

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Choreographing Politics, Dancing Modernity: Ballet and Modern Dance in the Construction of Modern México (1919-1940)

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8z45r94t>

Author

Reynoso, Jose Luis

Publication Date

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Choreographing Politics, Dancing Modernity:
Ballet and Modern Dance in the Construction
of Modern México (1919-1940)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Culture and Performance

by

Jose Luis Reynoso

2012

© Copyright by

Jose Luis Reynoso

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Choreographing Politics, Dancing Modernity:
Ballet and Modern Dance in the Construction
of Modern México (1919-1940)

by

Jose Luis Reynoso

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Susan Leigh Foster, Chair

In this dissertation, I analyze the pivotal role that ballet and modern dance played in the construction of modern México during the development of its post-revolutionary history and culture from 1919 to 1940. In this doctoral research, I approach dance as a means of knowledge production that contributes to shaping the cultural contexts in which individual and collective identities are produced while perpetuating systems of sociopolitical and economic domination and/or offering alternatives to restructure unequal power relations. As an organizing principle, this dissertation presupposes that dances always enact, explicitly and/or implicitly, sets of political assumptions that affect the bodies that participate by dancing or by watching dance. In other words, I examine how dance represents race, class, gender, and sexuality; how corporeal

difference is arranged in space; what does the dance say about human relations; and how subjectivity is constructed through dance training and performing on stage. I also consider whose worldview, values and interests are enacted on stage and thereby normalized beyond the stage. In exploring these questions, I connect their answers to multiple forms that corporeal social interactions take in the formation of subjectivity at the world at large. Also, by examining specific dances and the discourses these engender, I offer various views of what it meant to be a modern Mexican across the different historical moments in which the country continually redefined and redirected its nationalist project of modernization. This discussion is framed by the various forms that México's revolutionary nationalism took as well as by cultural and political imperatives modeled by countries of the "first world".

In chapter one I discuss Anna Pavlova's visit to México City in 1919 and I argue that her dances created a homotopia, a social space that functioned to preserve the status quo and where a class of similars could reaffirm their identity as members of a class of civilized, modern Mexicans. By analyzing some of Pavlova's dances, I emphasize how these elites also confirmed their affinity with European culture as the most representative symbol and source of human civilization. In chapter two I examine how Pavlova defied the class allegiances she had established with her homotopic elite audiences by re-choreographing a folk popular dance. With this "eliticized" rendition of the folk dance, I argue, she offered the country an opportunity to synthesize the universal and the local as a response to the conundrum that "third world" countries like México confront in developing a local identity while also trying to appeal to the "first world" by embracing a universalist discourse. In chapter three I trace some of the developments towards the institutional professionalization of Mexican dancers. I analyze how classical ballet technique, established as the foundational training for dancing bodies during the

1920s and 1930s, was employed in hopes to produce modernized Mexican subjects capable of embodying the *essence* of the nation through the formation of a genuinely Mexican dance form, a desire that Pavlova had set in motion in 1919.

In chapter four I draw parallels between dance histories in México City and New York City during the 1930s in order to discuss distinctive embodied ideological aesthetics that developed in these different cultural contexts and which ultimately contextualized the advent of modern dance in México in 1939 and 1940. As I discuss different aesthetic approaches and discourses embraced by choreographers and critics in these two cities, I emphasize the debates that Anna Sokolow and Waldeen Falkeinstein helped to engender as they arrived in México City from the United States in 1939, invited to lead the first modern Mexican dance companies in the country. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of different artistic subjectivities that these various approaches to dance making produced in New York City and México City in this period of history.

The dissertation of Jose Luis Reynoso is approved.

