 110- 115 Pg 136 – 140 Pg 141

Production of the past	O'Shea	Pg 123
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## 5. CHAPTER 4 – COMMON GROUND

**Research Methodology** – how I've gone about gathering information that might provide evidence for the selection of criteria that may be used to determine who has the right to perform flamenco (besides Theoretical Framework)

### Data Analysis and Findings

CONTENT	SOURCE	REFERENCE
<p><b>Ethnographic</b> – immersion in the subject – personal involvement -, immediate experience - study of the form itself, raising questions about repertoire content, performance contexts, training methods, criteria for evaluation &amp; 'world view' of the dance field</p> <p><b>Historical</b> - questions about where and how it originated to trace 'bloodlines', cultures, etc</p> <p><b>Anthropological – (informs ethnographic approach)</b> cultural theory (?), cultural difference, other,.</p> <p><b>Ethnological –</b></p> <p><b>Interviewing -</b></p> <p><b>Analytical</b> – analysis of (my) repertoire and technical requirements &amp; developments of flamenco over the ages</p>	O'Shea	Pg 127
Case Study (Heart of Sand)		
Interviews		
La Rosa – history and who we are	Haupt	Pg 173
Deconstruction of the motivation behind - and processes and elements used to create Heart of Sand		
Tying this in (or not) with the themes of the Theoretical Framework	Cooper Allbright Frege	Pg 25 & most of chapter Pg 101

## 6. CHAPTER 5 – FLAMENCO (R)EVOLUTION

CONTENT	SOURCE	REFERENCE
The affects of industrialisation – South of Spain to global commodity Understanding Flamenco today Cf <i>Bharata Natyam</i>	Mones et al Malefyt O’Shea	Pg 157 Pg 65, 66 Pg 124
pedagogy – Amor de Dios, Granada, Jerez , Biennal – world trade centres for Flamenco	O’Shea	Pg 124
globalisation – diasporic practice of flamenco — ‘at home in the world’ - Japan, Germany - the world Globalisation challenges the notion of stable identity and unchanging tradition	O’Shea Shapiro	Pg 126, 152 Pg 254
economics & tourism Sponsorships Japan	Mones et al Buckland Malefyt	Pg 156 Pg 4 Pg 65
Politics & tourism		
technology		
the evolution of Flamenco concept of an artist being both flamenco and modern  Social significance and change over time - Transformation in form & content over a period of time Recontextualisation Rejuvenation vs threat & destruction (dilution)	Belen May interview Israel Galvan’s reviews Pastora Galvan in MHH Javier Latorre – interview Strauss – Galvan Review Macaulay – NY Times (Galvan review) Crisp – Financial times (Galvan Review) MHH (BW) O’Shea Randall  O’Shea O’Shea	      Pg 61 Pg 126 Pg 100  Pg 128 Pg 136
Space for a 5 <sup>th</sup> or further sub-category in classification of Spanish Dance	MHH (BW)	Title (!)
Acceptance or rejection of new forms Imitation vs progress Artists – simultaneously modern, creative and authentic	Kealiinohomoku in <i>Blacking</i> Randall Randall	Pg 51 Pg 100 Pg 103

**7. CHAPTER 6 –CONCLUSION: AT HOME IN THE WORLD – A CASE FOR ACKNOWLEDGING THE EXISTENCE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN FLAMENCO IDENTITY / SUB-CULTURE (O’Shea quote)**

<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>
Companies and artistes in SA today – what do we have in common? (roots)		
South African Flamenco identity / subculture – who’s doing what now? What ties us together? What separates us? And does this sub-culture not form part of a Transnational Flamenco Network?	Carol Brown Sharon Friedman Haupt	Pg 207 Pg 139 Pg 173
How do we get to ‘count’ in the world of flamenco? Do we count already?	Javier Latorre’s Manifesto	
Change – the effects of	Kealiinohomoku in Blacking Kealiinohomoku (Ballet)	Pg 48, 52-54 Pg 3
Constraints of tradition or freedom from this?	O’Shea	Pg 144, 146
Intercultural translators	Randall	Pg 99
Cross cultural events – romanticism of outcomes	Shapiro	Pg 253
<b>Limitations of this study</b>		

## **APPENDIX 6: NOTES OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE NAC AND THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMMUNITY**

Notes (taken by an anonymous member on behalf of the South African contemporary dance community) of the meeting between representatives of the dance community and representatives of the National Arts Council of South Africa held on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012 after the announcement of the outcomes of funding applications. These notes are a direct copy of the notes circulated by email to the broader dance community in South Africa: any spelling and grammar errors are those of the notator.

### **Notes of the Meeting between the NAC and the Contemporary Dance Community**

#### **1. Introduction and Background**

The meeting was requested by the dance community and as such had prepared the questions to be posed at the NAC in advance. The NAC on the other hand had prepared a pack containing the following documents:

- NAC act
- Strategic and Annual Performance Plan
- History of funding of the organization forming part of the meeting
- Statistics of Company Funding: 6 – 9 year funding

#### **2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks**

Chairperson welcomed everyone and indicated that this was the first interaction of many interactions that will follow with the artistic community. She indicated upfront that funding is never enough and the little resources that are available needs to be shared. She further mentioned that she is quite aware that those who used to benefit in the past will feel aggrieved if they have to now share with others what they use to enjoy in the past. She also indicated that change is pain and as such it is not a smooth exercise.

##### **2.1 The first question from the dance community was that who was responsible for the final decision making on company funding?**

- The NAC response was that Council was responsible for the final decision and that the panel makes recommendation to Council.

