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The appropriation of Flamenco heritage beyond its borders:
The case of artists in Belgium.

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SUMMARY:
The following text is a product of various phases of research carried out between 2007 and 2010. This fieldwork was primarily conducted in Brussels and Ambers, but also in Mechelen, Gante, Roeselare, Lovaina, Vilvoorde, Kortrijk, Menen, Lokeren, Turnhout, Machelen and Bruges, (all in Flanders), as well as in diverse localities in Andalusia and in the Spanish State. The main objective of this investigation, focusing on the practices and discourses of the principal actors, was to contribute to the understanding of flamenco as a cultural phenomenon beyond its borders[1]. This article attempts to show a representation of the intertwined meanings that artists create in respect to the construction of a flamenco heritage.

KEY WORDS:
Flamenco, appropiation of heritage, identities, ethnicity

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A field of conflict

Let us begin with a few words from a retired Andalusian flamenco singer, who has now returned from Brussels where he lived since the sixties. These words were recorded at his home in Seville, where he resides seasonally:

> I exchanged words with Louis Quiévreux one day. He was a journalist. One day he told me that "Vino Amargo" was not flamenco, but rather derived from South America. He was accustomed to not being contradicted, and said to me: "What do you know?". "I know more than you because I am a flamenco singer. You may write, but I say, or rather, by saying, I have more power than you, and more knowledge, because often those of the pen write what they hear from those who know. I know what I am talking about, and you have never even heard of El Niño de la Huerta, whereas he gave me the first cigarette I ever smoked."[1]

Putting aside "flamencological" considerations, as well as the splendid message he sent to "those of the pen", these words synthesize various aspects related to the processes of constructing heritage.

The flamenco singer, equipped with fighting words that are full of illocutionary strength (Austin, 1982), validates his own knowledge, based on the fact that he is who he says he is, and the ability to say as much wields knowledge and power. The "say-so" of the flamenco singer means more than that of the scribe, whose say at the end of the day is only second hand and worthless without the words of those who know. Even more, he who knows has direct experiences with flamenco—physical, tangible, corporal, and sensual experiences that are connected with others whom are also a part of the "great tradition", whom are important in the history of flamenco, and who both physically and spiritually bind this flamenco singer to the same destiny.

Therefore we have before us two agents of the world of flamenco: an Andalusian boy, working-class, immigrant, flamenco singer; and another boy, a native, French-speaking Belgian, with a good socioeconomic background, an "intellectual", that writes, analyzes, interprets,

1. Louis Quiévreux was a prestigious Belgian journalist and flamencologist who also published a review of flamenco at a very early stage: only four years after the foundational work by González Climent (Louis Quiévreux, 1959). *Vino Amargo* is the title of a *milonga* (a genre of flamenco with Latin American influences and known colloquially as a style of "comings and goings") that in its heyday made the flamenco singer Rafael Farina very popular. El Niño de la Huerta (Lora del Río -Seville-, 1907-1964) was an acclaimed flamenco singer.

and counts on having power in the ring ("accustomed to not being contradicted"). Two actors from different worlds, who move at the same patrimonial beat, who converge upon this still forming field, which is at the moment diversely defined according to the actors that flock with their respective interests, values, and cultural repertoires.

UNESCO (2003), during its Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, defined intangible cultural heritage in the following way:

> the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity

It is necessary to address two pertinent matters here. On the one hand, within this definition lies the potential for a symbolic construction of identity and sense of belonging, a notion that is highlighted by numerous authors (for example Françesc Llop and Fuensanta Plata, 1993; or Gema Carrera, 2011). But on the other hand, we should be cautious that this does not lead us neither to an idealistic nor ossified view of cultural practices, after all, these involve processes of transformation, fighting, resistance, *mestizaje*, exchange, creativity, etc., as various authors have also emphasized (amongst others Helene Giguere-2005- for the field of flamenco, or Beatriz Santamarina -2011- for the definition of intangible heritage).

Both singer and journalist are ascribed to the heritage of flamenco. At the end of the sixties, the time during which the meeting occurred, both are attributed presence and prestige, each in his own right. However, they are in conflict when it comes to their discerning core values: according to the flamenco singer, what really matters is personal experience versus what is only read about; the ability to relay an experience first hand, to relay flamenco, versus the bastardization of an account by those of the pen; the decisive strength of the senses versus the construction of castles in the sky. Of course, for the flamencologist, the perspective is different, prescribing more value to a thought-out analysis and scientific knowledge versus the limitations of an illiterate understanding; to the word attributed to high culture versus the fragmentary discernment based solely on

first-hand experience; to the search for the truth versus the imperialism of basic impulses; to the light at the end of the tunnel versus the blindness of immediate experience. We have here a clear positioning of flamenco, with attributes appropriated from different traditions[2]. The logic which each one utilizes, the legitimacy that each reserves, are put into play on the same stage, in the construction of a heritage that is arrived at through very different positions.

The Andalusian flamenco singer vindicates, in the words of Ulf Hannerz, "the everyday experience, face to face, the first formative stage, belonging to the body and the senses"—reasons which are all in favor of the importance of the local (Hannerz, 1998: 49). But the Belgian flamencologist uses cosmopolitan resources to his advantage in the fight for heritage: "cultural competency", "an apt ability to manipulate in a more or less expert way a predetermined system of meanings" (idem:168), allowing for the collection of elements of a foreign culture with "an intellectual attitude and aesthetic that is open to divergent cultural experiences" (idem:168), in a context characterized by "organization of diversity, a growing interconnection between diverse local cultures, at the same time as the development of cultures that are not weighed down to any concrete territory" (idem:165-166).