David H. Gere

David J. Rousseve

Chon A. Noriega

Susan Leigh Foster, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

With deep gratitude I dedicate this dissertation

In memory of Noy, my mother, who taught me about love by example

To Susan who showed me how to appreciate the knowledge of the moving body

and thus to discover new ways of perceiving and experiencing the world

To Pepito for daring to learn how to fly

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION | ii |
| COMMITTEE PAGE | v |
| DEDICATION PAGE | vi |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | vii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | x |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | xii |
| VITA | xv |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Bodily Training and the Choreographing of Dances, Identity, and Writing | 1 |
| Ballet and Modern Dance in the Construction of Modern México (1919-1940): An Overview | 9 |
| CHAPTER ONE: Choreographing Homotopia in Constructing Elite Modernity: Anna Pavlova in México City (1919) | 22 |
| The Mythology of “Artistic Genius”: On Becoming a Star | 27 |
| Modernizing Genius in Constructing Homotopia: Shifting Locales, Shifting Roles | 32 |
| Choreographing Homotopia: Pavlova as (her) <i>La Muñeca Encantada</i> (<i>The Enchanted Doll</i>) | 40 |
| National and International Politics in the Construction of Homotopic Spaces | 46 |
| Integrative dances of the Cultured, Civilized Modern: The Critic as Constructor of Cultural Discourse and Subjectivity | 57 |
| Choreographies of Homotopia and Divergent Mexican Subjectivities | 65 |
| <i>Embodiments of Class in the Production of Homotopic Elite Modernity</i> | 65 |
| <i>Reverent Admirers and the Religiously Devout</i> | 66 |
| <i>Mexican Effeminate Pavlovians</i> | 67 |
| <i>Embodiments of Homotopic Femininity</i> | 68 |
| <i>Racialized Class and Sexual Normativity: Palova’s Amarilla and Raymunda</i> | 71 |
| <i>The triumph of civilization over the potentially corruptive pleasures of the flesh: Pavlova’s “Bacchanale”</i> | 74 |
| CHAPTER TWO: “Eliticizing” the Folk and the Popular in Constructing <i>Mestizo</i> Modernity: Anna Pavlova’s Refined <i>El Jarabe Tapatio</i> | 85 |
| De/Constructing the Genius: Dis/Embodying the Modern and the Universal in Pavlova’s <i>The Dying Swan</i> | 87 |
| Auto/Exotifying Encounters: Towards an Indigenized <i>Mestizo</i> Modernity | 94 |
| Flirting with the Local: The Transgressive Anthropomorphic Swan | 100 |
| Tracing Genealogies of Pavlova’s <i>El Jarabe Tapatio</i> | 104 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Popularizing High Art: The Materialist, the Ideological and the Dancing “Humanitarian” | 115 |
| Civilizing Mission and Interclass Colonization in Popularizing High Art and/or “Elitizing” the Folk and the Popular | 119 |
| Re/Constructing the Nation: Towards Choreographing Eliticized <i>Mestizo</i> Modernity | 124 |
| Embodying Eliticized <i>Mestizo</i> Modernity: Dancing The Nation | 131 |
| Dancing on Geopolitical Terrains: Choreographing National and International Politics | 138 |
| <i>El Jarabe Tapatio: The Embodied Emblem of the Nation</i> | 142 |
| <i>El Jarabe Tapatio: Almost 100 Years Later</i> | 144 |
| Concluding Steps | 145 |
| <i>Pavlova’s Concluding Dancing Steps</i> | 146 |
| | |
| CHAPTER THREE: Dancing Bodies Producing Distinctive Modern Mexican Subjects | 150 |
| “The goddess of Folkloric Dance on Pointe” | 151 |
| The Return of the Winged Dancing Genius: Pavlova and a Different México City (1925) | 154 |
| Passing on the Torch: Ballet as Embodied Exclusivity and Moral Edification | 167 |
| <i>Carroll’s “Chicas Bien” as a Racialized Homotopic Space</i> | 177 |
| Let Us Instead Dance the Revolution: The 1930’s Dancing Steps | 181 |
| Professionalizing Mexican Dancing Bodies, Aspiring to Produce Modern Subjects | 195 |
| Concluding Disclaimer | 207 |
| | |
| CHAPTER FOUR: Histories of Embodied Ideological Aesthetics in the Production of Mexican Dance as Legitimate Modern Art | 210 |
| Points of Dis/Encounters: Histories of Embodied Ideological Aesthetics | 223 |
| <i>Socialist Mass Dances in México and the U.S.: Towards a Revolutionary Modern Dance</i> | 223 |
| <i>Modern Dance and the Politics of the Revolutionary and the Bourgeois in New York City in the 1930s</i> | 228 |
| <i>Taking a Stand: José Limón’s Notion of Depoliticized Modern Dance as Legitimate Art</i> | 239 |
| <i>Integrative Embodiments: Anna Sokolow as the Rebel and the Bourgeois in New York City During the 1930s</i> | 242 |
| The Embodiment of Revolutionary Modernism: Anna Sokolow in México City (1939-140) | 247 |
| The Embodiment of Dance Innovation: Waldeen Falkeinstein in México City (1939-1940) | 252 |
| The Question of Mexican Dance as “Real” Legitimate Modern Art: Waldeen’s and Sokolow’s Distinctive Approaches | 260 |
| Choreographing Politics, Dancing México and the Universal: <i>La Coronela</i> as Il/Legitimate Modern Art | 271 |
| <i>Mestizo Universalism</i> | 272 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| <i>The Politics of De/Politicizing Dance: Embodied, Verbal and Written Discourses</i> | 279 |
| <i>Towards De/Constructions of Artistic Identity: Modern Dance in New York City and México City</i> | 285 |
| Epilogue: <i>La Coronela</i> as Point of Departure, a Point of Culmination, and as Just one More Dancing Step | 289 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 294 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Anna Pavlova and Alexander Volinine in the <i>Bacchanale</i> . Drawings by E. García Cabral. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, ¹ | 80 |
| 2. Newspaper Advertisement for Pavlova's <i>Fantasia Mexicana</i> and <i>El Jarabe Tapatio</i> . Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 86 |
| 3. Pavlova dressed as a <i>china Poblana</i> . Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City, | 134 |
| 4. Pavlova and Pianowsky dancing <i>El Jarabe Tapatio</i> . Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City, | 137 |
| 5. Gloria Campobello. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City, | 183 |
| 6. Nellie Campobello. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City, | 184 |
| 7. Nellie and Gloria Campobello dancing <i>El Jarabe Tapatio</i> . Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City, | 187 |
| 8. Nellie Campobello dancing in <i>Ballet Simbólico 30-30</i> . Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “Jose Limón, México City, | 190 |
| 9. Nellie Campobello encouraging women to join the revolution. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “Jose Limón, México City, | 191 |
| 10. Performers forming human pulleys, a hammer and a sickle in <i>Ballet Simbólico 30-30</i> . Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 192 |
| 11. Hipólito Zybin teaching at the Escuela de Danza. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 197 |
| 12. Waldeen dancing in México City. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 256 |
| 13. Waldeen dancing in México City. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 258 |

¹ All photos courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada in México City were photographed from various sources by Jose L. Reynoso.

| | |
|--|-----|
| 14. Sokolow's La Paloma Azul. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 264 |
| 15. La Paloma Azul features Spanish dances. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 265 |
| 16. <i>La Coronela's Dance of the Disinherited</i> . Drawings by Germán Oracio. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 275 |
| 17. <i>La Coronela's Dance of the Disinherited</i> . Drawings by Germán Oracio. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 276 |
| 17. <i>La Coronela</i> . Drawings by Germán Oracio. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, | 277 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would have never completed this dissertation without the support of so many organizations and individuals. I am grateful to the UCLA Graduate Division for the following financial support: Dissertation Year Fellowship (2011-2012), University Fellowship (2009-2010), Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program (2008), and a Eugene Cota Robles Fellowship (2006-2009). I am also grateful to UC MEXUS for two Small Grants (Spring 2010; Summer 2009) and to the Latin American Institute for a (LAI) Fellowship (2009) that enabled me to conduct research in México City. My gratitude goes to grantors of the following scholarships: the Jean Irwin Scholarship (2011-2012), the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance Scholarship (2010-2011), and the Elaine Krown Klein and UCLA Affiliates Fine Arts Scholarship (2008-2009).

