

Chapter 4

Roles and Characters of the Bernalillo Matachines

The most important folk Catholic celebration in Bernalillo is the Matachines dance. Throughout the year, Bernalillo observes other celebrations such as the Christmas Posadas and Comanchitos dance, but every August, this sleepy town comes to life with a buzz of activity and excitement as the fiesta nears. The people that have lived in Bernalillo for generations have been involved in the Matachines dance in many ways from dancing, or watching the processions, to making personal promesas. This intensive life-long connection has shaped and molded the dance into its own distinct style within the larger whole of Southwestern Matachines. It is important to explore each character involved in the dance, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the individuals who do not dance, but who play significant roles within the Fiestas de San Lorenzo. This chapter describes the dance, its characters and the roles these characters play during and after the dances, its structure, and its significance in the community.

The Bernalillo Matachines dance is comprised of two dances—la danza and la corrida. The first dance is performed by two Monarcas, two Toros, two Abuelos, six Malinches, and 24 line dancers (danzantes), including eight capitanes. La danza is comprised of tenured dancers, many of whom have danced numerous years. La corrida is the dance performed while taking San Lorenzo in procession through the town of Bernalillo. In order to begin dancing la danza, one must first dance in la corrida. After dancing in la corrida, one then graduates to a position on the fila, or la danza. Typically, one dances for approximately five years in la corrida before dancing in la danza,ⁱ but depends on the amount of open spaces on the fila. Those who dance in la danza also participate in la corrida.

The Characters

Monarca



Monarcas. Patrick Aguilar, 2005.

El Monarca (monarch) represents Montezuma, the leader of the Aztec people, who leads his dancers in the Matachines dance. Prior to the 1960s, Monarca dressed similar to the *danzantes*; in the 1960s he began to wear white pants, a white shirt and white shoes.ⁱⁱ This was perhaps changed in order for the leader of the dance to be easily identified. The role of Monarca is given to the individuals with the most experience dancing in the Matachines, with some having danced for over 30 years.

Monarca wears a corona (crown) generally decorated with red and white flowers, although the colors have varied throughout time. Monarca's face is covered by a black cloth called a *mascada*, which is worn to conceal the identity of the dancer.ⁱⁱⁱ The *mascada* also represents "a shield to cover your face"^{iv} in order to protect the dancer from evil. *Fleco* (fringe) is worn over the eyes, which is also used to conceal the identity of the dancer. Charles Aguilar, a current violinist, *rezador* and former Mayor of Bernalillo, explains that the act of covering the face is part of the *promesa* which "is something very personal between that person and God

through the intercession of San Lorenzo. So the whole idea is to conceal the identity of the individual.”^v Ribbons are attached to the corona and hang down the back of Monarca. Monarca also wears a *respaldo*, which is a scarf worn on the back, and varies depending on the personal preference of the dancer.

The style of the *respaldo* can vary, but the majority of dancers typically wear a silk *respaldo* depicting Our Lady of Guadalupe.



Our Lady of Guadalupe respaldo. Patrick Aguilar, 2005.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is not one of the most popular saints in Bernalillo, but this hint at a devotion to her may have carried over from the time the refugees from Bernalillo were in exile in the El Paso area. Jacqueline Orsini states that a mission to Our Lady of Guadalupe was established in El Paso in 1668 (Orsini 1999:49). Further, she states “it was to this mission, which had been recently established for the native population, that refugees from the Northern Rio Grande corridor would be drawn into active devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe” (Orsini 1999:49). The direct correlation between the *respaldo* depicting Our Lady of Guadalupe may be

drawn from Orsini's statement regarding the reoccupation of the Rio Grande Valley by Diego de Vargas: "On September 15, 1692, leaders of the Tewa, Tano, and Picurís tribal groups presented Vargas with a number of valuable items including...a now lost image of the Virgin of Guadalupe rendered on silk" (Orsini 1999:49).