On the other hand, the flamenco singer, although an immigrant and "transnational", is not in effect "cosmopolitan", but rather "local", and located on a stage which, interestingly, he himself contributed to making global, and thus ideal for those who are "cosmopolitan". This dialectic, which maintains a certain sense of irony such as do other components of the flamenco world (see William Washabauh, 1996), is present in the relationships and positioning of the "flamencos" and the "non-flamencos", "artists" and "non-artists", "ancients" and "moderns", etc. These dialectics drive us to consider heritage making as a process, and heritage goods as spaces of confluence and social conflict (Victoria Quintero, 2007 and 2009). In this sense, the generational and ethnic *belongings*, as well as *experiences*, constitute particularly conflict prone spaces that are filled with discord in the respective processes of legitimation.

2. In applying Bourdieu's model to the field of flamenco, see the emergent work of Francisco Aix (2002), who instead of linking flamenco heritage with the identities associated with it, associates it only with the concept of its "heritage uses", which I consider loses very important dimensions of the cultural phenomenon in favor of a concept reduced only to its functionalist value.

The generations

The conflict between generations consists primarily in the youths' attempts to break into the field, and once in, to occupy holdings of great power and prestige, both symbolically and economically, as well as politically, socially, and culturally. Particularly significant points of discord include those dealing with sociability habits and musical aspects. For instance, in the latter, the use of the box drum and other instruments like the flute, the sax or electric bass guitar by the youth is contentious. Such that "We were not doing flamenco, they [the elders] said; because we stuck in the flute. And the box drum, they said: 'what business does the box drum have in flamenco?' Well, the box drum accompanies" (An amateur flamenco singer from Madrid, aligned with the "second generation",[3] and resident of Brussels).

In the nineties there was an earnest attempt in Brussels to create groups comprised of both elders and youth; but according to one of the youth protagonists, this ended in "disaster" due to the very different and distinct conceptualization of flamenco on behalf of each, as well as due to the clash of interests. An incident was also well known of the attempted usurping of a renowned dancer from Madrid (whom is now retired and a resident of Andalusia) by her apprentice, who is a Gypsy with Andalusian roots, and who similarly returned to Andalusia and is today a professional dancer. The effects of the situation exhibit a visible tension between generations, for example in the relationships of parents and their children:

> My father [a connoisseur, but not a public flamenco singer] is rougher around the edges, he belongs to by-gone days. For example, he'll tell me: "I'm going to sing to you a *malagueña*", and I know it is not right and then we're arguing: "you're going to tell me if it's right […] But of course, I have training and I know what I'm talking about…(professional flamenco singer from Andalusia, born in Flanders).

Here we see how the youth turn to the value of systematic and intensive learning in order to make headway in this field. It also serves as a justification on behalf of the youth to argue with the older generation, nullifying the issue of respecting one's elders.

Let us turn to the following discussion where the subjects themselves address this last matter. This is from the perspective of one of the leading men in flamenco, a professional Andalusian guitarist whom was born in

3. The use of this term is problematic and inadequate for the scope of this analysis (Albert Moncusí, 2007). Here I use it only in its demographic sense.

Valonia and now resides in Brussels:

> Because the old ones would come and of course, the old man wanted to play louder than the young one: "because you are not going to tell me off, I've been living off this for twenty-five years, and you, what's your deal, man". And of course, you have been playing longer than he. And respecting him. But the respect was not reciprocal. Later, with time, they have realized it, but at the moment, no, in the moment "don't come here trying to take over". […] The old generation.

This positioning, militant and triumphant, implies a strong understanding of what has transpired: a rivalry between those who occupy the field and those who intend to penetrate and win positions, and who come equipped with enough cultural goods to battle the symbolic capital of their elders. However, there is still a code that they all live by, where the value of respect is principal, and which the young man rescinds with his attitude against the elders, in an attempt to gain legitimacy at the expense of having others lose theirs.

However, this does not, in any way, imply that there exists a rupture. In fact, quite the contrary: both generations utilize the same basic references; moreover, the youths' dedication to flamenco is in itself a legacy of the elders as well as an imprint of their influence, closeness, and authority, which has contributed in a most decisive manner to their attainment of social space within a local context. This importance bestowed upon a community of ethnic origins has supported the social insertion of immigrant descendants in terms of "selective acculturation" as Rumbaut and Portes (2001) argue, however, in this case the "acculturation" is arguable.[4] As far as the elders were concerned, the youth's acquisition of space, in general, was a most inopportune interference:

> We were performing at the University of Lovaina, and this guy walks in, Manuel[5], "el Camarón"[6] whose father is from Seville, and he comes in with a drum, and I say: "You, where are you going with that?". "To accompany". "No, no, that sounds like parade drums, you sit over there and play the *palmas* [flamenco rhythm clapping], but not that".

4. In another work I address the historical importance of flamenco in the Belgian societal integration of Andalusian immigrants (Ruiz Morales, 2011).
5. I utilize pseudonyms when referring to the names of artists tied to flamenco in Belgium.
6. El Camarón de la Isla (1950-1992) was an extraordinary Andalusian Gypsy singer who reinvented flamenco for the young by using his own personal style. Today he continues to enjoy great fame.

The reaction from this veteran Andalusian flamenco singer figures as having been intruded upon by a young man who is accompanied by foreign elements that are also intruding upon "tradition", a tradition of which the speaker considers himself to be the keeper. In so much as he has merely to make his authority evident and put the neophyte artist in his place. The neophyte, who is now a semiprofessional flamenco singer, is known by the nickname "Camarón", which reiterates his position within "modern" tendencies, but which can also carry an air of illegitimacy, since the "camaronero" is a recent arrival that only knows how to sing according to a single type and style, ignoring all that has come before him. There is also an interesting ambiguity that is suggested by positioning this young artist as the "son of" one from Seville. On the one hand, it situates him in this "tradition", in terms of his father's legacy; but on the other hand, any legitimacy that he could possess due to his familial capital, is countered by his nature as a "kid". We stand before another pivotal discussion. The communitarian and familial (local) sentiments are ones that clash most strongly with the extreme individualistic (and at the same time cosmopolitan) nature of the younger generation, which is ever present given the case and strategies involved.

