

## FLYING FRILLS: WHEN FLAMENCO IS ALL ABOUT GESTURES, MACHINES, AND NYMPHS

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### Abstract

This paper re-evaluates the modernist significance of flamenco by focusing on Antonia Mercé, La Argentina, as a foundational yet overlooked figure in avant-garde dance. As well, it claims a common pattern of artistic and choreographic practices between Mercé and Isadora Duncan within avant-garde art and dances. Through the lens of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* and critical theories from Agamben, Foucault, and Deleuze, it demonstrates how Mercé's choreography embodies the lost gestures of Western modernity.

It is necessary to clarify, on the one hand, that there were different levels of impact and common influences between the avant-garde art and both dancers. On the other hand, the bidirectional transfer that went on amidst modern dance, and philosophy and feminism thought, which emerged in the West at the beginning of the 20th century with a liberating germ. In this context, the article argues that flamenco's marginalization in dance historiography stems from entrenched narratives that oppose folkloric expression to modernist innovation. By revisiting visual, historical, and philosophical sources, this study reclaims flamenco as a crucial mode of cultural and feminist resistance in the early 20th century.

**Keywords:** Flamenco, Modernity, Avant-garde, Identities.

## VOLANTES VOLADORES. CUANDO EL FLAMENCO ES COSA DE GESTOS, MÁQUINAS Y NINFAS

### Resumen

Este artículo reevalúa la importancia moderna del flamenco centrándose en Antonia Mercé, La Argentina, como figura fundacional, aunque ignorada, de la danza de vanguardia. Asimismo, reivindica un patrón común de prácticas artísticas y coréuticas entre Mercé e Isadora Duncan dentro del arte y las danzas de vanguardia. A través de la lente del *Atlas Mnemosyne* de Aby Warburg y de las teorías críticas de Agamben, Foucault y Deleuze, demuestra cómo la coreografía de Mercé encarna los gestos perdidos de la modernidad occidental.

Es necesario aclarar, por un lado, que existieron diferentes niveles de impacto e influencias comunes entre el arte vanguardista y ambas bailarinas. Por otro, cabe considerar el trasvase bidireccional que se produjo entre la danza moderna y el pensamiento filosófico y feminista, surgido en Occidente a principios del siglo XX con un germen liberador. En este contexto, el artículo argumenta que la marginación del flamenco en la historiografía de la danza proviene de narrativas arraigadas que oponen la expresión folclórica a la innovación modernista. Mediante la revisión de fuentes visuales, históricas y filosóficas, este estudio reivindica el flamenco como un modo crucial de resistencia cultural y feminista a principios del siglo XX.

**Palabras clave:** flamenco, modernidad, vanguardia, identidades.

### 1. THE LOST GESTURE

Her finger clicks the castanets in the palm of her hand  
a perfect rhythm, like the shot of a machine gun. (Ozenfant 8)

Un'epoca che ha perduto i suoi gesti è, per ciò stesso, ossessionata da essi; per uomini, cui ogni naturalezza è stata sottratta, ogni gesto diventa un destino. (Agambe 48)

By the end of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society had lost its gestures in Wester. Giorgio Agamben in *Note sul Gesto* describes how, after this pathological loss, the bourgeoisie found and reinvented its gestures in the cinema, and he only briefly notes the importance of another medium *in movement* that was as defining for his finding as the previous one, modern dance. However, paradoxically, if we follow the Agambenian thread —Gilles de la Tourette's

footprint tracing method and the series of snapshots *Woman Dancing, in Animal Locomotion*<sup>1</sup> taken by Eadweard Muybridge in 1887— it is virtually impossible not to think about the importance of dance as a privileged medium for evoking new gestures, those that society at the end of the century and the beginning of the twentieth century had lost. What the Italian philosopher forgets is that modern dancers promptly followed those lost gestures, not only Isadora Duncan —the only dancer mentioned by Agamben, apart from the Ballets Russes—but also other radically modern dances such as flamenco, which traced «il cerchio magico in cui l’umanità cercò per l’ultima volta di evocare ciò che le stava sfuggendo» (48).

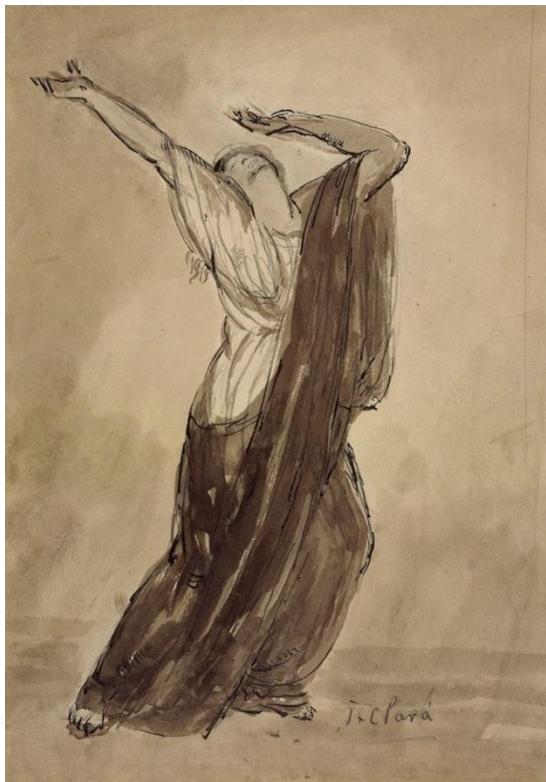


Fig. 1 (left). Josep Clarà, *Isadora Duncan bailando el Ave Maria*, 1927. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona.

Fig. 2 (right). Josep Clarà, *La Argentina bailando Córdoba de Albéniz*, c. 1927. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona.

«Give me a body then» Antonia Mercé La Argentina and Isadora Duncan still seem to be saying in the drawings that Josep Clarà made of their dances in 1927. On the basis of this statement or philosophical claim by Gilles Deleuze, seen through the lens of dancing gestures and choreatic acts, both images encapsulate much more in the magic circle Agamben describes. By applying Deleuze's claim in chapter eight of *L'image-temps* to modern dance and not only to cinema, the dancing body of these dancers and their creative processes are revealed as an

<sup>1</sup> This series is not explicitly mentioned by Agamben in *Note sul Gesto*, but it constitutes two of the most interesting collotypes by Muybridge regarding the female gesture in dance and its relation with Deleuze's *images-mouvement* and the Agambenian gesture; as well as with the idea of animalism mentioned here.

element and result of the philosophical thought of their contemporaneity. Thus, as Deleuze states, the body is no longer an obstacle to thinking but a necessary element to immerse oneself in order to advance, something already formulated by the dancers in their writings. Tórtola Valencia claimed in *Mis danzas* that «When the soul is burned in the fire of inspiration, it communicates to the body the feelings that it contains, and the body expresses, with movements, all the impressions suggested to the intelligence»<sup>2</sup>, and *In The Dance of the Future*, Isadora Duncan presented her choreographic creations as a vehicle that helps «the female gender to reach a new knowledge» (Sánchez 80)<sup>3</sup> because «She will dance the body emerging again from centuries of civilized forgetfulness, emerging not in the nudity of primitive man, but in a new nakedness» (80). Attitudes, gestures and danced postures thus was becoming body-linguistic forms of thought, or rather, the dances composed by these forms are the result or the choreatic act of activate the philosophical thinking through the body. And the Agambenian magic circle —where some of them would be reborn and dance again— seems to be no other than the one formed by the immanent virtual movement of the gestures of western humanity (80), that circle that Aby Warburg tried to collect, to map and to tirelessly record in his *Atlas Mnemosyne*, to narrate by means of the *dynamis* and *κίνηση* of the gesture —present in the frozen images from Greece to Josep Clarà— history as collective memory of the European civilization.