A scarf hangs from the left elbow of each Monarca. Monarca also wears another scarf that is fastened at the waist which is held by la Malinche during various dances. The color of the scarf is usually red, but varies according to personal preference of the dancer. Lifelong resident of Bernalillo and former longtime Monarca, Eddie Torres II states "my grandfather used to tell me that the scarf that you use on your left arm was like your *bandera*, like to show your colors."^{vi} Monarca also carries a palma (palm) in his left hand, which represents the holy trinity. The wooden palma is typically maneuvered in a figure eight throughout all dances. Regarding the symbolism of the palma, Mike Kloeppel, a current Monarca, explains that the dancer keeps the palma in front of his face and in front of his heart, protecting himself throughout the dances.^{vii} A guaje (rattle) is carried in the right hand, which is used to pulse the beat of each tune. The palma and guaje are painted and decorated according to personal preference. Most palmas are decorated with flowers in accordance to each dancer's color scheme, including ribbons, mirrors, pictures of loved ones, saints etc. Some have a grill, the attribute often depicted with San Lorenzo, carved into the wood. Some may even elect to have their names carved on their palmas.

La Malinche



Las Malinches. Miguel Gandert, 2005.

In many parts of Mexico, the historical figure of La Malinche is often blamed for the betrayal of her people. She was an interpreter for the Spanish, aiding in their subsequent conquest of the Aztec Empire. She is known as a traitor in Mexico, but further north, in New Mexico, La Malinche is admired and respected. In many parts of the Southwest, she is viewed as an ally who helped the Spanish people. In the Matachines dance, La Malinche represents the daughter of Montezuma (Kloeppel 1970:8).^{viii} She is viewed as one of the first converts to Christianity and therefore is influential in her father's conversion to Christianity. Regarding the interaction between the danzantes and La Malinche, Kloeppel states "she's our guardian angel that we watch over throughout the dance."^{ix}

The Bernalillo Matachines dance contains six Malinches in order to compensate for the three arduous days of dance. Each Malinche has an opportunity to take part in both la danza and la corrida and are chosen to do so randomly. The Malinches vary in age from 10-12 years old. This reflects the communal view of childhood's innocence and purity. Each Malinche is required to wear a white First Holy Communion-style dress, which represents Malinche's purity^x and innocence.^{xi} The Malinches also wear crowns with veils attached. The crowns are sometimes decorated with flowers chosen by the Mayordomos.

El Abuelo



Abuelo. Patrick Aguilar, 2005.

Two Abuelos (grandfathers) are present in the Bernalillo Matachines. These individuals are influential in the discipline of the Toro. They are referred to as grandfathers who teach the dancers, especially Malinche, in the proper ways of the religion. Outside of the actual dance,

they are responsible for the organization of the dance groups and the *velorio* (all-night watch).

Also a position of seniority, the Abuelo role is taken on by a veteran dancer. Kloeppel states:

The Abuelo is the one that will make sure that all the danzantes are conforming to the dance and making sure that they are keeping the tradition proper, so the Abuelo is the overseer of everything, he's the older person, he's been around, he knows how the dances are supposed to go and he goes from there.^{xii}

Leonard Prairie, a lifelong member of Bernalillo, began dancing in los Matachines in 1971 and has been Abuelo for 17 years states "the Abuelos try to correct the dancers from any wrongdoing, if they're out of line, or if they're having trouble with the dance steps. We also try to get in there and try to teach them as we go and help them and also keep the bull in line and protect the dancers."^{xiii}

Ralph Chavez, also a lifelong resident of Bernalillo, remembers seeing the Matachines as a child and constructing makeshift palmas and guajes with sticks and aluminum cans filled with rocks to imitate the dancers. He began dancing los Matachines in 1975 and 1976, and after a brief stint in not dancing the Matachines, he returned in 1980 promising to dance for 20 years. In 1988, after dancing for 14 years on the fila and as Toro, Ralph began, and continues to dance as one of the Abuelos. Chavez states being an Abuelo entails having a large amount of responsibility, and that in the community "a lot of people look at you with respect. It's part of [the Abuelos'] job; part of our promesa. It's not for us, it's for the public. I love what San Lorenzo has done for me...It's a great feeling; a great honor to dance for San Lorenzo...to be here for that long. I'd be lost if I retired."^{xiv} Chavez expresses the importance of the younger generations of Bernalillo taking interest in the dance stating "[When we're in procession,] little kids will say 'there's the whipper...whip [the Toro] again!' I hope these kids take the tradition and keep it going."^{xv}

El Abuelo is dressed in black pants and a white shirt with a respaldo on his back. Both Abuelos will typically coordinate the same color scheme and respaldo, but in some instances the decision is based solely on the preference of the individual. The Abuelos may also wear two ribbons, about three feet in length that are attached at the waist and hang down the side of each leg. The Abuelos wear sun/shade hats and carry whips, which are influential in the discipline of the Toro.