In this intergenerational rivalry, the most active agents of each generation stopped talking to each other, although according to the youth the ones that refused to talk were the elders. This spurred on a "second generation" of artists that granted themselves legitimacy because, after all, the others were the ones who did not want to share, and who in one way or another did not abide by the code. They saw themselves as holders of a superior level of technicality and of more advanced aesthetic ways, conscious and creative; hence, wielding greater cultural capital with the understanding that they possessed knowledge. They valued the "modern" against the "traditional", creating a rupture. Although, according to the "code of flamenco", codes are known, utilized, and resignified through and by the elders. As such, the "modern" is transformed into a very valuable instrument in the process over the fight for the ability to "say": in this way the youth affirm their lead and renounce the tutelage of the old, in a dynamic, cosmopolitan, and market context in which the old can only conserve a symbolic prestige and an historical power of those whom the forgotten market nobody remembers. This is a definitive weapon for the symbolic affirmation of the centrality of the youth.

Ethnicity and Origin

Another factor that comes into play in the processes of heritage-making deals with ethnic adscription. In the Belgian context, this pictures both in the local ethno-linguistic problem, which is used to define people, and the demographic weight of immigration, especially in Brussels (Christiane Stallaert, 2004). In a similar way to age and sex/gender categorizations (although not a strategy in patrimonialization)[7], ethnic adscription serves as an important criteria for segmentation. This is a highly utilized resource for gaining prestige, legitimacy, and power within flamenco. And in our case, it functions from both possible poles: from abroad and from within.

From abroad, segmentation results when flamenco residents of Brussels or Flanders travel to Andalusia or Spain, or when artists who come from the "birthplace" of flamenco go to Belgium and display this criteria front and center in the relationships they maintain with the "Belgians". On some occasions, local artists (residents of Belgium, irrespective of their ethnic adscription) are excluded by those who make it a point of promoting themselves as legitimate and "authentic" and ready to cast their authority over the locals they consider to be "guiris" ("foreigners" or "tourists").

Sometimes this results in feelings of rejection, as one Andalusian born dancer illustrates: "Those times when you go to say hi and they reject you, they look beyond you…The thing is I don't even say hello anymore because I know how it will be. To do that to myself…no, because they are not worth anymore than me as a person." This valuation of a "person", which offers no room for symbolic inferiority, is often found as an important ideological factor related to Andalusian culture.[8] Such experiences are difficult to go through because they demand a radical questioning of the symbolic resources of "guiris" artists. These situations also impose unwanted labels which Spaniards, regardless of their Belgian associations, continue to resent: "They call me the Belgian over there [in Seville], and I say to them 'don't call me the Belgian because I'll get mad'" (Flamenco singer originally from Andalusia).

However, just like in a game of mirrors these same criteria are fre-

7. Special attention to the matter of gender is found in W. Washabaugh (1996 and 1998), C. Cruces (2003), C. Cruces and A. Sabuco (205), and L. Chuse (2007).

8. Apart from what is expressed through values and numerous traditions and rituals (Isidoro Moreno, 1993), these are also found in the words of flamenco. On the other hand, recall how at the end of the eighteenth century, the Spanish nobility was aghast by the apparent treatment of equality that was practiced in Andalusia between nobles and commoners (Caro Baroja, 1993).

quently employed, in such a way that claiming Andalusian or Spanish heritage is a valuable asset amongst artists. Among residents of Andalusia or Spain, it is young artists looking for their place in the field of flamenco that tend to exhibit a more open attitude toward the "Belgian" artists, although there are also others who have maintained a central position in the world of flamenco and tend to have equally open minds. The reaction of local artists against what they consider to be discrimination can be seen not only on an emotional plain, but also on a rational level where they exhibit a clear position on the matter:

> The flamencos of Andalusia are convinced that one has to be Andalusian to be flamenco. I am Andalusian because I am from Seville. However, I live abroad and see things from another point of view. I am not so radicalized […] as are the flamencos from over there, from Spain (guitarist from Andalusian origin).

This "other point of view" allows for the valuation of the several roads to flamenco and its legitimacy and appropriation. In the social construction of reality, in which the hegemony of various sectors is determined (in this case, the resident artists in the "birthplace" of flamenco), it is basic to the recontextualization of the elements which comprise it, and that "other point of view" that this artist highlights implies no small undertaking.

Although with some significant exceptions, gypsy artists hailing from Andalusia or Spain tend to be more militant in setting borders and referring to flamenco as their heritage against the "guiris" who are not even gypsy but "payos", hence employing a double ethnic classification used to gain legitimacy at the expense of others.[9] In a get-together following a performance, a young gypsy artist, from a large Andalusian family hailing from a long tradition of flamenco, was privately saying to a local Andalusian flamenco singer at the party: "I'll call you and then you'll know what a real gypsy party is like". This is like opening a special door or window to those who are not at the "center" of flamenco "tradition", or its "authenticity", while at the same time reaffirming the lack of "tradition", centrality and "authenticity" of the flamenco singer, whom one should assume should feel privileged, at such a gesture. This position of bearer of "authenticity" implies, according to the gypsy Andalusian guitarist Pedro Peña, an understanding of its content, the capacity for improvisation, and the accumulation of experiences on which to rely on, as well as the "subconscious and atavistic" dominion of flamenco rhythms (Pedro Peña et al. 2002). The ideology of atavism, childhood experiences,

9. This is not a general occurrence. There are important gypsy artists from Andalusia whose attitude is opposite what is described above.

the notion that certain abilities come "naturally" in the construction of flamenco heritage, especially for the gypsies, all comprise a kind of worth of enormous symbolic power that is wielded by these sectors. Even if the real story proves otherwise. In a large way, the extension of elements that are beyond one's reach evokes a return to the metonymy that Llorenç Prats (1997) refers to with respect to the construction of heritage.