##### **2.2 The follow up question was that the official representative for dance was not present for the final decision making to council. They wanted to find out why did that occurred?**

- The NAC response was that none of the panel chairpersons was involved in company funding for various reasons. They were either conflicted or have put applications themselves and in view of good corporate governance and strategic nature of company funding, Council took a decision that the Deputy Chairperson should chair company funding. The Company Funding Panel was also constituted of Council and Panel members who are normally people with various expertise within the arts sector.

**3 The dance community further wanted to know if there was structure or criteria on which companies were accessed and if there were any level of transparency in this regard.**

- The NAC referred the dance community to the NAC strategy which is informed by the NAC act to which the NAC derives its mandate. The object of the act was outlined before the dance community to ensure that the dance community understands where the NAC is coming from with its strategic shift.
- The NAC's response was that there is no where in the act, that suggests that company funding is only for professional companies. The Deputy Chairperson read the act and outlined in particular the issues of redress and access within the NAC act. (Provide additional support to the underprivileged communities).
- The Deputy Chair also gave reasons why the Board had to focus on redress direction. As he stated the main reason was aligning the NAC to the object of the act which emphasizes redress. The other reason was that the NAC in the past was mainly focused on support the western arts forms at the expense of the indigenous art forms. The funding was also benefiting mostly urban based organizations and individuals.
- The Deputy Chairperson informed the meeting that the company funding panel took three hours in preparation of the criterion for funding before the panel could commence with actual process of assessing applications. He further explained that what was initially a two day meeting ended up being a four days meeting they way the process was so rigorous.

**4 The question of conflict of interest was raised and in this regard the question was why was the dance chairperson replaced on the panel without been informed.**

- The NAC indicated that conflict of interest is taken very serious by the board as it may compromise the integrity of the NAC. In this regard it was explained that Council members should not be seen to be funding themselves. The chairperson made it clear that council will not compromise on good values and integrity.

- It was further explained that all members of the panel who have been conflicted were replaced by either board members or panel member who has the expertise in the respective discipline.
- The Deputy Chairperson further explained that conflict of interest is inexcusable and that recusal is not enough as some people within the panel may vouch for particular Company or Project. The point was emphasised that the NAC act in this regard is clear on the question of conflict of interest.

**5 The dance community further asked the question as to whether the NAC is phasing them out in the system.**

- The response from the NAC was that dance companies may still apply if they wish to do so however they should follow the criterion set by the NAC and that whoever gets funding, the NAC may still impose conditions as to where the funds should be utilised.
- The NAC further raised an issue of art companies who are using black people as front for political correctness and in order to source funding from institution such as the NAC. The NAC further encourage companies to empower black people to establish arts companies at their respective communities.
- The dance community was concerned of the fact that by establishing more dance companies will increase more needs for funding as more companies would want to source funding from the same pot.
- Dance community further requested that the NAC should consult its stakeholder regarding its new strategic direction. In this regard the point was taken and the Chairperson undertook to engage them in future.

**6. The issue of double dipping was also raised as the NAC indicated that all of the companies who are part of the meeting were all been funded by the lottery fund.**

- Dance Community responded that the money from lottery is from the sale of tickets sold to the public while the NAC money was from tax and in this regard the NAC cannot compare the two.
- They also acknowledged fact that NAC funding has been the most sustainable source of funding as compared to the National Lottery Fund which has some considerable time delays in processing applications and funds.
- The NAC's response was that irrespective of the fact that lottery funds were from tickets what remains was that all these was government money designed to serve the same purpose. The point is that there are people who are benefiting

from different sources of fund however there are people who have not begin to benefit from either source.

**7. The other key question raised by the dance community was that why did the NAC change from three years to one year company funding.**

- The Deputy Chairperson explained that the three years company funding is core of the Council and if Council would have proceeded with three year funding it would have lock itself on a long term funding without applying its mind on the issue. Given the fact that this was a new council it had to deal with a number of challenges when it took over and to appoint the new CEO and develop a new strategy that will inform all the key decisions of Council.
- He further explained that Council did not want to inconvenience the Artists hence a decision on one year interim funding was taken. This would have allowed Council to apply its mind and perfectly assess the situation and analyzed it to make an inform decision.
- The Deputy Chairperson assured the dance community that in three to four months the NAC will have another call for application for three years company funding.

**8. Issues and Concerns raised by the indigenous dance community**

- There were other three companies which were from indigenous dance sector who wanted to know if they should establish themselves into separate forum of indigenous song and dance as they were not regarded as dance companies.
- They were concern that their sector were not recognized as legitimate professional dance companies and their main concern was the fact that there are primarily song and dance companies and as a result they wish to know from the NAC whether they should form a separate structure as they are not recognized by the contemporary dance community.
- A concern was further raised by these three indigenous dance representatives was that they are not regarded as professional dance companies even when they from time to time travel internationally and appreciated abroad.

**9. Issues Raised by the Dance Community with regard to Redress and Transformation.**

- The dance community indicated that they are training most the underprivileged communities dancers who ultimately become employed by the same companies.

These particular individuals come from various provinces and they are provided accommodation, meals and transport for the day.

- The training that they provide is an accredited training that enables the beneficiaries to have something solid on the market and their appeal was that the NAC should not destroy something that they have build but rather to use what already exist to move forward.
- The NAC was impressed by the development work that some companies are doing however they were further encouraged to ensure that the previously marginalized individuals should be at the forefront of managing and owning these companies and should not just be fronting for these companies.

## **10. Conclusion**

The Chairperson in closing encouraged the dance community to work together and talk as one voice for their sector. She further made a commitment that the NAC will visit their companies and attend their productions whenever possible.