El Toro



El Toro. Patrick Aguilar, 2005.

The Toro (bull) represents evil and paganism. Throughout the dance, he walks about the dance area, attempting to distract the Abuelo, Malinche, Monarca and danzantes from converting to the new religion. In la corrida, El Toro walks about the street scaring small children, making him a feared figure within the community. El Toro is a reminder of the constant presence of evil.

The Bernalillo Toros wear red shirts and black pants. The headdress is decorated with red flowers, including horns protruding from the top. The face is also covered with fleco and a mascada. The Toros wear respaldos and scarves on the left elbow. The Toro also holds a black cane in each hand, portraying the image of an actual four-legged bull. The canes are often decorated with ribbons and flowers.

Capitanes/ Danzantes



Capitanes and Danzantes. Mario Montano, 2004.

The danzantes, or soldiers of Montezuma, can begin dancing los Matachines at the age of 14. These dancers perform in la corrida and la danza. Their attire consists of black pants and white shirts. Danzantes also wear respaldos, elbow scarves and carry a palma in the left hand and a guaje in the right hand. The distinct attribute of the danzantes is the cupil, which represents a bishop's mitre hat,^{xvi} or an adaptation of an Aztec noble crown (Champe 1980-81:10). I would also like to suggest the similarities between a Christian church and the Matachines dancer. Christian churches were capped with a cupola, or dome. The linguistic similarities between the words cupola and cupil are striking, but when both items are analyzed in a religious and spiritual context become even more interesting. According to Gale Murray, the Christian church dome served as a symbol of the association with heaven and confers a sense of holiness of its inner components.^{xvii} By donning the cupil and making a promesa, a Matachines dancer also encompasses all that is holy in his/her heart and mind which is strikingly similar to the meaning and purpose of a Catholic cupola.

The cupil was once made of cardboard, but because summer rains ruined these easily, new materials were used, including plastic and durable vinyl. Emma Torres, whose husband

danced for numerous years as a *danzante* and *Monarca*, learned to make cupiles by taking apart an older cupil made by her husband's mother.^{xviii} She states that the older cupiles that were made of cardboard ruined because of the sweat of the *danzante*. This prompted her to look for a durable, harder material. In creating her sons' cupiles, Torres used a material cutting board because it is sturdy and when finished, does not flop at the top. The material is fitted to the size of the *danzante*'s head. An inverted "U" shape is then cut with two side flaps on each side (Illustration 1).

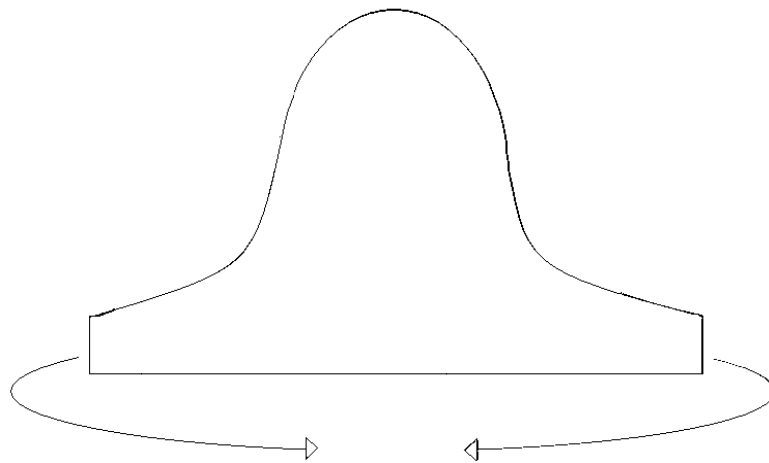


Illustration 1. Pattern of the cupil.