There are in effect a series of traits attributed to artists from Andalusia and Spain, especially gypsies, since they are the key to privileged fonts of inspiration, "natural" rather than academic apprenticeship, and inclusion by birth (also "natural") to flamenco culture, etc.

The proximity to "authenticity", considered directly related to ethnicity, also functions internally within resident artists in Brussels and Flanders. In order to break into the market, some sectors revert to this notion to back up their claims, or gain legitimacy and symbolic capital in the field, of course this is only the case when one's ethnic adscription permits. However, everyone, especially the young and those most distant from the repertoire of "ethnic reasons", are keen to break open that box of meanings in order to gain ground. This does not mean that artists will achieve displacing the conceptualization of flamenco from that of ethnic collectivities to the point of evoking universal public sentiment, in the sense that Gerhard Steingress suggests (2007). The flamenco artists residing in Brussels and Flanders, regardless of their ethnic adscription, are very conscious of the fact that it is not possible to free flamenco from its ethnic attributes, they understand it would lose its expressive, and in turn its public, potential. Moreover, they do not see a contradiction between the "local" strength of flamenco and its reach into a cosmopolitan public. What those that are most distant from the "great tradition" (especially those that find themselves at a disadvantage by not sharing in the attributes that promote "authenticity") do expound is that they are cosmopolitan, that flamenco is an artistic manifestation more so than a way of life, and that the sentiment and aesthetic heights of this art depend more on the formation and education of a public that is cosmopolitan rather than on local conditions.

Along these lines, many apply elements from other musical traditions that they know well (mostly jazz, which has a long tradition in Belgium) in search of new sectors removed from flamenco that can also be introduced into the same aesthetic universe. I emphasize that this does not imply that they ignore or consider irrelevant the local conditions of productivity or the centrality of the Andalusian ethnic culture in flamenco. What occurs is precisely the opposite. For example, many frequently travel to Spain (primarily Andalusia) in order to amplify their formation

and, as they frequently reiterate, to "recharge their batteries" and look for "inspiration". Therefore, the dichotomy that Steingress proposes is not evident here, but rather an employment of strategies that compensate for a lack of symbolic capital based on ethnicity.

Returning to our previous discussion, being considered a Spaniard (especially an Andalusian, and even more so if one is from Triana) is of prime importance because flamenco heritage is defined in accordance with one's homeland and one's people, incidentally, as is gypsy identity. Let us turn to the following quotation from an artist of Andalusian origin who shares his thoughts on flamenco in a moment of reflexivity as he critiques the way in which Andalusian and Spanish residents skirt Belgian artists into the periphery:

> The flamencos whom are not Spanish are in Ambers, and those people, I don't know why, have never wanted to join us. […] I don't think it's for lack of interest, but rather because they don't want to face a situation that they don't like, like the party here the other day. [This party took place in Brussels two days before this conversation.]

In this way, he directly points to ethnic culture when referring to the situation at the "party" where according to him, the Belgians would feel uncomfortable because it would be lacking in their customs and values. Although it is true that non-Spaniard artists abstain from attending such gatherings, their reasons are drawn from another perspective having to do with reclaiming their space. The following words from a Flemish dancer sum up this sentiment and also incorporate other elements into play: "I don't have much contact, because I work too much".

Here we have a new way of gaining prestige and power that comes from a completely different kind of logic albeit still born from the same kind of ethnic consciousness: work and effort, instead of origin. Those from Andalusia and Spain continue abiding by the criteria related to "authenticity", and even the "great tradition". Within this context, they find themselves on the periphery surrounding those residents at the "birthplace" of flamenco however, they are also finding new avenues at the center of the local scene. Even "blood", although it is not a point of contention amongst local artists, sometimes gets into the mix. The "natural" aspect granted by birth finds its value in the manner in which it gets interpreted, for example, in the notion that one "has art": "There are forty thousand in Spain that are nothing and only if they moved would they have any art […] How can a Fleming have the same art as someone from here!" (Andalusian Flamenco singer). From this point of view, this "art" is "a given", it can be learned only in its most formal and superfi-

cial elements.[10]

Belgian artists and those from other nationalities also respond by constructing their own ways of legitimation, as was aforementioned. The statements of a Belgian[11] guitarist that resides in Flanders are very telling: "Spaniards think that they have more of a right than I or Ivo does [a Flemish guitarist], they will never call me, they have another kind of mentality. They are Spaniards and live in Brussels. The only Spaniard that follows me is Francisco [originally from Andalusia but resides in Flanders]".

This "right" that is associated with the mark of being a "Spaniard" (equally "Andalusian", or from Jerez, or "gypsy" on other levels) is an important piece in the fight for the heritage making of flamenco. A symbolic piece, which they tie to artistic worth.

However, the Belgians intensely claim justification and their role in the construction of this heritage: "I want to enjoy playing and find other musicians that are interested in playing rather than competing" (Belgian guitarist). This non-participation in the fiestas, or the act of not taking one's guitar out when in informal contexts, which is considered a flamenco faux-pas on behalf of the original artists or those from the "heart" of flamenco, is resignified by the Belgians, referencing it at other levels: the strictly musical level that is positioned above any personal relationship. We have two arguments here dealing with the legitimacy of those that do not hail from the "great tradition" nor from the old generations that bear the "seal": the work of technical elements and music. They recluse themselves from that "competition", avoiding a possible situation with the potential to become a negative experience.

