

**Flamenco and Its Gitanos
An Investigation of the Paradox of Andalusia:
History, Politics and Dance Art**

by

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ABSTRACT

Andalusia, Spain is considered the birthplace of flamenco. The art form not only embodies but represents the complex, multifaceted Andalusian identity. The southern region is a land of contradictions which includes the Gitano/Roma culture. The Spanish Gitano community laid the foundation for what we now call flamenco. The amalgamation of the cultures which existed in Spain informed the genre. These influences are explored with a thorough analysis of the of the Gitano/Roma nation. I document their journey from India to Spain and unravel the core elements of their identity. I focus on flamenco history and break down the song, guitar and dance techniques while discussing the emotional and paradoxical nature of the genre. I examine how eugenics, the Bullring, concepts of honor and shame, as well as flamenco, feed the Andalusian paradox. Flamenco under the dictator Franco, became an icon of Spain and as a result the female body was commodified. Gender roles are examined and a discourse on power is established. I conclude that this study represents an important contribution to the understanding of Andalusia, flamenco and the Gitano/ Roma nation. With the transmission of the arts, social, political as well as gender complexities are revealed.

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