The base material is then covered with cloth and may include shiny, floral lace. The colors of each depend upon the preference of the dancer, who usually chooses a color scheme. Torres then uses liquid stitch glue to attach a laminated picture of the dancer's patron saint to the center of the cupil. This may be the dancer's or a family member's patron saint. The most popular images include San Lorenzo, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus and El Santo Niño. At this point, Torres adds floral lace trimming to the borders of the cupil and around the picture of the saint. According to Torres some dancers prefer fleco or lace to cover the eyes,

which is added next. Torres then sews absorbent padding to the inside of the cupil, which is usually a double-folded headband, in order to absorb the sweat of the dancer. Next, Torres measures the head of the *danzante* and hand sews white elastic bands to the cupil in order for the headpiece to stay in position throughout the dances. Ribbons are then added to the back of the cupil, which vary from five to six feet in length, but vary according to the height of the dancer. Torres measures from the top of the cupil to the back of the dancer's knee. In addition, the ribbons are glued together in the back of the cupil so that the dancer's head is not seen. The same lace that was added as trimming and around the picture of the saint is added to the back of the cupil, across the ribbons. A *mascada* is then added which is pinned to the cupil and tied over the ribbons in the back of the cupil.

Torres states that before modern technology, the process of creating a cupil was very time consuming. As a result, the sewing machine has cut the labor in half. In working for two hours an evening, in roughly two weeks, a cupil is complete. Using her own experience and ideas and techniques from others, Emma has created a very recognizable style of cupil. Being knowledgeable in using a sewing machine, as well the ability to hand-sew and knowledge of materials is necessary in order to create functional and aesthetic cupiles; an art that Torres has fully embraced and expanded with her own ideas. When asked what gives her the most satisfaction in creating cupiles, Torres smiles and answers that in seeing her sons donning her cupiles she gains satisfaction in "seeing them out there."^{xix}

In la danza, the *capitanes* are positioned at the end of each *fila*. These eight dancers are typically those with more seniority than others on the *fila*. The four *capitanes* on the inside of the *filas*, closest to Monarca, are called *capitanes de adelante*, and the four on the outside are called *capitanes de atras*^{xx} (Illustration 2).

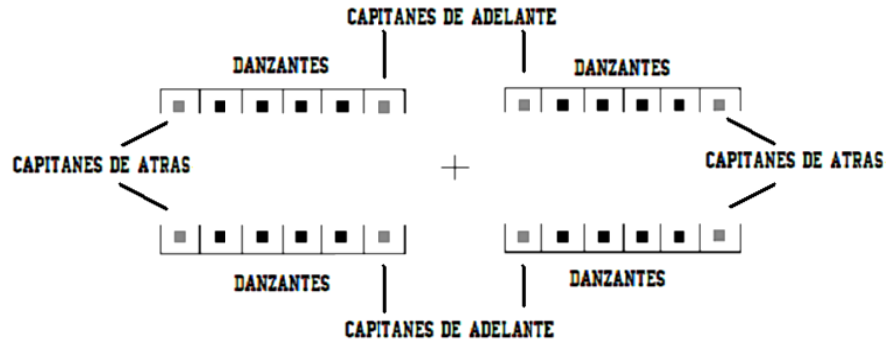


Illustration 2. Positions of Capitanes and Danzantes on the Fila

During the dance, the capitanes call out dance movements and are also responsible for maintaining straight lines and uniformity among all dancers. When a Monarca retires from dancing, a capitan will usually move into the position.

Arcos



Arcos. Mario Montano, 2004

These girls typically range in age from 11 to 13 years.^{xxi} The Arcos are responsible for carrying the arches that precede the three depictions of San Lorenzo while in procession through the town of Bernalillo. Two Malinches stand under the arches while interchanging throughout la corrida. The Arcos, like the Malinches, wear white dresses but do not participate in the actual

dancing; they participate only in the procession (la corrida) portion of the dance, as well as all other non dancing activities affiliated with the fiesta. The actual arches that the girls carry are said to have a connection to medieval times in Europe in which arches were carried in parades/processions celebrating combat/battle victories.^{xxii}

Tambores



Tambores. Mario Montaña 2004.

The Tambores (drums) are boys, typically the same age as the Malinches (10-12 years old). These boys are responsible for beating the drum that precedes the Matachine dancers in the processions. During the processions, these young children are accompanied by two to three adults who watch over them. They are also responsible for beating the drum prior to the start of the novena.

The Tambores are dressed similar to the danzantes in white shirts and black pants. They do not wear cupiles, but wear respaldos and elbow scarves. The drum the Tambores carry reflect neighboring pueblo customs that were either introduced or adopted into the Matachines dance, which were nevertheless embraced and incorporated into the traditions of Bernalillo. The actual drums used in the Matachines were made in Cochití Pueblo.