In this case how much is really competition and how much is subjective worth? In the get-togethers and parties that I have attended, there were no Belgian guitarists, or rather if there were they were not playing, which I can only attribute to the presence of this rigid segmentation. It is likely that before the fact, the heirs of the "birthplace" attempt to establish their symbolic power in conjunction with this culture of segmentation which is so characteristic. (C. Cruces, 2002; for the Belgian

10. There are two very interesting works concerning the processes of flamenco heritage making, both centered in Jerez: one is from Maria Papapavlou (2003) and especially the one from H. Giguére (2010). The latter, which also discusses the world of bodegas in this city, references the "power struggles" between actors, in which "blood" is an ever-present resource.

11. I will utilize the term "Belgian" from this point on in general terms to refer to someone who is "not a Spaniard", in order to preserve the anonymity of the nationality of respective artists. Therefore, in some cases the artists may not be Belgian but rather of another nationality.

case, Ruiz Morales, 2010). However, it is also probable that, other ethnic cultures that are more attuned to the relationships and ideologies of the market[12], and given the strength of such a market in this field, the importance of competition is prioritized over relationships of sociability. Once again we are before a culture clash within the same process of heritage making.

There is also another matter which is representative of this group and which can be illustrated by the following words of a Flemish dancer: the contacts that she maintains and prefers within flamenco are those "with people that are the most open-minded with regards to art and with a sense of humor." Here we have two other strong arguments in tow: this new sense of openness, which implies a more "universal" attitude, reflexive and specifically geared towards "art"; and a sense of humor that is in fact a pre-requisite and worthy of a certain kind of relativism with respect to what is and is not one's own, with respect to the dictates of tradition, with respect to identity, and in relation to the kind of aforementioned cosmopolitanism.

To sum up, we can pinpoint three general groups that participate in the processes of heritage making, on the basis of ethnic criteria, all of them equipped with their own discourses: the group comprised of the flamencos from Andalusia and Spain, in belligerent affirmation of their centrality especially in the case of the gypsies; the group of Andalusians and Spaniards whom reside in Brussels and Flanders;[13] and the group of Belgians. Obviously these groups are not homogeneous and neither do they act like a cohesive organism, internally the interests, objectives, etc. of individuals also find themselves at odds. However in terms of establishing strategies, and in the positioning of the definition and appropriation of flamenco heritage, ethnic adscription and their associated worth carry weight and guide strategic rules.

The first two groups, each having their own respective internal hierarchy, share a badge of "authenticity", and represent what is "natural", etc., incidentally reserving a privileged position for the first against the second, but which at the same time is used against the Belgians by the second group in order to secure an air of centrality and legitimacy in the local context. The Andalusians and Spaniards abroad also capitalize on the vast experience of moving between communities, participating in the different cultural codes of each. "Foreigners" in their home country and

12. See Isidoro Moreno (2002) concerning Andalusian culture and its tendencies that are not in tune with market principles.

13. Sometimes randomly assuming the characteristics of the previous group. For example, there have been some cases of an invented gypsy ancestry.

in Belgium, they know about the significance of borders and its ensuing pain, but also about the ubiquity that it all implies. They also turn to strategies, which they have been continuously generating alongside the making of this heritage and which are able to provide them with advantageous practices: music formation, the extension of their networks beyond local limits and including Europe (for example, there are numerous contacts with flamencos who reside in France), highlighting the value of "modernity" against what they consider to be stagnation, experimenting with other musicians and musical styles, etc.; all of which appear to be a resource against the first group in the mercantile context in which these processes occur.

They share this with the third group, the Belgians. They also oppose the value of "authenticity", which is key to systematic work, and which is the dominion of different cultural codes. Instead they promote the recontextualization of flamenco, understanding it to be a musical expression of great spiritual importance, in which, independent of ethnic culture, an artist with enough passion and talent, work and dedication, can express himself both in his musical (guitar and other instruments) and choreographic (dance) dimensions. It is defined, then, as an artistic manifestation free from local constraints, although sometimes one still clings to those "ethnic chains" without which access to flamenco would not be possible.

Such is the principle repertoire that is set on stage, although (I insist) they still do not form a cohesive group. It must be pointed out that a group of veteran Flemish artists (and also very important for the establishment and consolidation of flamenco in Belgium) subscribe to the values of the "great tradition", while at the same time constructing a mythodology of gypsy ancestors, Andalusians or Spaniards. Note how a Belgian artist illustrates this point:

On my mother's side […] it's possible that there are two ties to Spain, a Jewish one, that came from Belgium, but typically Andalusian. I look like my father, from Flanders, but my mother's family is brown, and a bit gypsy, I act like a gypsy.

In addition to the aforementioned aspects, that relate heritage with cultural and ethnic adscription, there are other basic components that cannot be taken for granted. Flamenco in Belgium is foreign music, which means that, although there is an audience for it, it is not a priority for theatre organizers or for those that dictate subsidies. In an attempt to implement its ethno-linguistic agenda, the government of Flanders supports artists that carry their seal, which leaves a good number of flamencos, especially those residing in Brussels (if they do not speak Dutch, as is often

the case) with little practical resources. This is more so the case if we take into account the lower socioeconomic status of artists descending from emigrants, whom in comparison to natives are cast as less "loyal" to the state apparatus, as Bart Maddens and others have surmised of migrants in general (1998).