As Warburg was working on *Mnemosyne*<sup>4</sup>, Antonia Mercé and Isadora Duncan had already consecrated their dances as a symbol of raging modernity and avant-garde. In fact, La Argentina was clearly ahead of Duncan in terms of gestures, innovation, and avant-garde aesthetics. Curiously enough, these two modern dance trends are today situated on different times and level of relevance. As Pedro G. Romero points out in his lecture «¿Puede el flamenco ser una danza moderna?» this is related to the way flamenco has been perceived in the flow of Western historical thought. A history which, in the words of Foucault, repeatedly ignores its construction nature in pursuit of a supposedly immutable essence; something we are aware of in philosophical terms but which we largely tend to ignore. And so, flamenco dance and modern dance are currently perceived as disparate in the collective and historical imaginary.

The case I put forward is Clarà's drawings of Isadora Duncan and La Argentina («Antonia Mercé, La Argentina»). These are two drawing sessions. La Argentina dances *Córdoba* by Albéniz and Isadora Duncan dances Schubert's *Ave María*. Clarà knows the dancers and *bailaoras* (a word always complicated in terms of its attributions). He approaches the drawing of the movement. He is interested in both these pioneer dancers of their time, and his treatment (the treatment of the figure) is very similar in both cases. And yet the perception that we have is that Isadora Duncan is opening up a new world (although with an archaeological gaze —dressed in a Greek

<sup>2</sup> Tórtola Valencia gave the lecture *Mis danzas* at the Ateneo de Madrid (ca. 1915), the undated cutting is kept in the archives of MAE, Institut del Teatre, in Barcelona.

<sup>3</sup> Isadora Duncan gave the lecture *The dance of the future* in 1903 in the city of Berlin and it was published the same year in Leipzig by Eugen Diederichs.

<sup>4</sup> Although Warburg unknowingly worked on the *Mnemosyne Atlas* most of his life, he started it as such in 1924, leaving it unfinished at the time of his death in 1929. Isadora died three years after Warburg started composing it.

tunic of sorts, Greek in style, that seems to be inspired in Fortuny junior, Mariano, the fashion designer—she is searching, trying to recreate, a world that is related to the world of classical dance, an imaginary world, which nevertheless represented the first hints of what finally evolved to what is understood as modern dance or contemporary dance), and La Argentina, who is as relevant as Duncan, who is a foundational artist (the artist, in my view, who founded what we understand as flamenco today, what we understand as genuine flamenco dance), is not perceived through the eyes of history as she was perceived in her days, when she was one of the biggest stars, one of the first global stars (Ohno, for example, decided to become a dancer after seeing La Argentina in Japan, and paid tribute to her with a piece in her honour at the end of his life). Through this long journey, the figure of La Argentina, however, seems to refer to an ancient world, a primitive world, a folkloric world, a rural world. All this is patent, it is like a pulse. It is a pulse in both cases, but the perception is absolutely different, and I cannot tell exactly why. (Romero, «¿Puede»)

Engrams can perhaps provide an answer to this disparity. For Deleuze an engram is «the genetic sign or the gaseous state of perception» (53) that makes it fluid or liquid; an image has a certain genetic charge or static «imprint». If we reframe this idea through the prism of the Warburgian (Vargas 317-331)<sup>5</sup> engram that operates in the *Atlas Mnemosyne* and apply it to dance, we see that all the images that make up the panels or sections of the *Atlas* are not exactly as Agamben proposes the frames of a film montage but, as Didi-Huberman points out («II Atlas»), a virtual dance of images displayed on panels and sections. It is no coincidence that for Aby Warburg the engrams inserted in the gestures seen in the photographic or frozen images reveal to us through their dynamic component—or imotion—an imaginary or virtual body. What happens if we transfer these concepts to an actual dancing body? We need to understand the dancer's body as a container that produces gestures, not only possessing or reproducing the gestures of the collective cultural memory, but also capable of generating new gestures based on philosophical thinking, which entails the aesthetic creation or choreographic composition. In other words, just as visual artists such as Botticelli imprinted the formula of pathos on their nymphs, Antonia Mercé and Isadora Duncan managed to «engrammatically» mark their gestures by giving them narrative power or fluid information. In the case of La Argentina, this information refers not only to the Nymph or Panel 46—in which Isadora's gestures or the modern dancers whose narrative power carries a strong «classical» body component—are inserted, but rather the narrative power of her gestures or «iconic-dialectic key» is also affected by the flamenco shapes<sup>6</sup> that Pedro G. Romero locates in what grotesque or Panel 32. Here lays

<sup>5</sup> As Mariela Silvana Vargas point out, «The concept of “Engram” was taken up by Warburg from Karl Lashey (1890-1958), who in turn developed it from the notion of “Mneme” by Richard Semon (1859-1918), a German evolutionary biologist, advocate of monism» (321).

<sup>6</sup> The construction of flamenco dance is absolutely modern but its genealogical narrative goes back a long way; its origin lies in hybrid forms such as those seen in the *bailes de negros* in the Seville slave trade through the sixteenth century and constitutes a melting pot that until its emergence in the second half of the nineteenth century gradually incorporated baroque, oriental, Moorish, gypsy, black, Atlantic-transoceanic, romantic, and popular elements as well as an endless number of complex and interesting dynamics that in general link its pathos to the visceral and terrestrial and not to Warburg's sidereal; but also, to the absorption of radical aesthetic elements

the main key to understand this perceptive disparity, along of course with other keys of historical nature in the broadest sense of the word. In short, in Warburgian terms, the images are the dancers—in constant virtual movement—of the great Western history dance. And so, their narrative information determining their development at each historical moment and, therefore, their current perception.

## 2. COLLECTING NEW GESTURES: MODERN DANCE AND THE COUPES MOBILES

Like Goethe in his collections, a body that «dances» collects ways, *gestures* and images to create choreographic composition or construction of art in dance. Collecting or constructing, «implies the arrangement, the knotting of one element with another and on another» (Escudero 8). It also means creating new gestures when the society in which one dances has lost its own, or it does not respond to the needs, concerns and experiences of its members. And so, free dance emerged in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century as a seed of the struggle and the search for a world of freedoms that were still utopian. It quickly became a fundamental way of female or feminist renovation through a great group of dancers who created a wide avant-garde range of innovative proposals designed—consciously or unconsciously—for change. They created, collected and reinvented new gestures through their bodies based on a unique perspective from which they looked back at ancient history, understanding it as an expanded mythical time—a primitive and idyllic place in communion with nature—which the dancers sought in the origins of the different civilizations, especially ancient Greece and the Greco-Latin world.