Mayordomos



Tina Dominguez and Santiago Montoya. Patrick Aguilar, 2005.

The most distinguished honor in relation to the Matachines dance of Bernalillo is receiving San Lorenzo in the home. The family that becomes the caretaker of the saint throughout the year receives the title of Mayordomo. The process of becoming Mayordomo begins years in advance. The title of Mayordomo typically goes to a married couple, but this is not always the case (for a partial list of Mayordomos from 1939-2007 see appendix). The 2004 Mayordomos were brother and sister, making this the first time that siblings have become Mayordomos. Tina Dominguez and her brother Santiago Montoya, both of whom are lifelong residents of Bernalillo, decided to take on the role of Mayordomos six years ago and were excited to see him come back to their parent's home. San Lorenzo was at Seferino and Connie

Montoya's home in 1986-87. Montoya and Dominguez are also the youngest pair of Mayordomos.^{xxiii}

The tradition in Bernalillo of asking for the saint is verbal. Dominguez elaborates on this system and how she and her brother received San Lorenzo:

You have to ask the last person in the line actually. What we did the year that we decided, we went to the Mayordomo at the time who was Gloria Garcia. She had the santo that year and we asked her if she knew who was at the end of the line and she told us who she thought it was. So it was just sort of like going from family to family you know 'so we heard that you asked for San Lorenzo. Did you promise him to someone?' and they said 'yes we did' and it just kept going until we got to the end of the line and what you do is... and at the time it was Mr. and Mrs. Santillanes, and you have to go to the house, you can't call on the phone or you can't see them on the street and ask them. You have to go to their house and ask for him and we set up a time, we went over there, my brother and I, and we asked them if we could receive San Lorenzo from them, so they agreed and offered him in return to us.^{xxiv}

The saint is passed from one family to the next on the third and last day of the fiesta. On August 11, San Lorenzo is taken from the home of the *mayordomos presentes* (current Mayordomos) to the home of the *mayordomos entrantes* (incoming Mayordomos). Dominguez and Montoya carried San Lorenzo from the house of the previous Mayordomos (John and Mary Aragon) on August 11, 2003. As the procession neared their home, they were instructed to walk ahead of the dancers and proceed into their house. With great anticipation, they awaited the arrival of San Lorenzo. Dominguez states:

I remember the second they came to the door. We walked in the procession because we had to, but as we approached a certain point, we had to run ahead. Someone had to grab the santo from us and we had to run ahead to be here, to greet them at the door, and you have to have the door shut and they knock and you have to allow them in your home, and they do a *bendicion*, a prayer to request that he come in, and you have to allow him in. I think that in itself is overwhelming because everybody in our family was just sitting here crying, because we were just so excited about it.^{xxv}

Beginning on August 11, the Mayordomos are responsible for many tasks, including hosting the monthly rosaries and preparing for the fiesta the following year. A space within the house is cleared for the altar of San Lorenzo. The image of San Lorenzo, as well as candles, statues, pictures of loved ones, flowers etc. adorn the altar. In order to commemorate the feast day of San Lorenzo on August 10, the Mayordomos host a rosary on the 10th of every month. The rosaries begin at 7:00 pm^{xxvi} with *danzantes*, as well as faithful followers of San Lorenzo typically in attendance. Charles Aguilar, a local *rezador* (prayer leader) comes to the house to pray the rosary, which includes the firing of rifles at the start of each mystery (for rosary text and prayers see appendix). If Charles is unable to pray the rosary, Robb A. Sisneros and/or Katherine Chavez usually fill this role. After the rosary, meals are served to those in attendance.

The Mayordomos are also responsible for keeping their doors open to any individuals who wish to come and pray at any hour of the day or night. The saint can never be left alone in the home. In some instances, the home of the Mayordomos becomes a space in which some people come to be in the presence of the *santo* for hours at a time. The Mayordomos feel that they have gained another member of the family while San Lorenzo is in the home:

There's like a presence you know. I feel, and it's a really warm feeling. It's really exciting I think especially because the altar is lit with candles, and each candle that is lit, is lit because someone lights it for a particular reason, you know they say a prayer and they have special requests or petitions for that lighting of that candle, and I think that light is always represented as something positive and so you have that in the house, you always see that, no matter if it's dark and you're sitting even in your own room you see that glow, so there's like this presence, and I think it's really amazing.^{xxvii}