I am also thankful to the generous assistance of staff, researchers and directors of the following institutions in México City where I conducted research for this dissertation: Biblioteca Centro Nacional de las Artes del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes and its attentive and helpful personnel; La Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada whose staff was so patient with my constant requests for more materials, especially Mario, Carla y Magdalena; Fondo Reservado de La Biblioteca Nacional de México where the Library Director, Lic. Eduardo Lizalde, allowed me free access to their archives. I am indebted to la Maestra Elvira Huerta Barrera, Odette, Dora and their staff who very generously assisted me there, sometimes after hours; the Escuela Nacional de Danza Nellie y Gloria Campobello where the school director, Mr. Fernando Aragón allowed me access to the school archives under the direction of Dafne Domínguez who was more than helpful in assisting me; the Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza José Limón (CENIDI-Danza); my gratitude to all the dance historians there and from

whose work I have benefited in developing this dissertation; to the center's director Elizabeth Cámara García, Lourdes, Paty, Alex, Isela and all the staff. Very especial thanks to Margarita Tortajada Quiroz, senior researcher at the CENIDI, whose generosity as a person is also expressed in her prolific and inspiring work. My gratitude to her for trusting me since the first time we met at a dance symposium in San Diego, California, for serving as my Mexican academic sponsor for two MEXUS Small Grant applications, and above all, for her friendship.

I feel deeply thankful for all the people who made of UCLA's department of World Art and Cultures/Dance an intellectually and artistically stimulating place while also creating a warm sense of community. My gratitude to all the staff, Arsenio, Carl, Daniel, Ginger, Hayley, Lilian, Mimi, Silvily, and Wendy; to all the faculty, especially Al, Angelia, Anurima, Cheng Chie, Dan, David G. David R., David S., Don, Guillermo, Janet, Judy, Lionel, Marta, Peter, Polly, Susan, and Vic; to all undergraduate and graduate students, especially Ana Paula, Angeline, Cedar Bough, César, Cristina, Doran, Feriyal, Giavanni, Jacinta, Jenna, Leonard, Lorena, Lorenzo, Neelima, Rosemary, and Yehuda. Many thanks to Nguyen for helping me edit the bibliography and assisting me whenever I reached the limits of my knowledge in the use of a computer to work with photos included in this dissertation.

For all their inspiration and guidance, my utmost appreciation and gratitude to the outstanding members of my committee, Chon Noriega, David Gere, and David Rousseve. From the bottom of my heart, a big THANK YOU to Susan Foster, my committee chair, my mentor and inspiration since I started in the M.F.A. program in dance at UCLA. I would probably have not pursued a doctoral degree in the first place was it not for Susan's inspiration. I could have not developed most of the ideas in this dissertation to the extent that I did up to this point without Susan's keen eye, professionalism and unbounded generosity. For all the labor she put into this

work and for her friendship, I am forever grateful. All the shortcomings in this dissertation, however, are my own alone.

My gratitude to Hae Kyung Lee for pushing me into a space where I found a new physicality and to Katsumi Imoto for allowed me to work for 13 years with the most flexible schedule a construction worker could dream of in order to go to school at nights, and do all the homework, first while learning English and then while doing all that followed. To my supportive friends in Los Angeles and México City, especially Abel, Alfonso, Armando, Caro, Carlos R., mi compadre Carlos, Elia, Fabi, Harry and Lily, Hector, Leonardo, Litos, Luciano, Margarita, Regina, Tere, Zoila; to Jaime Camarena who housed me at his place and dance studio in México City; and to Rosita, for all the good times we spent together, for what it was and what it could not be.

My deepest love to my family, my tias Licho, Vira, Betty, Carmelita, Lily, y Lety; to my tio Rigo, Toño, Chava y Chuy; to my primas y primos, Mary, Yoli, Geny, Avi, Kary, Gerardo, Chino, y Octavio; to my sobrinos y sobrinas, Paulina, Danny, Karen, Gaby, and Nathan; to my dad Pepe, my brothers Frank and Hugo; to my sister Erika and very especially, to my mom whose unconditional love inspired me as I worked in this dissertation and as her memories gradually faded away until she took her last breath before she could ever see this work completed. Los Amo!