This situation in which natives, especially those from Flanders, have an advantage and where there are class distinctions, contributes to reinforcing the borders between both groups, and thus we have to consider this in terms of the heritage making of flamenco. This picture coincides greatly, although with some nuances, to that painted by García Canclini (2003) when he speaks of "hybridization". According to him, ethnicities, classes, and nations are restructured in trans-ethnic, trans-class, and trans-national contexts, in such a way that people appropriate heterogeneous repertoires of resources and available messages in this context. Similarly, this hybridization generates the field of flamenco, with agents in constant contrast and rivalry, and new symbolic divisions (such as "Spaniards" and "non-Spaniards"). In such a way that, even with "internationalization" and "hybridization", traditional traits characteristic to flamenco continue to be emphasized, leading to a strong sense of segmentation. And what is more, the worth of ethnicity is reinforced in the fight for the creation of heritage as we have just seen. Hence, in this trans-ethnicity, this trans-class and trans-nationality, which do in fact occur, borders are fortified rather than dissolved.

Experiences

Each sector, whether divided up by generation, or in relation to ethnic adscription, or in terms of the role that one plays in the world of flamenco, depends on some kind of legitimacy to gain access, win ground, and extend their brand through the natural heritage that continuously reinforces their position.

We have seen that "familiarity", what is ascribed to being "natural" on many levels, as well as systematic work, the capacity for "openness", the recontextualization of flamenco as "art", etc., are all utilized in turn. However, there is a constant in the processes of legitimation that possesses an added worth amongst artists, independent of generation or ethnic adscription. This is one's familiarity with significant flamenco artists and in general, experiences, as the veteran ex-flamenco singer directed us to understand at the beginning of this article. An Andalusian flamenco singer who resides in Brussels, veteran but also active even though he is retired, reminisces on how as a child he would listen to Tío Borrico, to

Agujetas padre[14], etc., in the field houses, or *gañanías*, of Jerez. There are many testaments to encounters, of dealings, with central figures in flamenco, both historic as well as actual. In the retellings of both young and old, one can at any moment hear the name of, for example, Enrique Morente, Manolo Sanlúcar, Paco de Lucía, Pedro Escalona, Terremoto hijo, Fosforito, Chicuelo, los Habichuela, José Menese, el Niño Ricardo, Esperanza Fernández, etc., etc. If we include the context of dance classes then the list would be more prolific from Matilde Coral or Farruco all the way to Eva la Yerbabuena or Israel Galván.

Having known or dealt with central figures in flamenco translates into an endorsement, which guarantees and strengthens the legitimacy of the artist in question. Here is an example of a veteran flamenco singer from Andalusia. He recounts that he was introduced to Antonio Mairena by Fosforito (both are pillars in the history of song) with these words: "Maestro, I am going to present to you the best amateur that I have heard in the immigration". According to him, after asking him what styles of music he was best at, and responding that it would be "the main ones" (soleares, seguiriyas, tonás…), Antonio Mairena remarked: "And so what are you doing in Belgium then?". The encounter and its culmination with this last question are, by the manner in which it is shared, sought after instruments of affirmation, that reinforce the symbolic belonging of this artist at the center of "tradition", even though he is physically positioned at its periphery (as an immigrant), a situation which should be interpreted as an accident given life's circumstances.[15]

In any case, it affirms that the corresponding value is not at the periphery but rather central. This all occurs independent of the degree of proximity, or even the veracity of the details, which interest us not because of their truth, but rather because of the fact that they are used as an important resource in the process of creating heritage.

In some cases, "knowing someone" includes an entire geographic region ("I know everyone in Málaga"), and in other cases it extends to a sphere of familiarity: "Its that my cousins hung out with Antonio Gades. Juan [a flamenco dancer] is my cousin" (flamenco singer from Madrid). Kinship also plays a role, both objectively and subjectively.[16] Take, for

14. Historic flamenco singers, representatives of the most traditional kind of flamenco.

15. And hence, according to flamenco, this proves even more the legitimacy of the agent and his victimization by social injustices. Flamenco has been reappropriated by many artists as the cultural heritage of a marginalized people. This perception of the political impotence and the marginalization and exploitation of Andalusia has been highlighted by P. Manuel (1989) amongst others.

16. Of the 50 most significant and iconic flamenco artists in Belgium, 25 of these have a kinship relationship (either through affines or consanguinity), this affects 20 artists (given

example, the case of a gypsy flamenco singer from Andalusia hailing from an important flamenco saga that comes from Jilica, with ties to the family of the great guitarist Melchor de Marchena, which has resulted in performances and recordings of this flamenco singer accompanied by the maestro Enrique de Melchor. Family ancestors, given the telling of experiences, sometimes have intensely participated in the world of flamenco in Andalusia: "Vallejo was a close friend to my father, Pepe Marchena also"[17] (Andalusian flamenco singer).

This dimension of legitimation, which ties itself to strategies of "modernization" and frees itself from the debts to those at the center (resident artists in Andalusia or Spain above those in Belgium, gypsies above non-gypsies, etc.), can be seen in the following words of a guitar player from Andalusia:

> I get along very well with people, and let me tell you there are very open-minded people out there. Esperanza is proof of this, Esperanza all the projects she has taken on, she has put together with work and instruments that are non-traditional […], because she is burned out from the world of flamenco.

Here we have an association with a great flamenco of international repute, an Andalusian gypsy, whom this artist knows, but we also have a disengagement from the unwanted side of the inheritance: that which is considered more "traditional", ancestry, and what is the most reticent to include new actors and changes. As such, the strategy of knowing someone coupled with the aforementioned separation, is necessary in the construction of heritage for some flamenco sectors of Brussels and Flanders: the children of immigrants, the "Belgians" and other foreigners, those whom do not belong to the "great tradition" and are in search of being, or are, professionals.