Montoya states that the responsibility of being mayordomo came before anything else in his life, therefore he had to speak to his boss at work to explain the process of what was to come

in being Mayordomo of San Lorenzo. Montoya states that having the santo “was awesome... it was the best year of my life. When San Lorenzo was with us, life was good.”^{xxviii}

When practice for all *danzantes* begins in July, the Mayordomos begin to accelerate plans for the fiesta. During the actual fiesta, the Mayordomos are responsible for feeding the dancers before and after the actual dances. A total of three meals are served to the dancers during the fiestas. After the dancers have eaten, the public is invited to eat as well.^{xxix}

Another responsibility of the Mayordomos is the training of the *Malinches* and *Arcos*. Certain responsibilities are delegated to individuals, typically tenured dancers throughout this time. For example, Charles Aguilar is associated with the organization of the *músicos*, as well as the praying aspect of the *Matachines*. Robb A. Sisneros is also associated with the praying during the procession and *velorio*. The *Monarcas* and *Abuelos* typically take on the responsibility of contacting dancers, as well as maintaining the lists of dancers who have expressed an interest in dancing the following year. Overall, the Mayordomos are responsible for every aspect of the *Matachines* dance, although delegations of authority and organization have been structured. Ultimately the Mayordomos make all decisions. Delegation of duties between each mayordomo is also in place. Montoya states that there are implicit delegations of responsibility by gender, reflecting the communal view of gender roles, although he and Tina “did things collectively.”^{xxx} In some instances, the Mayordomos have actually chosen which individuals will dance certain roles such as *Monarca* or *danzante*.

Certain boundaries mark where the saint is geographically allowed to travel. For example, the saint cannot reside in a home north of U.S. 550 (formerly U.S. 44). The natural boundary to the west of Bernalillo is marked by the river and irrigation canal, which the saint

cannot pass. The furthest south the saint can travel is marked by Calle de Bosque. Finally, the saint is not allowed to reside in a home east of the railroad tracks.

Músicos



Músicos. Mario Montano, 2004

The 2004 Matachines dance was accompanied by an 11-member group, including six violins and five guitars. The musicians are present at every dance including la danza and la corrida. All members play during la danza. The group is split in two during la corrida. While one group rests, the other provides the music for the fila that is dancing.

The music for the Matachines dance is passed from generation to generation. Charles Aguilar, a violinist, expresses that he became involved in the Matachines dance playing the guitar accompaniment for his grandfather in 1956. Aguilar states that his grandfather Luciano Nieto, an accomplished violinist in the Matachines, was concerned about the survival of the music. Aguilar then learned the music by watching and listening to his grandfather and ultimately resumed the role of lead violinist. Aguilar has also taught the music to his son and niece.^{xxx} Although the music is taught by listening and repetition, it has been recorded and transcribed by other researchers.

The Bernalillo Músicos have been asked to play for other Matachines groups, including Sandía Pueblo. While attending the Folklife Festival in Washington D.C. in 1992, Aguilar states that he met an individual named Claude Stevenson from Albuquerque who was asked to join the Músicos playing the violin. Stephenson states that he played in July in Washington D.C. accompanying Charles Aguilar on the guitar. He was invited to play with the Bernalillo Músicos the next month in August for the fiestas and has since learned the music and has been involved in the Matachines. After playing the guitar for five years, Claude moved to playing the violin.^{xxxii} The music is an important component to the Matachines dance which can be seen in the growing interest in learning the music by several individuals, including young children.

Rezadores



The *rezadores* (prayer leaders) involved in the Matachines dance also play a crucial role during the fiestas and throughout the entire year. Because of the deep religiosity of the dance, it is a given that traditional prayers, and those that recite them, play an integral role within the entire tradition. As previously mentioned, *rezadores* are present at the monthly rosaries, as well as the nine-day novena prior to August 10. While Aguilar is devoted to supplying the music for the Matachines, two individuals have since become associated with the recitation of prayers. Robb A. Sisneros, a former Monarca, as well as Katherine Chavez sing the rosary during the processions. During the processions, the *rezadores* are present near the saints in the crowd that follows the dancers. On August 9, the first day of the fiesta, when the saint is placed in the Santuario, both *rezadores* pray the *visperas* (vespers). The *rezadores* are also seen in all processions through town as well as the all night watch (velorio).