VITA

EDUCATION

- 2006, March M.F.A. Dance; University of California, Los Angeles. GPA 3.91
- 2003, September M.A. Psychology; California State University, Los Angeles.
GPA 3.97
- 2000, June B.A. Psychology, (Magna Cum Laude); California State
University, Los Angeles. GPA 3.87
- 2000 (Sep)-2003 (Jun) 104 units in dance; California State University, Los Angeles.
GPA 3.96

SELECTED CONFERENCES

- 2011, Jun. “Embodiments of Class and the Folk in Eliticizing the Popular: Anna Pavlova in Mexico City (1919)” (Society of Dance History Scholars, Toronto, Canada).
- 2010, Apr. “Economies of symbolic and cultural capital production and distribution in Postmodern/Contemporary dance making: a search for egalitarianism” (Dance Under Construction, UC Riverside. Riverside, CA).
- 2008, Nov. “Some constitutive processes of shifting feminist subjectivities: Ana Sokolow in the first half of the 20th century” (Congress on Research in Dance, Roanoke, Virginia, U.S.).
- 2007, Sep. “El Meño’s “NorteArte”: A Norteño’s Tactic Against Bourgeois Mexican Contemporary Dance” (DanzaTeorica, Mexico City, Mexico).
- 2007, Jun. “The Migrant Fighter’s Politicized Spiritual Sensibilities” (Society of Dance History Scholars/Congress on Research in Dance, Paris, France).

TEACHING AND PRODUCTION POSITIONS

UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance (WAC/D; formerly WAC)

- 2012, Spring Instructor/Teaching Assistant Consultant: WAC/D 495 Teacher Preparation in World Arts and Cultures.
- 2011, Fall Instructor/Teaching Assistant Consultant: WAC/D 451 Teaching Assistant Seminar.
- 2011, Spring Instructor/Teaching Assistant Consultant: WAC 495 Teacher Preparation in World Arts and Cultures.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 2011, Spring | TA: WAC 100A Arts as a Social Action. |
| 2011, Winter | GSR: for Professor Susan L. Foster. |
| 2010, Fall | TA: WAC 152 History of Modern and Postmodern dance. |
| 2010, Spring | TA: WAC 100B Arts as a Moral Action. |
| 2010, Spring | TA: WAC 67A Dance Composition. |
| 2010, Winter | TA: WAC 101 Theories of Performance. |
| 2009, Fall | TA: WAC 1 (two sections) Intro to World Arts and Cultures. |
| 2009, Spring-2008, Spring | Producer (extracurricular): “Chew on This” A Series of Choreographic, Artist Talks, and Academic Presentations by WAC Graduate Students and Faculty. |
| 2008, Winter | Assistant Producer: to WAC’s Senior Production. |
| 2008, Winter | TA: WAC 186B Senior Honors Project. |
| 2007, Fall | Assistant Producer: to WAC’s Senior Producer. |
| 2007, Fall | TA: WAC 186A Senior Honors Projects. |
| 2006, Fall | Instructor: WAC 15 Beginning Post/Modern dance. |
| 2006, Spring | Producer: Culture Crossing (dance Concert). |
| 2006, Winter | TA: WAC 45 Introduction to Dance Studies. |
| 2005, Fall | Co-producer: “WAC is Back” (opening celebrations of the newly renovated Glorya Kaufman Hall. |
| 2005, Fall | TA: WAC 1 Introduction to World Arts and Cultures. |
| 2005, Spring | Instructor: WAC 46 Survey of Dancing in Selected Cultures. |
| 2005, Winter | TA: WAC 100A Arts as Social Action. |
| 2004, Fall | TA: WAC 1 Introduction to World Arts and Cultures. |

INTRODUCTION

Bodily Training and the Choreographing of Dances, Identity, and Writing

México is a fascinating and beautiful country. That is where I was born and raised.

In this dissertation, I analyze the pivotal role that ballet and modern dance played in the construction of modern México during the development of its post-revolutionary history and culture from 1919 to 1940. In this doctoral research, I approach dance as a means of knowledge production that contributes, within the specificity of a given historical time, to shaping the cultural contexts in which individual and collective identities are produced. I examine how dances always enact, explicitly and/or implicitly, sets of political assumptions that affect the bodies that participate through dancing or through watching dances. I also connect these assumptions to multiple forms that corporeal social interactions take in the formation of subjectivity in the world at large. By examining specific dances and the discourses these engendered, I offer various views of what it meant to be a modern Mexican across the different historical moments in which the country continually redefined and redirected its nationalist project of modernization. This discussion is framed by the various forms that México's revolutionary nationalism took as well as by cultural and political imperatives modeled by countries of the "first world".

People in México can be, as in many other countries, very prejudiced about differences based on social class, gender, sexual orientation, race and skin color. I remember growing up in "El Infonavit", the housing complexes designed and assigned for the families of workers like those in the textile factory where my great grand father, my grand father, my father, and then I, starting at the age 15, all worked, as did most members in my extended family. I remember playing soccer in the streets since I was a little kid, smoking a pack of cigarettes a day since age 9, getting tattoos at age 13, and saying "dirty" sexist and homophobic jokes, all as corporeal

means of constructing, rehearsing, and affirming my masculinity and heterosexuality. These were also the quotidian rituals through which I bonded, eagerly, with kids like me. I also remember the predictable exclamations that my tias (aunties), and people in general, would profess as a response to meeting somebody's little child for the first time (or while watching a T.V. commercial, soap opera, or film). If the baby or infant was "morenito/a" (dark skin, dark eyed, dark hair), he/she would be "bien curioso/a y simpatico/a" ("cute, cute, cute"); if he/she was "medio guerito/a" (somewhat light skin), then he/she was "muy bonito/a!!" ("very pretty!!"); but if the baby or infant was guerito/a or blanquito/a, de ojos azules/verdes, y rubio/a" (light skin/white, blue/green eyed, and blond), then he/she was "precioso/a y hermosisimo/a!!!!" ("oh! stunningly beautiful, gorgeous!!!!")¹. I remember one of my brothers and one of my cousins – both fairly light skin- often making fun of people from la fabrica (the factory) and vehemently expressing that they both should had been born in London. Because of my brother, without understanding much at all of what they sang about, we grew up listening to the Beatles.