According to Maruja Mallo, the avant-garde was defined by kinetic elements, sports and nature based on Greek notions (Chamorro). Dancers like Antonia Mercé used them to build—through eurythmy or Egyptian and Hellenic shapes—an avant-garde world in which their bodies danced like modern nymphs imbued with smooth winds of renewal for Spanish dance. Isadora Duncan, on her part, had stated years before that the true origin of free dance was to be found in nature—the movement of the waves, the winds or the Earth—as well as in the ancient Greco-Latin world. A world which La Argentina re-read as the origin of modern flamenco dance in the shapes and gestures of the mythical dancers from Cádiz or Gadex, famous through all the Ancient World. A renewed *religare* of dance, Antiquity, and nature that Isadora shaped based on Darwin and Haeckel's postulates to show us an interesting feminist vision of the evolutionist theories through her dance. In those same years, and in contrast to these feminine readings, social Darwinism was dawning as a weapon against the *other body* instrumentalized by the social sciences under the auspices of hetero-patriarchal humanism. But for Isadora Duncan, the dance of the future did not follow normative dictates but was rather based on the body and social liberation of the individual. The experience of the body in dance thus took on new meanings and was supposed to promote new ideas on the role of women in society. Duncan

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through the different historical moments (Cubism or Purism, Informalism, Pop, happenings or quasi-ritualistic events, dematerialization in the manner of Oscar Masotta, etc.).

presented dance as an *art-women-society* unit through simple and harmonic choreographies that claimed the liberation of women from patriarchal submission and the corsets of normative conventions. The dance of the future brought with it the message and aspirations of thousands of women, the modern dancer's mission was to communicate through her spontaneous creation—or set of «living dancing figures» carrying the liberating gesture—the collective demands of her gender, while showing at the same time the uniqueness of her free woman being.

The «live» movement was essential to achieving their goal. The information was inscribed in the gesture-image in movement during a dancer's performance or when it was recorded on film. When captured by the camera lens or the brush of artists such as Clarà, the image was frozen and its movement lived on virtually. Dance in its creative form is therefore composed of *coupes mobiles*. For Deleuze these sections or moving pictures are images in movement themselves, but as Agamben insightfully observes «Occorre extendere l'analisi di Deleuze e mostrare che essa riguarda in generale lo staturo dell'immagine nella modernità [...] una costellazione in cui i fenomeni si compongono in un gesto» (Agamben 49-50). Think of the surrealist logics of the montage of images in *Documents* magazine, Aby Warburg's *Atlas* or even the rupture of the image in Cubism. Modern dance and the visual arts in avant-garde times are not focused on moving images but rather on gestures. Paraphrasing Agamben in *Note sul Gesto*, the task of modern dancers was to introduce the element of awakening into that dream. Isadora Duncan and Loïe Fuller thus proposed «to banish academic heritage and codes—like pointe shoes, to leave the feet bare, or tulle skirts, to wear light tunics—» (Murga Castro, *Poetas* 53) while advocating a return to nature through its mythical, eco-social or scientific path from women's perspective as the basis of free movements. For them—as for Foucault decades later—classical dance was constrictive and did not respond to the freedom of the contemporary subject and its diverse identities. Thus, through new gestures or *surviving* gestures that in a way they managed to (re)polarise, modern dancers built a new visual and theoretical paradigm of struggle based on the Nymph of ancient times. To paraphrase Gombrich, the Nymph was inevitably drawn into the feminist conflict. For politics, universal suffrage and free dance were all in debate in the early twentieth century society, a symptomatic enclave where the image and anthropology of women became visible through the dance, social and political movement of women's bodies (Gough 122-126). These dancers generated through their gestures a new collective subjectivity of liberation for women based on the arts; it is not surprising, therefore, that for Isadora dance «is a question of race, of the development of the female sex to beauty and health, of the return to the original strength and to natural movements of woman's body» against the oppressive dynamics, the constraints and rigidity that characterized classical dance (Duncan 79).

In *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*, Foucault exposes this disciplinary relationship between power and classical dance. For Foucault, dance<sup>7</sup> is a disciplinary device

<sup>7</sup> In *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* Foucault talks about classical dance as opposed to modern dance, but it is pertinent to note that the term classical dance should be expanded in the twentieth century under terms

pierced by the logics of power whose ultimate goal is to produce docile, obedient and useful normative bodies through danced gestures. The biopolitical operation is perfect, the dancers learn certain gestures in which the disciplinary praxis is inscribed, when they go on stage the eyes of the social body register these gestures in their retina keeping them as unconscious learning. Perhaps not even Foucault himself was aware of the profound efficacy of this disciplinary system in dance key when, years earlier, he used dance as a *liberating* medium in a fable created for Deleuze.

Tired of waiting for Theseus to return from the labyrinth, of stalking his passing and of recognizing his face behind all the shadows that pass by, Ariadne has just hung herself. From the lovingly woven thread of identity, memory and recognition, her pensive body spins on itself. However, Theseus, when his ties are broken, does not return [...] he advances, limps, dances, jumps. (Qtd. in Amigot and Pujal 100-130)

In the fable *Ariane s'est pendue*, Foucault presents thought —or the act of thinking— as a dance. An almost initiatory dance composed sometimes of gestures that make Theseus advance and sometimes of jumps that make him fall, but he is always a dancing and active subject, while Ariadne, after hanging herself, becomes a passive subject who can never dance again. And so, thanks to Ariadne's death, dancing Theseus finally manages to create the *liberating gesture*. However, at this point we might ask ourselves some questions: why did Foucault hang Ariadne so that Theseus could free subjects through dance, thus ignoring the whole movement of social, political and body liberation carried out by female modern dance dancers at the beginning of the twentieth century? Is it actually possible for hegemonic history to have erased from Western memory an entire movement of activist dancers in barely thirty years?

The discursive map on gender and dance issues was particularly complex in Europe in the early twentieth century. The evolutionary postulates of Darwin and Haeckel were integrated into the social sciences, which meant that the female sex was radically discriminated against by science in the same way as the *gypsy* or *flamenco body* as an amplified notion of difference due to a dissimilarity in race or *social life model* —inherent to dance and artistic productions related to flamenco—, thus situating women and the *gypsy body* closer to animals than to men, or in an intermediate stage between man and «beast». These same postulates gave rise —in Duncan's specific case— to the construction of free dance as an evolutionary component, thus generating an avant-garde constellation of feminine visions in dance that now bring us a new and suggestive narrative that is far from the artistic historiography and the feminist narrative that had existed until now. For if they danced on stages all over Europe liberating their bodies from hetero-patriarchal oppressions —real and metaphorical— anti-feminists like Nóvoa Santos placed the brain or soul of women in a pyramidal space between the animal and the sapient male (60-80). This controversy around gender did not go unnoticed for the incisive

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such as official dance or dance traversed by biopolitical power, an example of which would be national dances in times of fascism.