Robb A. Sisneros started dancing la corrida in 1972 when he was seven years old. Sisneros comes from a long line of danzantes with his father Justin Sisneros serving as Monarca. His brother Richard Sisneros is also a current Toro. He also danced as Monarca in 1987 and 1997. Since 1987, Sisneros has been involved in the Matachines serving as a rezador. Sisneros states that he learned how to be a rezador under the guidance of Petrita Torres (Eddie Torres II mother) and Mary Gauna (Prospero Baca's daughter).^{xxxiii} Petrita Torres and Mary Gauna shared responsibilities, according to Sisneros, but because he was always in the presence of the two, he learned the *alabados* and prayers associated with each component of the Matachines tradition. Sisneros also states that each rezador wants to create something to leave in the tradition. The prayers that are recited in today's Matachines are a product of the strong ties between each rezador: Don Filomeno Lucero, Don Prospero Baca, Petrita Torres, Mary Gauna, Charles Aguilar and Robb A. Sisneros (for alabado texts see appendix).

As previously mentioned, Katherine Chavez also aids in the praying aspect of the Mataachines, namely the procession. According to Sisneros, during the processions, the rezador and rezadora are responsible for singing the rosary, assuring that the saint is being passed from person to person, and keeping the arcos together and in a straight line. Sisneros describes “I feel I need to keep the group moving” acting, in a way, as a “referee.”

The rezador is also an individual that remains with the saint throughout the velorio. Sisneros learned from Mary Gauna that the velorio reminded the community that at least one person would be with the santo and that the Mataachines dancers are watching over an “image” of a saint, not a saint.^{xxxiv} In addition, other responsibilities included taking some of the responsibilities from the Mayordomos by praying and being with the saint during the early morning hours in order for them to rest. An important element of the velorio is the element of humor which is evident throughout the night. This element was incorporated by earlier rezadores and carried-on by Sisneros as a reminder that San Lorenzo “went out of this world laughing.”^{xxxv}

Oficiales

The *oficiales* (officials) are individuals involved in the Mataachines dance who are positioned at the edges of the dance area during la danza. They are mainly responsible for crowd control. They are also positioned in front of the dancers, as well as near the saint during la corrida. Nobody is allowed to pass the saint as he is taken through town, and these individuals enforce this implicit rule. These individuals are dressed in black pants and white shirts in addition to carrying whips similar to those the Abuelos carry. Ten officials were involved in the 2004 Mataachines. Many of these individuals have previously been involved as dancers in the Mataachines, who have since retired from dancing. One individual, who was a dancer in la danza

asked the Mayordomos if she could resume her father's role as an *oficial*. Her father recently passed away and was an *oficial* for many years.^{xxxvi}

Rifles



Rifles. Mario Montano, 2004

Like the *rezadores*, the two men who carry rifles are seen throughout the processions, as well as at the monthly rosaries. The rifles are shot at the start of each mystery, as well as when the saint arrives at his Santuario, or the home of the Mayordomos. The two men who are responsible for the rifles also dress in white shirts and black pants.

La Procesión



Procession. Mario Montaña, 2004.

During the processions through town, a large crowd of people follow the dancers. Some of these individuals are family members of dancers, but many are faithful followers of San Lorenzo. These people also take part in praying the rosary during processions. Anyone is welcomed to participate in this portion of the Matachines.

Three images of San Lorenzo are carried on wooden platforms during the processions. The main depiction of San Lorenzo is an image of Bernalillo's patron, which is the saint that is in the home throughout the year. This image is also called the *stampa* and is encased in a white wooden frame with a glass cover. This saint can only be carried by the *mayordomos presentes* in the front, and the *mayordomos entrantes* in the back. Another depiction is a small *bulto* which is also encased in a wooden frame. This santo is also called the *santo viejo* and San Lorenzo Silva,

which was brought from a small community that borders Bernalillo to the north called *Llanito*. It was brought every year on horse buggy from Llanito and was allowed to stay in the home of the Mayordomos from July to August.^{xxxvii} The santo belonged to the Silva family that resided in Llanito, but when the matriarch of the family passed away, the saint was then passed to her daughter, who lives in Bernalillo on San Lorenzo Street.^{xxxviii}