This dissertation is certainly not about searching for genealogical threads that I can weave as an attempt to explain how the experiences constituting my personal memories came into being. At least not directly! These memories remind me of what Marta Savigliano (1995) has noted about colonialism: that "colonialism is a set of practices, encompassing formalized institutions all the way through personalized attitudes, through which societies reproduce the domination, exploitation and extermination of the many in the hands of the few. Racism, classism, and sexism are integral parts of the technology of colonialism" (21). Savigliano's

¹ For recent studies about racial prejudice and other forms of discrimination in México see the following links: Consejo Nacional Para Prevenir la Discriminación (CONAPRED) <http://www.conapred.org.mx/>; and a video about racial/skin color prejudice involving children, also produced by the CONAPRED http://terratv.terra.com.mx/Noticias/Actualidad/Mexico/Conapred-realiza-video-sobre-Racismo-en-Mexico_5178-356586.htm

words as well as my memories of growing up in Guadalajara, México find echoes throughout this dissertation as I examine some of the inter-national and inter-class neocolonial forces that contributed to shaping México's post-revolutionary modern identity. In other words, I argue that México's nation formation after the armed revolution of 1910 was contingent, as was the case for many other "third world" countries, on political, economic, and cultural foreign interests embraced and negotiated by a class of Mexican cosmopolitans distinctively participating in the government's revolutionary nationalist project. If neo-colonialism has been implemented through means such as military interventions, economic dependencies and academic discourses, I examine here the role that expressive culture plays in the propagation and normalization, if not official institutionalization, of values that reproduce racial and class privilege amongst the owners of the means of cultural production.

After having being expelled from Junior High and going through my 4-year stint at the textile factory in México, I immigrated to the United States where I began to work, and three years later, to study English in a school for adults. A few years later I came into contact with dance almost by accident while taking general education courses at a community college. I began to study dance more systematically -first in the same school where I was a student in psychology, then in a M.F.A. program in dance and eventually as a doctoral student. I also began to see more dances on stage. I often read in dance programs variations of "grandiose" descriptions about what the intentions of the choreographer were in investigating "the complexity of human relations" and about "the human experience". Very often I did not see on stage what those program notes claimed that the dance would do. But I was already seeing, feeling, being, and moving differently. The world as I have learned to understand it through my fascination with universalist and humanistic approaches to psychology was soon replaced by the power of dance. Whether or not the dance matched the choreographer's claims on program

notes, I gradually became interested in how explicitly and/or implicitly the dance represented race, class, gender, sexuality etc.; how corporeal difference was arranged in space; what the dance said about human relations; how subjectivity was constructed; whose worldview, values and interests were enacted on stage and thereby normalized off the stage in the world at large; how the dance represented either or both a challenge to social norms and/or a mechanism to preserve the status quo; how dances constructed a “reality” presented as the “natural” state of affairs. I began to embrace the idea of historicizing dances as an exercise to write the history of the present. I began to see the possibility that to historicize dances was to theorize about the present, about uncovering the role dance played in perpetuating systems of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural domination as well as the role dance could play in offering alternatives to restructure unequal power relations.

Taking the construction of modern México (1919-1940) as its basis, this dissertation represents a modest attempt at examining how dance is deeply involved in complex processes by which we become human, how the body, and its disciplining, contributes in the formation of subjectivity.² While analyzing specific dances, I discuss how race, class, gender and sexuality are complexly intertwined in multiple ways through which we learn to develop a sense of who we are, what is our place in the world, how we should experience it in relation to one another, what we are deserving of or not, what defines the “we” and “us” that I have used in these clauses, as well as the ideologies that determine and *justify* those criteria. With this focus, this dissertation presents itself alongside the work of several dance historians, DeFrantz, Foster, Manning, Novack, Martin, and Savigliano, to name a few, all of whom emphasize the processes through

² Among other things, in *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*, Foster (1986) discusses how different dance training approaches -Deborah Hay, George Balanchine, Martha Graham, and Merce Cunningham- produced different subjects that embodied distinctive epistemological assumptions about art, about their place and their role in the world. These ideas inform the methodological approach in much of what I discuss in this dissertation.

which concert dance has participated in the production of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural discourses and practices that in turn shape the various contexts in which dance is produced.³

While there has been extensive historical documentation about the participation of Mexican musicians and muralists in developing México's post-revolutionary identity as a nascent modern nation in the first half of the 20th Century, the role of concert dance has been largely ignored. This dissertation is not only the first historical account of Mexican concert dance (1919-1940) written in English but also the first one that draws parallels between the history of dance in México City and New York City during the 1930s. This work will contribute to current discussions of the role of corporeality in knowledge production as well as debates concerning the generative relationship between the arts and politics in disciplines such as Dance Studies, Performance Studies, History, studies on México -U.S. relations, and studies on Latin American Culture in general and México in particular.

This study develops under the assumption that in all art making and scholarship observations, analyses, and interpretations are always mediated, among other things, by the scholar's own embodied aesthetic and a/political assumptions. In other words, the author's body and the knowledge inscribed in its muscles, the way it has learned to move in the spaces to which it has access inevitably becomes part of the research methodology and writing; here the body is not an instrument of but the producer of the method; thus the body itself is part of the method.