Emilia Pardo Bazán, who had written about it in *El Imparcial* years before, calling it «The new burning topic»<sup>8</sup>. In *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, Nerea Aresti points out that the nascent progressive feminism failed to create «new ideological coordinates capable of structuring a “new sexual order”» (19). However, we should not forget that thanks to the voices of feminist writers such as Jenny d'Hericourt, Juliette Lamber or Emilia Pardo Bazán, it did manage to be decisive for the path of women's emancipation, as they set in motion new views on science applied to women's nature, gender equality, and social reforms.

It is necessary to understand that biologism was a very powerful weapon against *the other body* when it was instrumentalized through the social sciences. It was at that point when social Darwinism led to scientific racism or sexist biologism, among other strategies of exclusion. It was at the dawn of this historical and biopolitical moment that the warp of what we understand today as animalism began to be woven. Although we should bear in mind that the application or use of this term in the first decades of the twentieth century is not entirely correct<sup>9</sup>, it is also true that the notion of animalism or animalist nymph as a concept linked to diversity and sexual and political freedom of female bodies in communion with nature and operating outside the hetero-patriarchal norm is entirely relevant when it comes to building a new historical genealogy of free dance, feminist in origin, and narrated based on a profuse constellation of images of rebelling dancers that have reached our days. Although it may seem inconsistent now, it is a proven fact that the same advances and postulates enriched and structured both political ways of life. An example of this were dancers' body liberation movements, or more specifically, their close link to hygienist concepts that later would serve as the tanatopolitical axis of Nazism. Therefore, feminism should not, and cannot be a humanism that orbits around the anthropocentric but rather an animalism that fights it with its liberating wind. As Paul B. Preciado pertinently states in *El feminismo no es un humanismo*, published in 2014, «Animalism is the wind that blows».

It would not be haphazard at this point to resituate the feminist component of modern dance outside the humanist narrative of our stagnant academy —still operating with quasi-intact hegemony— and apply views such as animalism to (re)write Western history on a new decolonial cartography of interconnected centers and peripheries to find diverse methods to generate more inclusive academic discourses that reveal new genealogical connections. In the words of de Saint-Point, we must fall into crude animality. A radical animalism whose lens serves us to reread the twentieth and twenty first century history of dance, and turn us into nymphs of all genders blown by the same wind of change that gave rise to many of Isadora Duncan's gestures and Antonia Mercé's flamenco moves. Their dance allows us today to trace the complex cultural dynamics related to the liberation of women or the (non-)normative bodies

<sup>8</sup> A *fin de siècle* controversy on the question of the veracity or otherwise of the inferiority of women, which led to raving biological or psychological arguments that helped perpetuate the status quo through a new scientific language, or in Derridian language, phallogocentrism.

<sup>9</sup> To better understand the application of the term animalism, as well as the aesthetic paradigm and culture of the animal nymph presented here, see: Navarro (221-242).

at the beginning of the twentieth century. Let us go into the forest where the Nymph lives and the wind blows. As Aby Warburg observed in his studies of Botticelli's Renaissance painting, in art, when the wind blows a nymph is nearby, with that air of animalism that for Preciado liberates bodies and societies. Also by the end of the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacobo Burckhardt (Didi-Huberman, *El Bailar* 15) began to sense that art should be seen from the point of view of human gestures. We should thus rescue that moment in ancient times when dance and music were linked and see that dance is important to the point that human knowledge should be something like a dance free of thought.

The Nymph as a new visual and theoretical paradigm appears on the scene to show us the physical and socio-political struggle—in the form of dance—that allowed the female body to free itself from the rules of oppression established by the heteronormative system at the beginning of the twentieth century subverting polarities anchored in outdated humanist views. Didi-Huberman, on his part, claims that social images are another political way of seeing bodies «dance». As he sees it, the social individual acts like a dancer but does not dance on a stage but in the public sphere, fostering with their social movements the «wind» of change. If this principle is applied to the search for the «gesture» of animalism—or expanded feminism—it leads us to rethink the visual documents of dancers such as Antonia Mercé, Mary Wigmann, Tórtola Valencia, Giannina Censi, Carmen Amaya and Isadora Duncan, among other avant-garde artists; as well as Aby Warburg's Panel 46 on the Nymph, and the abundant visual documents on the changes in activity and dress related to the New Woman, an indisputable feminist liberation ideal at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Gombrich stated in *Aby Warburg*, «The emancipated woman... claimed her right to wear loose clothing and to move in this clothing not as a rigid doll, but as a living being» (Gombrich 110). This clothing had its undisputed origins in the garments worn by modern dancers, women's sportswear, and the avant-garde production of artists like Sonia Delaunay. Warburg himself, in his correspondence with Jolles about the Nymph, which started in 1900, highlights the controversy around the New Woman and women's suffrage in the political and social life of the time, and so does Degas in *Young Spartans Exercising* (Braude 640-659), by breathing the spirit of the legislative struggles of the *fin de siècle* French feminist movement into a classic scene of gender binarism translated into physical competition. He thus turned two groups of male and female Spartan youth challenging each other—a sociopolitical event with a religious and cultural base—into a direct reflection of the political tension of his time.

### 3. MOVING POINT... VANISHING POINT (FLAMENCO, MACHINES AND CARS)

A stylish dancer will always be a dancer with a wonderful mechanism [...] a living dancer, who dances like a machine sews, or like a machine calculates, or like a machine runs, or like a machine flies... (Bergamín 5)

Sostenía Mairena que sus «Coplas mecánicas» no eran realmente suyas, sino de la «Máquina de trovar», de Jorge Meneses [...]

MAIRENA: ¿Y en qué consiste el mecanismo de ese aristón poético o máquina de cantar?

MENESES: Es muy complicado, y, sin auxilio gráfico, sería difícil de explicar. Además, es mi secreto. Bástete a usted, por ahora, conocer su funcionamiento.

MAIRENA: ¿Y su manejo?

MENESES: [...] Ya contiene, pues, el aparato elementos muy esenciales para una copla: es hombre, no es hombre, puede ser hombre, es mujer, etc. etc.<sup>10</sup>. (Machado 52-56)

When Degas sculpted his flamenco dancers, they were not yet machines —neither airplanes, nor kinetic, or engine pistons— but movement was undoubtedly the key to the encounter. An *Étude pour la danse espagnole* with a mechanic flamenco cadence allowed Degas to artistically code the strong tense movement of the flamenco body or its subaltern gestures in three female models in contrast to the languid, prescriptive, and meticulous ballet movements. In spite of his blindness, he perceived different gestural nuances in these popular, fast and modern moves, like marvellous Bergaminian mechanisms of arabesque versus geometric sensuality, which in those years were more in line with Carmencita than with the incessant foot tapping of one of Marinetti's organism-machines. In terms of Warburg's visual-epistemic device for *Mnemosyne*, the gestural mechanics of Degas' *danseurs espagnols* would lead us back to the Agambenian thread and its magic circle. For while the curve in a Degasian *bailaora* recalls us the danced violence of the images that make up Panel 32 (Appendix I) of the *Bilderatlas* —also present in the Edison Studios film *Carmencita* and in *Gitane danzante*, a photograph taken by Pierre Bonnard in 1901— it also squarely situates us in the human, danced, and animal movement studies by Muybridge; of massive distribution in the 1880s. And of course, in the *nymphal* wind present in the images at the bottom right margin of Panel 46 (Appendix II). Where the Contemporary vs. Renaissance Nymph breaks the heteronormative city between *bios* and *zoe* with the wind that accompanies their gestures.