When practice for the *danzantes* begins on the first Sunday in July, the *Matachines* dance in procession to the home in which the *santo viejo* resides on a permanent basis. He is then brought to the home of the current Mayordomos. San Lorenzo Silva is known as the saint of the people and therefore during the procession, Dominguez states “The people interchange through [carrying San Lorenzo Silva]. You usually have a set group that begins, you know that starts it off, and then everybody interchanges throughout the procession.”^{xxxix} The third depiction of San Lorenzo is a carved wooden *bulto* which stands about two feet tall. This santo was carved by a local *santero* (saint maker) named Filimón Aguilar^{xl} and resides in the Santuario de San Lorenzo throughout the year. This santo joins the other two on the first Sunday in July and stays in the home through September. Typically, the Mayordomos of the Santuario de San Lorenzo begin and end the processions carrying this saint, but during the processions the people walking share in carrying the saint.^{xli}

When the saint is passed to the new Mayordomos, the *santo viejo* returns to the home on San Lorenzo Street, and the other saint is returned to the church, which occurs after the September 10 rosary.

La Gente de la Comunidad

While the Mataachines dance in procession through town, many people line the streets to watch the dances. It has been the tradition of extended families to gather and watch the processions. When the Mataachines are near, a silence comes over the crowd. As the Toro passes, children run to the security of their parents or of a car.

During la danza, families also carry on the tradition of getting together to watch the dances. Many people bring canopies and tarps, which are set up on the peripheries of the dance area. Many family members who have moved to different areas of the country return to Bernalillo during the fiestas.

The structure of the roles and characters portion of the Mataachines says much about how Bernalillo organizes a large number of dancers and participants. Distinct delegations of authority and planning emerge, along with positions of seniority. The experienced dancers are responsible for the planning and structuring of the dances. The Mayordomos add personal touches to the tradition, including specific color schemes, which can be seen in the attire of the Malinches/Arcos and inside the *jacal*. The range in the ages of the dancers is also very pronounced. The Tambores and Malinches range in age from 10-12 years, with young adults and middle-aged individuals taking on danzante positions. The experienced dancers are typically those that are responsible for the most distinguished dancing roles including Monarca, Toro, and Abuelo.

Much can also be said in regard to the deep familial ties that are evident in the Mataachines tradition. Several family members participate in the fiestas, which demonstrate how families forge their identities around this dance. Every person within the community plays an important role in the continuation of this tradition. Some chose to make a promesa and fulfill it through dancing; others help the Mayordomos; others simply watch and take part in the dances

by observing San Lorenzo's feast day. Overall, the Matachines dance acts as the social glue that binds the community, and is held in very high regard by the residents of Bernalillo.

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- ⁱ Leonard Prairie, interview with author
ⁱⁱ Eddie Torres II, interview with author
ⁱⁱⁱ Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^{iv} Eddie Torres II, interview with author
^v Charles Aguilar, interview with author
^{vi} Eddie Torres II, interview with author
^{vii} Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^{viii} Eddie Torres II, interview with author
^{ix} Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^x Sharon Torres-Garcia, interview with author; Desiree Lovato, interview with author; Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xi} Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^{xii} Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^{xiii} Leonard Prairie, interview with author
^{xiv} Ralph Chavez, interview with the author
^{xv} Ralph Chavez, interview with the author
^{xvi} Charles Aguilar, interview with author; Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^{xvii} Gale Murray, interview with author
^{xviii} Emma Torres, interview with the author
^{xix} Emma Torres, interview with the author
^{xx} Mike Kloeppel, interview with author
^{xxi} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xxii} Timothy Lucero, personal communication
^{xxiii} Santiago Montoya, personal communication, September 2006
^{xxiv} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xxv} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xxvi} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xxvii} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xxviii} Santiago Montoya, personal communication, September 27, 2006
^{xxix} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xxx} Santiago Montoya, personal communication, September 2006
^{xxxi} Charles Aguilar, interview with author
^{xxxii} Claude Stephenson, personal communication, September 2006
^{xxxiii} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
^{xxxiv} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
^{xxxv} Robb A. Sisneros, interview with author
^{xxxvi} Charles Aguilar, interview with author
^{xxxvii} Eddie Torres II, interview with author
^{xxxviii} Eddie Torres II, interview with author
^{xxxix} Tina Dominguez, interview with author
^{xl} Santiago Montoya, personal communication, September 2006
^{xli} Tina Dominguez, interview with author

CHAPTER 5 NOTES