The force of political activism has always shaped the tension of my muscles and the thrust of my body as it moves in space, even as a small child growing up in Guadalajara, México. I do not recall having a conversation about quotidian matters with my father, much less

³ In addition to the work of some of these authors that I cite in this dissertation, see also, DeFrantz (2004), Foster (1996), Martin (1998), and Novack (1990).

a conversation about politics. However, I learned much about him through conversations with coworkers at the textile factory where I worked as a teenager and where after many years of labor as a machine operator, my father became a union representative highly respected by workers. I learned some more about him by listening to the LP records he listened to and from the titles of the books he read and with which he educated himself (e.g. “Labor Federal Law”, “Social Security Federal Law”). I learned some more by accidentally discovering and reading the hidden notes he wrote with names of his potential killers who accused him of being a “communist” –some of them, his own union co-workers. It was also the presence of el Che Guevara, his face, the one I saw dozens of times a day as I ran up and down our home’s staircase that had an enduring impact. My father had placed on the wall a poster with Che’s image and a letter the revolutionary figure wrote to his children minutes before his execution in 1968. I often stopped my habit of running up and down without paying attention; I’d stop midway on my way down the staircase to look at the image and to re-read the letter. These various idealizations for social justice constituted the training regimentations that contextualized my quotidian physical rehearsals as a body moving at home and at the factory.

Informed by poststructuralist and critical theory as organized by Dance Studies, I employ choreography as my primary analytical tool. Building on Foster’s (1998) “Choreographies of Gender”,⁴ I examine in this dissertation dances and discourses that constituted choreographies of

⁴ In *Choreographies of Gender*, Foster (1998) distinguishes the political implications of applying the terms performance and choreography while proposing the latter as a more productive theoretical and practical tool for analyzing and re-shifting embodied power relations. She offers that performance, as a tool for analysis, has helped us to understand how the execution of repetitive processes account for the consolidation of specific identity constructions and power relations. Judith Butler’s notion of “performativity”, for example, accounts for gender identity formation as a result of compulsory reiterations of behavior patterns. However, as with J.L. Austin’s theory of speech-acts, Butler’s “behavior patterns” emphasize the verbal utterance, not movement, as the producer of meaning and power (e.g. legal).

Choreography, as a tool for analyzing and re-shifting power relations, on the other hand, proposes a shift from seeing gender as performance and to see it rather as choreography. Foster suggests that studying the choreography of movement in identity formation and power relation processes exposes the

racialized class and gender and which functioned to naturalize class relations within a heteronormative framework. I also discuss choreographies of desexualized eroticism as enactments of moral superiority among specific social and racial groups as well as of choreographies of the nation and revolution. In this process, I rely on extensive archival research of primary sources written in Spanish and for which I did the translation. In addition to the many authors from whose work I benefited in organizing this dissertation, the work by Foster and Foucault will resonate throughout for the reader familiar with them. Although I do not cite directly Pierre Bourdieu as much, his work on social distinction and the production of cultural capital and taste in relation to bourgeois ideology also finds echoes in every chapter of this dissertation.⁵ In this process of examining the role of ballet and modern dance in the construction of Mexican modern subjectivity as well as embodied revolutionary and bourgeois identity in New York City during the 1930s, I also adopt Raymond Williams' (1989) notion of the "bourgeois dissident". I adapt this idea in my analyses in order to identify a group of artists whose social and/or racial privileged status enabled them to perform their political and aesthetic progressiveness.⁶

systems of power and domination that sustain such choreographies. It is these systems of power and domination that choreograph sets of behavioral patterns -embodied assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs produced in different registers of cultural production, including dance- and which constitute specific constructs such as gender. The apparent "natural" pervasiveness of similar behavioral patterns across different register of cultural production normalizes such patterns as if they were indeed "natural." In other words, the systems of power and domination that choreograph the constitution and embodied execution of specific constructs, represent the mechanisms of discipline and systems of representation that determine what is allowable, proper, normal (e.g. in gender identity/relations) in a given historical and cultural context.

⁵ See for instance Bourdieu's (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

⁶ In his book, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, Williams (1989), assures that the processes involved in the evolution of the bourgeoisie have produced "... its own successions of distinctively bourgeois dissidents. This is a key element of the politics of the avant-garde, and we need specially to remember it as we look at forms which seem to go beyond politics or indeed to discount

Upon my arrival to the U.S., I worked laying grass in gardens at newly constructed homes in affluent residential areas all over northern California. After relocating to Los Angeles, I worked in a factory that produced trailers for UPS and eventually I started what would be my construction job for 13 year and which helped me to pay for most of my undergraduate work and for all of my first master's degree. The quotidian nuances of living these experiences further shaped my identifications. I can identify with the one who moves in space as a means for survival. I can identify with the one whose labor is exploited based on his/her deterritorialized "legal" or "illegal" existence. I can identify with the one subjected to prejudice or discrimination on the basis of his/her lack of proper English –fluency, accent, and diction. However, I do not claim to be an authoritative representative of working class interests and/or otherness. Many things have changed for me. As an angry white sheriff officer exclaimed in relation to "illegal aliens" when he found credit cards –which were legitimate- in my "compadre's" wallet during a "routine" stop, "I don't understand how you illegal aliens manage to work through the system and get away with it". I managed, with arduous work, to start and continue my education in the U.S. I then began to enjoy the privileges granted to the class of people who earn degrees in higher education: funding, loans, traveling, access to health insurance! I began to enjoy the privilege of devoting more time to thinking and writing, to using my body -not to bang on the heads of thousands of nails with a hammer while walking on wooden roof rafters 15 feet above ground- but to dance, with survival-like force. I began to enjoy the privilege of "reading" and

politics as irrelevant" (56-57). In this dissertation, I readapt William's concept of the "bourgeois dissident" to identify artists whose approach to art making seeks to embrace their political proclivities while privileging their aesthetic concerns as the primary means through which they construct their identity as artist.

choreographing dances as well as writing about dances and about the impact they have in the world.⁷

The multiple discursive and physical trainings that these diverse experiences implied inform my artistic and scholarly work today. I thus write this dissertation as a hybrid. I write as a “bourgeois dissident” whose privilege has enabled him to translate into words his desire for a more egalitarian world. I also write as the “bourgeois dissident” whose privilege has enabled him to exercise the luxury of claiming that he can also write as a dissident “organic intellectual”, which Antonio Gramsci (1992) characterizes as one who evolves within his/her social class and remains working with and for his/her social class.⁸ I write as both as a “bourgeois dissident” and as a dissident “organic intellectual” as I prepare to leave the working class community in East Los Angeles where I have lived for almost 23 years and in which I was an active volunteer in various community programs before I started commuting 20 miles each way to the Westside of town to study at UCLA –an experience that has granted me access to even more privilege and resources.