From this new point of view, it seems no coincidence but rather a historical symptom, that just in the passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth century Spanish dancers were transformed into flamenco *bailaoras* and marginalized dance practices were now seen as a path to modernity; that scientific advances favoured the resurgence of the body-machine notion, which was in turn taken up by avant-garde artists and poets who applied mechanical dynamics to organic bodies and their movement, and human aptitudes to machines, thus giving them life. A transfer questioned by José Luis Pardo in *La carne de las máquinas* when he stated that

<sup>10</sup> «Mairena would say that his *Coplas mecánicas* were not really his, but rather belonged to Jorge Meneses' *Máquina de trovar* [verse writing machine] [...]»

Mairena: And what is the mechanism of this poetic Ariston or singing machine?

Meneses: It's very complicated and, without graphics it would be difficult to explain. Besides, it's my secret. It's enough for you, for now, to know how it works.

Mairena: What about its operation?

Meneses: [...] the apparatus already contains essential elements for a *copla*: it is a man, it is not a man, it can be a man, it is a woman, etc. etc.»

«engines animalize machines, but they also bestialize men». And so, that women's dance movements emerged, empowered by the political advance of transcontinental feminism.

These issues are also present in the construction elements of the *Coplas mecánicas* by Mairena —sung by El Niño de Elche in a piece staged with flamenco dancer Israel Galván— «es hombre, no es hombre, puede ser hombre, es mujer, etc». [it is a man, it is not a man, it can be a man, it is a woman, and so on] and in Francis Picabia's enigmatic artwork, *Peigne* and *Flamenca*, halfway between Dadaism, Futurist Machinism, and gag. Both works were published in 1917 in Barcelona, in an arts and literary magazine called 391. Machine shaped *flamenca*, or *flamenca-machine*, depending on how you look at it, is a work that definitively unites flamenco with the most radical European avant-garde. But as with Meneses' *Máquina de trovar*, written by Antonio Machado under a pen name, Mairena —a fictional character created by him— this is not an empty, anecdotal or simple container without content, although it is largely thus implied. For Picabia never ceases to use a game of mirrors, even in some of his Spanish paintings, such as *Barcelona* or *Papillon*, to visually spin through figures —superimposed or in palimpsest— the identity paradoxes on gender, race, knowledge, class or nation that were key at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is a fundamental question that hegemonic history seems to have sanitized. On the contrary, a flamenco counter-history based on Aby Warburg's method, whose political reading of historical images would lead us to re-read these documents from the past through the lens of a specific current historical event, would unite past and present feminist struggles. To then look at flamenco or modern dance without this cultural myopia. Perhaps we should, like Goya to his friend Zapater, ask for a pair of glasses so that we can see the symptoms in our time.

Why not see Picabia's *Flamenca* as a *Máquina de danzar* [dance machine] rather than as a *Máquina de trovar* [verse writing machine]? Indeed, both Picabia and Machado placed flamenco on the same axis as futuristic and Dada productions. Or to put it more clearly, they placed the popular or subaltern flamenco art on the same level as the refined and cultured avant-garde art, not only to compare them but as equal in terms of productive beauty under class, way of life, gender and capital synergies. When Picabia began writing poetry in 1915, painting became one aspect of his art career but not the only one. As William A. Camfield points out in *The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia*, his literary activity between 1917 and 1924 was on a par with his painting; he became a prolific poet and writer, while he kept painting and flirting also with stage production for ballet and film. Taken from this point of view, his experiments, *Peigne* —a correspondence between a flamenco ornamental comb and the mechanism of a vertical piano— and *Flamenca*, a correspondence between a sexual kinetic machine and the body of a *bailaora*, are like a correspondence game between the popular, the poetic and the political through a Dadaist *Miroir de l'Apparence*. As Picabia writes in the verse that accompanies his *Peigne*, let us look elsewhere to find the answer; let us look at the *tablao*. That subaltern social space where Mairena's Andalusian *cante jondo* enthusiasts create a mechanic copla with the *Máquina de trovar* which is like a futurist *parole en libertá* or a Dada poem by

Tristan Tzara (Romero «Vanguardistas»). As Maximillian Gautier stated in the second issue of the provocative magazine *391*, Picabia shows us historical symptoms through a theory of correspondence.

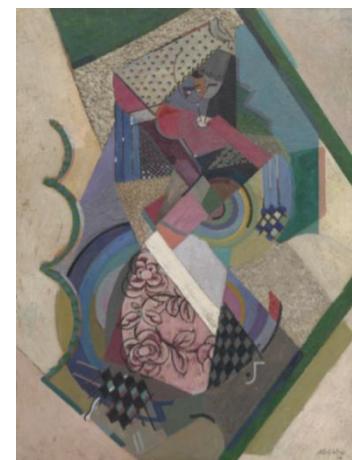
Le monde des idles et des formes lui apparalt comme un cosmos sympathique, tout en correspondances, rapports et ressemblances. Il aperçoit ce qu'il peut y avoir de commun et de liant entre une fleur et un moteur à explosions, entre une ligne et une idle, [...] un piano et un peigne, la mer et un tramway. Ce qu'on peut prendre chez lui pour une affectation de comique, n'est que l'effet d'une ingénuité pure, d'un ferme et sincère désir d'exprimer tout l'humain par les moyens les plus directs. Il n'a pour objectif que de se confier, projeter dans la matière les réalités de son être intérieur. (2)

While a critical social vision was emerging and leading the artistic avant-garde to movements and ideas of liberation of the social individual, Futurism was interested not only in the ethics, movement and aesthetics of the machine, but also in its reflection in dance. Thus the experimental studies on movement in flamenco dance that were being carried out by cubists such as Gleizes or Sonia Delaunay precipitated a new phase of social optimism for flamenco dissidence. «Capturing the structures of movement (time, speed, energy and force...)» present in their dance; as Ulla Magar states, «The confluence of this light and the rapid movement of the bodies break them down into a series of lines and broken shapes that give rise to a virtually abstract texture» (Magar). We can see this in Severini's *Blue Dancer*, Man Ray's *Explosante fixe*, or Marius de Zayas' cubist experiments with the dance of *La Argentinita* and the hand of the *tocaor* Manolo de Huelva or Ramón Montoya.



Fig. 3 (left). Maria Dalbaïcin with a Bugatti at Parc des Princes, June 17, 1927. [Agence Rol], Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Fig. 4 (right). Albert Gleizes, *Spanish Dancer (Danseuse espagnole)*, 1916. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.