However, the strategy of "knowing someone" which is central to gaining legitimacy in flamenco is not limited to artists, but also extends to places that we could consider iconic, impregnated with "character", or charisma. Artists reference the important places that they have performed at such as Jerez, Granada, or Almeria, many of which first rate artists such as Paco de Lucía, Camarón de la Isla, José Mercé,etc., are

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that some are or have been children or partners of flamenco artists), that is, 40%. There are also an additional 3 cases where their partners have been agents of flamenco although not in an artistic sense. And there are at least 3 more where the father or mother has been or is an artist in some other field.

17. Vallejo (Sevilla, 1891-1960) and Marchena (Marchena -Sevilla-, 1903-1976) are foundational flamenco singers in the history of the genre.

also associated.

That same legitimating role is also found in immersion experiences within places considered to be genuine, in which the most valued aesthetic (José Vergillos, 1997) is guided by "authenticity" and association with the "traditional": "In Jerez they have always said to me: 'You are from Santiago'[18]. I wish that were true!" (ex-Flamenco dancer who returned to Spain). This begs a new exceptional legitimacy that is found in all sectors. Another Spanish flamenco dancer, also of the pioneer generation, tells us that she learned to dance with the local gypsies, in Asturias. Although it is highly improbable that gypsies there would know enough of flamenco, this is also a route to prestige, over all, and not coincidentally, for the artists that are at a distance both from "tradition" and from Andalusia.

The clout behind "knowing someone" also extends to places foreign to the arts. Both Spanish and Belgian politicians, diplomats, political representatives of the Andalusian government, also appear to be taking part in the legitimating discourse that many of our actors construct in various situations in this field.

In the previous cases, the artist is "tapped" by those who exude prestige, but also the actor himself is legitimated by his life experiences. It could be said that "experiences" support each gesture, action, every trace of the agent in question, as Pierre Bourdieu argues (1995), elements both of belonging and appropriating such a heritage, formulating part of the principle strategies in the process of heritage making.

Experiences are especially related to one's infancy. If one's birth or infancy occurred in an iconic place, for example Triana (in Seville), the artist holds a good case for his place in this field. Let us illustrate the fact with the testimony of a flamenco singer from Andalusian origins:

> Triana is very much Triana, and not because I'm from there, but Triana… […] In Santa Ana's *vela*[19] I've had some good times, all night with my mouth shut, and I have much respect for the old folks because although they don't know all the *palos,* [distinct styles of flamenco] but I have a lot of respect for them. […] When I was little I used to go with my uncle Jacinto to the bars, […] and one *fandango*, and another…it's been so long since I've done that.

This tends to be a common argument for the re-justification of one's position based on ethnicity or generation, but the discourse on experience tends to put an end to that. The above citation allows us to observe this

18. Santiago is known as a gypsy neighborhood with a history of flamenco.
19. The *vela* is a neighborhood festival. The well established one in Triana is celebrated in the span of six days during the month of July.

oppositional stance against the "old folks" that simultaneously abides by tradition. There are two elements that are equally important to sustain this much sought after legitimacy: the implication of the family in these contexts, and the participation in moments of special significance.

When the subject can no longer turn to the experiences in the heart of the "great tradition", he evokes other experiences that in one way or another have brought him closer, or more familiar with tradition, similarly to the flamenco dancer from Asturias with the local gypsies, or in the case of an Asturian Flamenco singer, that remembers how in his childhood he would hear the "posaderos", miners from the Andalusian cities of Almeria, Jaen and Linares. In this way, without a break in values, or understanding, whomever spends his childhood in the periphery of the "great tradition" also justifies their relationship with it, demonstrating that their experiences since then have in some way been a part of it.

One condition for the "experiences" to be effective is their uniqueness, meaning that they are special, or even exclusive. On many occasions, the artists pull out this trait in their story. For example, it consists of having been at a party in an Andalusian store where "not anyone could get in", in having performed with first-rate musicians, etc.

Social experiences have also come to mean something in Flanders or Brussels, as long as they establish permanent ties with flamenco. Such experiences are those which occur in gatherings in restaurants-*tablaos* after the doors are closed, after public performances for the clientele, where some informants state "the real flamenco" happens.[20] In a similar vein is the tradition of the *tertulias*, which were very important in the nineties. In either case, the notion of belonging is reiterated, along with the border between the "flamencos", who participate in the "real" flamenco, and what belongs outside of flamenco, foreign to these experiences. It is a similar process to that which T.D. Malefyt (1998) puts forth in terms of the Andalusian *peñas*. Although the main characters of these situations have been the older generations, Andalusians and Spaniards, the youth has also played a part (for whom this was a real learning experience) as well as a few Belgians.

Such encounters happened in Brussels, with the foremost ideology of "use value": for the artists and amateurs that participated in these gatherings and *tertulias*, these were genuine experiences of flamenco, of generalized sociability and reciprocity, in which the much sought after value

20. The musician, singer, folklorist, poet and guitarist Wannes van de Velde (2001) left something written about this. This Flemish artist, that learned to play flamenco guitar, has been fundamental for the presence and spread of flamenco in Belgium (Ruiz Morales, 2011).

of "sharing" took shape. Experiences in which the "us" was staged, the flamencos, with a vivid idealization of the situation and its relationships, considered foreign to market relationships, beyond the same. Meanwhile, the artists that did not participate in these encounters manufactured their inventory of experiences crossing other borders: primarily, the Belgians that received lessons from renown flamenco dancers in Seville, in Jerez or Madrid, who searched out flamenco places in Granada and assisted in performances of first-class artists.