Ballet and Modern Dance in the Construction of Modern México (1919-1940): An Overview

While applying these personal and scholarly resources in the writing of this dissertation, I highlight the role of government officials, dance critics, and audiences who along with dancers and choreographers constituted a complex network of authority-experts with distinct levels of

⁷ I am indebted to Marta Savigliano who encouraged me to start reflecting and writing about my own access to class privileged afforded to me by higher education while I was studying with her as a graduate student.

⁸ In his essay *The Intellectuals*, Gramsci (1992) assert that the “organic intellectual” is the one who irrespective of his/her job, he/she contributes in “directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which [he/she] organically belongs” (3).

legitimacy in the development of a genuinely Mexican dance form that could embody the country's nationalist identity and universal aspirations. I also emphasize the crucial collaborations that foreigners visiting or living in the country had with Mexican artists and intellectuals in the development of Mexican modern culture and history thereby destabilizing notions of a purely Mexican *essence* constituting the country's processes of identity formation.

During the first half of the 20th century, México experienced a tumultuous period of nation formation, influenced first by the armed revolution of 1910 and subsequently by events taking place during WWI and later WWII. During this period of time the competing interests of popular and institutional revolutionary factions as well as those of the capitalist bourgeoisie sought to restructure the country politically, economically and culturally. New revolutionary government policies that attempted to benefit the country's indigenous people and working classes often clashed with efforts to construct and present México to the world as an emerging modern nation. In the context of this agitated period of Mexican history, choreographers from Russia, the U.S. and México collaborated with other artists and government officials in pursuing the development of a dance form that expanded Mexican identity and notions of the modern.

In 1919, Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova performed in México City the Europeanized ballet repertoire that had made her an artistic star around the world, an embodied referent of Western high culture and civilization. Upon her arrival in the city, the most selected factions among the Mexican society expressed their reverence for the acclaimed empress of the ballet. At first, some of the critical reception was ambivalent. Critics like Carlos Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco characterized Pavlova's first show, especially her *Enchanted Doll*, as an old fashioned classical ballet that did not speak to the country's reality. These critics claimed that the *Culture* the Mexican public was ready to witness existed in the form of modern ballets such as

those choreographed by other Russians like the artists of the Ballet Russes who had successfully fused the “three sister arts” of dance, music and scenography. While some of the revolutionary forces were still fighting in some parts of the country, such embodied fusion reflected the prevalent desire among the Mexican elites to unify forces in the construction of a more culturally sophisticated and more economically developed modern nation. Also, the unification of these three arts as constitutive of the modern reflected the unification of the allied nations orchestrating through the League of Nations the post-WWI new world order that México was eager to join. As Pavlova continued presenting her shows in México City, the critics became almost unconditionally enamored with her and what they perceived as her subsequent integrative modern ballets.

In chapter one, I discuss the construction of Pavlova’s artistic genius as a myth that served international elites in the consolidation of their class and racial privilege as inherently “natural”. Inspired by Foucault’s (1986) notion of heterotopia as a social space where diversity engenders progressive change, I argue that Pavlova’s dances created a social space, a homotopia, that functioned to preserve the status quo and where a class of similars could reaffirm their identity as members of a class of civilized, modern Mexicans. By analyzing some of Pavlova’s homotopic dances, I emphasize how at the same time, these elites confirmed their affinity with European culture as the highest standard of human civilization. I specifically discuss dances such *The Enchanted Doll* as a ballet that reaffirmed Pavlova’s artistic identity as the most precious enchanted doll of the international ballet circuit of her time. Simultaneously, the same ballet also functioned to naturalize class superiority based on the purchasing power that financial privilege afforded to the Mexican elites and foreign capitalists living in the city.

As I discuss diverse responses to Pavlova's presence in México City, including a group of Catholic protestors and a group of persecuted "effeminate" men who adopted Pavlova's "style", I analyze ballets such as *Amarilla* and *Raymunda* as dances that naturalized racialized class divisions within a heteronormative framework. I conclude this chapter by contextualizing Pavlova's *Bacchanale* with a discussion of Isadora Duncan's and Ruth St. Denis' desexualization of the dancing body in favor of a spiritualizing aesthetic discourse as a legitimizing strategy to render dance as a serious art form. In this context, I examine how Pavlova's *Bacchanale* represented a choreography about the triumph of civilization over the potential corruptive pleasures of the flesh thereby re-instating the Mexican elites' discursive moral superiority constitutive of civilized modern subjectivity.