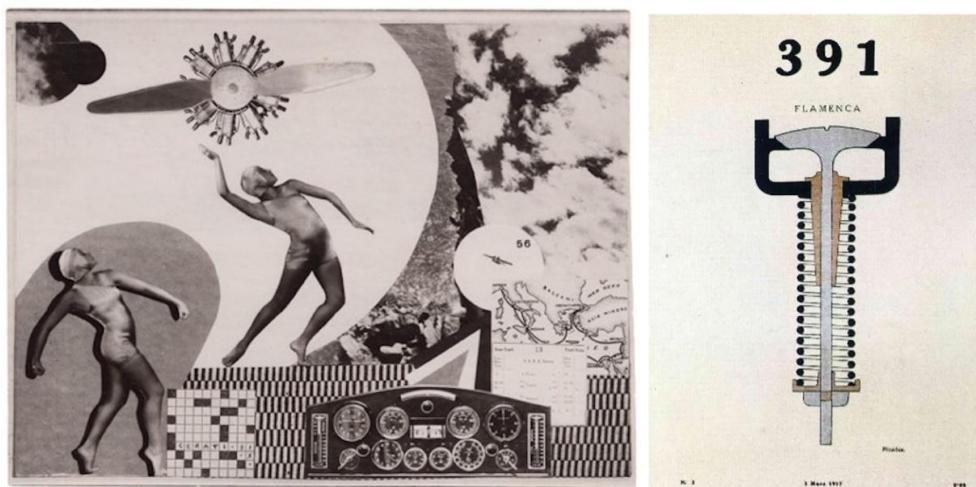


Fig. 5 (left). Cesare Cerati, *Hélice aerocomposición fotolibera*, fotocollage, 1931.

Fig. 6 (right). Francis Picabia, *Flamenca*, 1917, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

When Bergamín wrote *El arte poético de bailar: la Argentina* in 1933, he was well aware of Machado and Picabia's *machines*. It is from this point of understanding that we must see how Bergamín turns a malicious and sexist remark on Antonia Mercé —dancing like a sewing machine— into wonderful words of praise. He was wise and he knew that flamenco and machine were current trend identities. Paraphrasing Derrida, the avant-garde art and dance movements used architecture and the machine as a metaphor for a way of thinking, among other things, because creating «is a way of inhabiting» (135). Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, artists found in the machinist and architectural metaphors the perfect way to express the problems generated in the chaotic flow of inhabiting modernity. Let us think of José Bergamín's machine similes, the dancer Vicente Escudero creating *El tren* based on the sound of the locomotives and the movement of the wagons, or Néstor's marvelous set and costumes for *El fandango del candil* in 1927, one of the most beautiful and radically avant-garde ballets by Antonia Mercé, when La Argentina, wrapped in a dress made of flying roses like *Cahiers d'Art feuilles volantes*, shows a liberating wind through its architectural shapes.

We need to include cars in this machinist visual corpus. The feminist writer Emilia Pardo Bazán is said to have been the first Spanish woman ever to drive a car. This is no surprise when we know that the automobile was a symbol of freedom and technological progress. Not only did women's magazines fill their pages with advertisements with women driving or posing in front of the latest models of Renault, Van Den Plas or C.T. Weymann, but dancers like Josephine Baker starred in these ads, and artists like Sonya Delaunay designed their own Citroën models. The photographic hit of the moment was to be portrayed next to a car, as shown in photographs of Antonia Mercé, Isadora Duncan or Tórtola Valencia, among others. Giannina Censi danced like a futuristic airplane, and Isadora posed in photos giving laurels to an aviator or climbing into an airplane. Flamenco had a romance with the automobile from very early on; Marinetti begins his flamenco adventures at the wheel of a car in *España veloz y toro futurista*, published in 1931, same as Ozenfant, according to Gómez de la Serna. One of the most

interesting documents on flamenco and cars is the 1927 photograph in which we see the dancer María de Albaicín as a true New Woman of the time at the *Campeonato de artistas* held in the Parc des Princes in Paris, dressed in the latest trends in women's fashion on a Bugatti car. Flamenco and cars were an absolute symbol of modernity and the Spanish style was in vogue in the Parisian haute couture firms and in housing design. As *Flirt* magazine (Madrid) reveals, the Manila shawl was established as the equivalent of cars or airplanes in terms of modernity and beauty:

Shawls, thanks to their femininity, have gallantly survived the practical spirit of modern life, which has mixed and renewed everything... automobiles, airplanes. In our fast paced life, everything changes as soon as it starts, especially fashion... Hats, capes, suits, they all come and go. Only the classic shawl remains always in vogue and like a rose in spring they are reborn [...] A black or white shawl suits every face. A Manila will always enhance a woman's body. (5)

Going back to inhabiting *bios* and *zoe*, the flamenco way of life constitutes a space of political and vital resistance which did not go unnoticed to avant garde movements. It is not only present in Lorca's «machine for living» as a kind of wonderful misunderstanding of the famous Le Corbusier's *machine à habiter*; in Espinosa's affirmation, that sees «the gypsy» as a half-developed flamenco, as pointed out in his 1940 article, *Lo flamenco*. In the dance research that Antonia Mercé carried out on gypsy dances, codifying them as idiosyncratic dances performed *ad limitum* and, therefore, looked upon with a certain distrust because most of the time they degenerate into the grotesque. The most interesting thing is that, at a certain moment, the architectural and mechanistic discourse is united with *natura* through living, inhabiting, and a certain emotional geometry of the universal. As Juan José Lahuerta states in *Urbano y antiurbano: ¿Inferencia o antagonism?*, the modern project was not as machinist as it was believed to be. Thus, the natural laws of everyday man were understood as mechanical; ergo the flamencos become machines. In their journeys through Spain, Le Corbusier, Ozenfant, and futurists like Marinetti saw the opening of the magic circle of Agamben with a multitude of warlike, architectural and machinist similes appearing to describe singing, dancing, and music (Hernández García). For example, for Ozenfant the *Niña de los Peines* plays the castanets like a burst of machine gun fire:

following a law so subtle that the notes could not capture it, but that our instinct approves, as it senses an algebraic curve. La Niña creates a sound medium like metal, of an almost cruel accuracy, but flexible like a good spring. (8)

We cannot help but wonder whether Kazuo Ohno felt this way when he saw La Argentina dance at the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo in 1929. If this were the case, his piece *Admirando a La Argentina* created with Tatsumi Hijikata in 1977 would take on a particularly enigmatic meaning, linked to the biopolitics of the war events in which butoh dance sprouted, the nymphal gestures by ghosts in terms of Agamben and this machinist flamenco. Antonia Mercé was the exact symbiosis between the old and the avant-garde, a flamenco and a classical dancer, as

many have said, the best in a theatre and the best on *a tablao*. Pedro G. Romero recalls in *¿Puede el flamenco ser una danza moderna?*, that Antonia Mercé's flamenco scene was more experimental than the modern dance of Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman or Palucca. Not only was she more advanced in terms of visual, aesthetic and dance resources, but she also understood the stage as an experimental space. One only needs to think of her slim figure dancing a flamenco solo in a plain grey or red piece of cloth, a modern flamenco nymph.