However, the first and foremost experience, especially for Andalusians and Spaniards, is the one we have already mentioned, the one that categorizes childhood: "What he has weaned he has weaned outside of Spain. So, it's not the same" (Spanish flamenco singer, referring to another artist). Or, argued with even greater emphasis by an Andalusian artist belonging to the younger generation, and also directed at another artist: "The only thing he does is practice, but perhaps he has not lived it, what I'm saying about down below [Andalusia], the art, the mannerisms, it all depends on how you were raised. In my house there was always flamenco from night until morning". If we also take into consideration that the artist to whom he refers is also from "down below", we understand his comment to be an affirmation in the context where there is competition for legitimacy. There is also the case where one agent marks another as "non-flamenco", or "some flamenco". This can happen even if the marked agent has a notable "pedigree" like "flamenco" due to his ties to the "great tradition".

Experiences corresponding to professional grounding that are decisive for integration in, and performing of, flamenco play with a very important role, in as much as one who was raised in it: "That's where I began to know flamenco, the true flamenco" (Andalusian flamenco singer referring to a previous professional experience). We are not dealing here with childhood, nor with an upbringing in an acceptable place, nor the experiences of sociability, rather this is yet another level, that takes us directly to familiarizing oneself with the "truth", which one arrives at through study, openness and dedication (the youth and those ethnically distance from the "great tradition"), but always requiring the experience of the world of flamenco.

Final Considerations

The generation of belonging, the ethnic adscription and the "experiences" constitute the three basic levels for which artists construct their respective legitimation in the battle to occupy space and define the heritage

of flamenco. Although the analytical effects are presented separately, they are superimposed to the point that they cannot be understood separately, as has been shown.

Each artist arms himself with arguments concerning relationships, social positions, art, work, etc.; and determines a series of dispositions that are vigorously applied in these processes of heritage making. With each sector there are basic criteria that are taken to be "unmatched" because they bring the subject closer to the tradition of flamenco, of which everyone agrees, giving him a central position and symbolic capital: the belonging to a generation of elders, an Andalusian ethnic adscription (and even more to the point Andalusian-gypsy), and having lived one's childhood or maintained a sensible relationship with important figures in the history of flamenco. But against those that are intimately associated with tradition, arguments and values of cosmopolitanism are wielded, especially by those sectors that are furthest away from the "great tradition". Values such as rigorous and systematic study, the knowledge of a technical understanding, access to wide and diverse artistic registries, the conscious decision to become a part of this field, or the realm of more aesthetic codes, cultural and social. Against the symbolic resources of those closest to the tradition, these rely on social, cultural, and political resources and often economic ones as well that are equally important, although not expounded upon in this article since here we are primarily concerned with arguments for the acquisition of legitimacy in terms of how heritage is defined. This gives way to a disjointed panorama where, notwithstanding, there are still common interests (sometimes against more actors involved in patrimonialization), as well as shared codes even though there is diversity and cultural heterogeneity.

Gender and social class are also central: they are not axis in and of themselves of where artists construct their spaces and definitions of heritage; and hence are not specifically dealt with here; but they do intervene transversely in the three aforementioned axes, given that they constitute basic components in the social articulation and cultural assignation of agents. Social class is used in the three aforementioned axes to reinforce proximity to tradition in the case of belonging to the working class.[21] In terms of gender, they often follow the guidelines of segmentation that we observed in the world of flamenco of Andalusia; but it is also important to highlight that dance could have made possible the acquisition of social space and economic independence of many women. Moreover, the leadership role of these women translates into the justification for those

21. See the discussion that J. Gelardo (1998) expounds in terms of social class for the Andalusian context.

most distant from the "great tradition" to no longer be indebted to their elders and to affirm their "modern" and cosmopolitan character against them.

These dynamics really take off at the end of the fifties, and allow us to talk about the creation of a "local tradition" of flamenco, comprised of artists and other agents, in terms of history and continuous interethnic relationships.[22] Of course all of this is in daily contact with the flamenco from birth, and given the peripheral context, with an unusual reflexivity.

The aforementioned has a place within a frame that *a priori* can be considered foreign to flamenco and its terms of production, but it is not so, given the connections that cross ethnic borders, among others. The artists seek the most intense tie with what they consider the central radius of this heritage, which they also contribute to build and on which they lay their bets. Cosmopolitanism, which depends on the positions of the actors, and the cultural and musical hybridization which also occurs, make the borders more sensible and conscious, and bring to the forefront, by the strategies and ideologies wielded by the artists, the cultural particularities and the activation of the memory to which they are tied. What happens is the counter-opposite to the universality that is devoid of ethnicity and local cultural attributes that some authors claim for flamenco as an expression of universal reach.[23] Hybridization (which is a basic component of flamenco since its origins) is not against the force of the local, nor does it give way for the kind of impossibly sterile *melting pot*. Neither can it be reduced to a mere consumer product by the global market, determined by the leisure industries and personal tastes of some abstract subjects that do not exist. These musings suffer from a worrisome lack of ethnography, directly proportional to its pretensions of infallibility, and they play with false polarities. Universality and hybridity are only possible because its principal actors, whom are concrete, move within the field, looking for space within it, planting strategies, constructing answers. And in order to do this they need to resort to their culture repertoires and base these in local referents: they make flamenco, and in order for this to be universal it needs to be local. Yet another irony.

22. The same occurs in the United States (Susana Asensio, 2004), France, Japan, and Holland.

23. I understand that the "universality" praised by some authors and political instances is reductionist in the scope in which they base this argument as a negation of ethnicity and the weight of the "local" in terms of a generic individual or a cultural homogeneity that is more presumed than real. On the other hand, I agree that a vision which emphasizes polycentric thinking is relevant, such as the one that Edgar Morin puts forth (1999).

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