#### 4. IN SEARCH OF THE FLAMENCO GESTURE IN THE ANIMALIST NYMPH

At this point in our historical and feminist genealogy of modern dances, Panel 46 (Nymph) and Panel 32 (Grotesque) reach an extremely interesting point by being related to the current rhizome of animalistic and flamenco images. According to Warburg, in certain configurations of the image and its form there is a series of hidden meanings that remain unchanged throughout the centuries, gaining prominence as indicators in a determined moment of history. We can therefore find the internal dialectics, semantic inclinations, and discursive tendencies through the study and monitoring of these gestures that are maintained throughout history, as well as their transformations, changes and movements. Something like an «iconic-dialectic key» to the body, a way of seeing the symptom through the search for the gestures frozen in the images of history. As Jacques Lacan stated, «Explaining art through the unconscious seems to me to be the most suspicious thing, and yet this is what analysts do. Explaining art by the symptom seems to me more serious» (38).

Panel 32 is absolutely terrestrial. Situated on the earth and translated as a sum of excesses that travel between the monstrous, the capital, and the dislocations of the bodies, penetrated by the visceral —like a death drive— inscribed in many of the sovereign, biopolitical or thanatopolitical practices of the West. It is presented as the panel in which Warburg collected and mapped those images that construct the notion of *grottesco*. It shows us a curious composition of images formed, for the most part, by variegated Italian representations and ceramics of Moorish dances, that following the new flows of modern dance would represent in itself a refreshing window to Antiquity as an ancestral civilization; a fact that dancers like Tórtola Valencia, Bronislava Nijinska, and Ida Rubinstein understood and used at the beginning of the twentieth century. They were at the centre of the whole Warburgian idea of the body as a medium, vehicle and revelation, generating by means of the gesture a constellation of or multiple —depending on one's perspective— symbols through the symptom, that today become «new» visual objects of knowledge. Figures between monstrous and graceful that remind us of the tensions that exist in the history of Western thought between Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Gay Science*. Georges Bataille—a great reader and commentator on Nietzsche—often used in his work festive-tragic motifs such as the «imploring joy» with which a man would «dance with the time that kills him» (qtd. in Didi-Huberman, *El Bailar* 81). This takes us back directly to the construction of flamenco dance, as «imploring joy» is its cornerstone. It is a dance built, most of the time, from that almost ceneesthetic place in which the bodies and their gestures pass constantly and in thousandths of

a second from life to death. Perhaps for this reason, Pedro G. Romero has found in Panel 32 a clear relationship between Warburg's images —variegated, grotesque and dislocated— that compose it and some gestures or forms of flamenco dance, the curve, the undulating movements or the arabesque. But we also find the survival of gestures linked to specific historical tanathopolitical moments such as Hiroshima and Nagasaki, undoubtedly the origin of butoh dance. That dark and enigmatic *Sleep of Reason* where Goya saw that it is impossible to somato-politically portray the individual without letting in all the pack of animals, animalities, «deviations» or strangeness that constitute it.

Bodies and their «dancing» evolve or change over the course of their history. It is important to know where one starts from, but also where one is going. And what Foucault (re)located as genealogies in the twentieth century becomes crucial to understand how flamenco dancing has been introduced into that forest where the wind blows, in Paul B. Preciado's words. The gestures of the flamenco bodies are based on the idea of the (feminine) body as a crucible of the visceral, sinful, excessive, erotic. The gestures of the flamenco body are, at their starting point, those of a body/woman overflowing and expanded in its excess that Western history seems to place only within the visceral disposition of *Mnemosyne*; or at least that is how it has transcended in current collective thought. Here lies one of the reasons for understanding the disparity, the virtually opposite spaces or stages of creation and action in which Isadora Duncan and Antonia Mercé, La Argentina, are perceived. Elsie McPhail states in her article *Imágenes y códigos de género* that Warburg begins to examine nymphs in detail in Botticelli's Renaissance painting, where they were no longer confined to the mythological sphere but appeared, moved by a breath of air, to break the harmony and straightforward construction of the humanist arts. Now the nymphs were found in everyday scenes and in cities and more profusely than one would expect given their *natura* origin. What Warburg displayed on the sheets that make up Panel 46 is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the dynamism and forms of change that the appearance of this interesting female figure imbued with wind and her gesture entails.

Panel 46 is the most enigmatic and excitingly thought-provoking. While it shows the figure of the nymph in form and aura, it subtly radiates a very different power. This is precisely where the problem lies regarding the attraction of Warburg's nymph vs. the animalist nymph. Through the constellation of images that make up Panel 46, Aby Warburg articulated a visual ode to the dynamism of female forms that generate change, seen and created precisely at the same historical moment when Antonia Mercé and Isadora Duncan began to create their dance productions based on radical forms of modernity and the avant-garde. But where is the «appearance» or survival of the Nymph generated today? Where does our animalist and flamenco nymph live or survive?

She is in a forest that is a reflection of all the forests «where nature bursts and the struggle for survival is imposed» (Molina). Where the wind blows, and there it is! In Rocío Molina's flamenco moves; this is the «iconic-dialectic key» that shows us what animalism is today. The

characteristic of the Nymph that most intrigued Warburg was precisely that its representation showed strong movements caused by the wind, which materialized for example in the undulating forms of her long hair or in clothes of sinuous volatility. According to Warburg, the wind freed them, or rather, generated the liberating movement of the maenads represented on sarcophagi (McPhail 110). But what if there was something more? What if the wind did not exactly free them, but rather formed part of them? What if the figure and the gesture of the Nymph were indissoluble from the wind that generates the dance of the flamenco bodies, the symptom of animalism or of a different kind of knowledge, perhaps that related to bees?



Fig. 7 (left). Sandro Botticelli, *Scene from La historia de Nastagio degli Onesti*, 1483, técnica mixta sobre tabla, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Fig. 8 (right). Kazuo Ohno as La Argentina, 1986.



Fig. 9 (left). José Clarà, *Isadora Duncan. La bacanal de Tannhäuser*, 1927 (ca.), Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona.

Fig. 10 (right). Rocío Molina, *Bosque Ardora*, 2014.

Rocío Molina lets her body dance *Bosque Ardora*; with flowing clothes—or no clothes—her hair like a horse's mane moved by wind, or wearing only a man's shirt to strip the *flamenco body* of its clothes. To paraphrase Duncan, she dances the freedom of women emerging from centuries of civilization's demise, emerging from an animalistic nakedness far from the norms of hetero-patriarchal humanism. Skirts, ruffles, shawls and other elements typical of flamenco costumes are no longer necessary to appreciate the beauty and strength of the movements and gestures of the most animalistic flamenco. If Warburg found dance harmony in Renaissance art—in cascades of flowers, branches and bushes shaken by the wind—in Rocío Molina's forest mythical nature is materialized in bunches of fruit at the foot of the trees, in tree leaves on the stage, or in inert gadgets. Her stage design takes us to an immanent place, the sum of all times. Thus, flamenco critic Silvia Calado reread in *Bosque Ardora*—in part or in synthesis, at least—one of the most important films in Japanese animated cinema, *Princess Mononoke*. The nymph of *Bosque Ardora* is revealed to us when Rocío Molina appears on stage looking chthonic. Carl Gustav Jung regarded nymphs as aspects of the female character of the unconscious «independent and also fragmented» «[...] they represent the temptation of heroic madness that unfolds in warlike, erotic or other kind of feats». A quasi-warlike femininity that was claimed by the futurist Valentine de Saint-Point in her *Manifesto della donna futurista* (1912) or *della Lussuria* (1913).

And without a doubt the battle breaks out in *Bosque Ardora*, when trombones, *cante*, poems, and expressionism flood the scene and the clamour of the struggle demands our presence. If Aby Warburg read in Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and *Spring* an intense external movement around the figure of the Nymph, evocative of ancient models, in *Bosque Ardora* we see these same forms, gestures and aerial movements in Rocío Molina's fine and vaporous dresses, her wavy hair, and the power of her dance. They reveal a new alliance between the ways of feeling (*pathos*) of the «ancient times» nymph and the rhizome of animalistic and flamenco images. A *Nachleben* that not only comes from the *grottesco* component inscribed in the «gypsy», but from the drive for modernity with which Antonia Mercé reshaped flamenco dance, the raised leg of Isadora Duncan in her free dances, or the bowed head of the bacchantes with outstretched arms, and avant-garde tailed gowns or Greek tunics—flowy and translucent—that revealed new dancing bodies and generated the *dark* dances of butoh art, a liberating constellation of dance moves that show us that Rocío is not just another nymph, but a (post)animalistic and flamenco nymph, for she makes her rebel body dance while the owls, like masked heteropatriarchy men, observe her.

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## APPENDIX I

1. *Moresca or Morris Dance* (below) and *Court scene* (above), Detail of the Frame of the chessboard in table, Carved ivory, Second half of XV century. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello.
2. *Moresca or Morris Dance*, Manuscript illumination on paper. From: Michael Scotus, *Opera astrologica*, 1438. Wrocław, Biblioteka Cyfrowa, Ms. IV F 21, fol. 155v.
3. Chessboard, Wood and carved ivory, Second half of XV century. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello.
4. Anonymous Florentine, *The monkeys and the pedlar*, Engraving, 1470-1490c. London, British Museum.
5. Master of the banderoles, *Fight for the Trousers*, Etching, 1464 ca. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett.
6. Israhel van Meckenem, *Ornamental Engraving with Morris Dancers*, Chalcography, last third of the XV c. Vienna, Albertina
7. Attributed to Hans Leinberger, *Dance around «Frau Welt»*, Chalcography, early 16th century. Vienna, Albertina.
8. Israhel van Meckenem, *Morris Dancers*, Chalcography, last third of the XV c. Vienna, Albertina.
15. Attributed to Hans Leinberger, *Dance around «Frau Welt»*, Chalcography, early 16th century. Vienna, Albertina.
16. *Banquet of the Peacock*, Coloured pen drawings on paper. From: Countess Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken, Huge-Scheppel-Handschrif, 1455-1456. Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 12 in scrin., fol. 13v.
17. Anonymous Florentine, *Naked Morris Dancer*, Silverpoint drawing with ink, second half of the XV c. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto di disegni e stampe.
18. Anonymous Florentine, *Morris Dancer*, Silverpoint drawing with ink, second half of the XV c. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto di disegni e stampe.
19. Johann Rudolf Thiele, *War Over a Woman's Skirt, War Over the Trousers*, Coloured woodcut, After 1770.
20. Erasmus Grasser, *Morris Dancer*, Wooden sculpture, 1480. Munich, Stadtmuseum.
9. *Moresca or Morris Dance*, Fresco, View of the medieval Casa Aschieri from Bussoleno (Val di Susa, Piemont), reconstructed between 1882 and 1884 in the Borgo e Rocca Medievali, Turin, coordinated by the Portuguese architect Alfredo d'Andrade.
10. *Beaker with the Story of the Monkeys and the Pedlar*, Silver, silver gilt, and painted enamel, 1425-1450 c. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection.
11. *Fight for the Trousers* (Inscribed: «Efrer Spaadom ska! syv Quinder treatte om en mans bure»), Chipboard box/ bridal box, 1702. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Museum Europäischer Kulturen.
12. Albrecht Dürer, *Monkeys Dancing* (inscribed by the artist: «Noch andere zw nornberg»), Pen and ink, 1523. Basel, Kunstmuseum, Kupferstichkabinett.
13. Peter Aubry, *Fight for the Trousers* (Text in the image: «You children of Venus believe you are all good and wise, but here seven women fight for a pair of trousers»), Etching, 1625-1650. Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung.
14. Anonymous Florentine, *Morris Dancer*, Silverpoint drawing with ink, second half of the XV c. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto di disegni e stampe.
22. Circle or pupil of Hugo Van Der Goes, *Allegory with the Goddess Venus* (Naked woman on a peacock. Probably the design of a table game for the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York, 1468), Silverpoint drawing, 1468 or 1485-1500. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett.
23. *Man Dancing Before an Idol of the Goddess Venus* (Personification of the month of April), Wash and ink drawing, XVI century. From: *Calendarium romanum a. 354 compositum cum figuris mensium*. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 3416 fol. 5v.
24. Daniel Hopfer, *Moresca Dancers Surrounding a Sausage Seller*, Copperplate etching, 1490-1536 c. Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Art.
25. *Triumph of the Carnival*, Painting, XVI century. Whereabouts unknown.
26. Manner of Hieronymus Bosch, *The Battle between Carnival and Lent* (Inscription on the painting, bottom center: «Dit is den clans van Luther met zijn nonne» (This is the dance of Luther with his nun)), Oil on panel, 1600-

21. Erasmus Grasser, *Morris Dancer*, Wooden sculpture, 1480. Munich, Stadtmuseum.
- 1620s c. Amsterdam Rijksmuseum (on loan to the Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, since 1984).

## APPENDIX II

7. Ghirlandaio's workshop, Fruit bearer, copy of the detail from *Birth of Saint John the Baptist*, Firenze, Chiesa di Santa Maria Novella, Cappella Tornabuoni, Pisa, Museo Civico.
15. Jacopo e Tommaso Rodari, *Presentazione al tempio con rilievo di Ercole (?) sull'altare*, bassorilievo, 1491-1509, Como, Duomo, lunetta del portale nord
19. Maso di Bartolomeo, *Un prigioniero viene condotto dinanzi all'imperatore*, tondo in marmo dal modello di una gemma antica, 1452, Firenze, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, cortile
20. Marcantonio Raimondi (da Raffaello), *La peste frigia (Il Morbetto)*, acquaforte su rame, 1520 ca.
24. Photograph from the beginning of the last century of an Italian peasant woman returning home (daily scene).

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