In chapter two, I offer an analysis of how Pavlova's genius status enabled her to become an agent of change as she impacted the country's cultural revolution by setting in motion the desire to develop a genuinely Mexican dance form that could be universal in *nature* but uniquely Mexican in character. I begin this chapter by analyzing how Pavlova's *The Dying Swan* represented a universal embodied metaphor for the resilience with which the modern "human spirit" could strive in the midst of adversity. I discuss how the dying, dancing swan's will power to live, her repeated success at restoring her body on the tip of her ballet shoes, resonated with México's own efforts to remain on its "own feet" after almost nine years of sociopolitical and armed struggle. I argue that as Pavlova defied the class allegiances she had established with her homotopic elite audiences, she offered the country an opportunity to synthesize the universal and the local as a response to the conundrum that "third world" countries like México confront in developing a local identity while also trying to appeal to the "first world" by embracing a universalist discourse. Pavlova, the universal dancing swan, transformed into a *china poblana*,

one of the most iconic traditional female figures in the Mexican folk and popular cultural imaginary. In this *Mexicanized* embodiment, Pavlova re-choreographed a balleticized rendition of a Mexican folk dance that eventually came to be regarded an embodied emblem of the nation, *El Jarabe Tapatío*.

Pavlova's *El Jarabe Tapatío* was part of a short series of Mexican traditional dances composed as a divertissement under the title *Fantasia Mexicana* and presented after the performance of her Europeanized repertoire. In tracing genealogies that converged to produce Pavlova's refined folk dance, I examine the Russian dancer's interactions with a network of Mexican experts in Mexican history and culture who served not only as artistic collaborators but also as "native informants" who legitimized the proximity to the *authenticity* of the dances included in *Fantasia Mexicana*. I analyze how Pavlova's *El Jarabe Tapatío* embodied the *mestizo* modernity⁹ that a class of cosmopolitan Mexican artists and intellectuals, many of whom had fled to live in Europe during the harshest early years of the armed revolution, regarded as fundamental in the development of the country's national identity. I also discuss how these efforts were characterized by processes of "eliticization" through which "lowbrow" cultural expressions were sanitized, refined, and whitened in order to render them worthy not only of, as in the case of *El Jarabe Tapatío*, the national and international concert stage but also of figuring as representative embodiment of the nation.

⁹ "Mestizo modernism" is referred here as a form of cultural production that reflected México's colonial history characterized by the fusion of México's own indigenous cultures and aspects of the European culture that the Spanish established during the conquest and colonization of México for almost 400 years. Also the new bodies and subjects resulting from such racial mixing and colonization were identified as *mestizos*. See Diana Taylor (2003) for a discussion of the word *mestizo* as a referent specifically evocative of the violence perpetrated against the indigenous peoples in the Americas during part of the continent's conquest and colonization by Europeans.

This inter-class colonization constituted processes whereby the Mexican cultural architects, and Pavlova, appropriated folk and popular expressive culture to construct a sense of national “reality” characterized by the values and interests of the class of people these elites represented. I then offer a discussion about the tensions and contradictions inherent in these processes of appropriating national folk and popular culture as a maneuvering to indigenize Europeanized notions of modernity while attempting to construct a modernized local identity. I emphasize the compromises that Mexicans like Pavlova’s collaborators had to negotiate as they mediated her delight for the colorful and the exotic; at the same time, they had to negotiate the need to mark the nation’s difference as unique while also aspiring to satisfy the demands of the international –tourist and dance- markets for exotic cultures. In this context of autoexoticization, Pavlova’s *El Jarabe Tapatio* simultaneously provided a sense of national affirmation for the locals and satisfied the desire for exotic others on the neo/colonialist global stage.¹⁰

In 1925 Pavlova returned to México for a short season, but she found México City’s cultural milieu impacted by what the critics called “frivolous” performance genres. The arrival of Madam Rasimi’s French Bataclan Theater Company in the city inspired shows known as *ba-ta-clan*, a form of satirical musical operettas which combined various performance genres from theater to circus, from drama to comedy and which often featured female full or partial nudity. Within this context of “frivolity”, Pavlova’s season was not nearly the success it had been in 1919. However, she had already left her indelible mark in the development of dance in México. *El Jarabe Tapatio* continued to be danced simultaneously by hundreds of couples as part of

¹⁰ In this chapter, I rely on Savigliano’s (1995) *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* where she traces the circulation of tango within a ne-colonial context characterized by the production and consumption of passion as constitutive of exoticism that leads “third world” countries to produce autoexoticized identities.

official events. Some of the *china poblanas* participating in these large-scale versions of the folk dance performed it on pointe shoes. Pavlova had also inspired people like Lettie Carroll, a dance teacher who had immigrated from the United States. Carroll befriended Pavlova and supported her shows while the Russian dancer visited México City. During the late 1920s, Carroll employed ballet technique to refine some of the genres considered “frivolous”, such as jazz, and made a career teaching for and choreographing with the daughters of the Mexican elites and of foreign capitalists residing in the country.

In chapter three, I trace some of the developments towards the institutionalization of the professional training of Mexican dancers. I emphasize the various aesthetic and political discourses embodied in different dance practices and training approaches in order to produce specific subjects. In a context in which cultural production was often indirectly, if not directly, mediated by the state, Carroll’s entrepreneurial skills as a dance producer serving the wealthiest patrons in the city enabled her to function independently from the state and its “populist” inclusive impulse for working for the popular masses. Unlike Pavlova who had constructed homotopic spaces in which Mexican elites reaffirmed their affinity to European culture and identity as civilized moderns, Carroll created a smaller racialized homotopic space within the confines of her dance studio and dance recitals. By virtue of their social and racial *nature*, the daughters of white elites –mostly foreign capitalists living in the city- established ballet as foundational in their dance practice as the embodiment of their own and their family’s social prestige and moral edification.

From amongst Carroll’s students and company dancers, the sisters Nellie and Gloria Campobello would become influential during the 1930s in choreographing the government’s revolutionary nationalist impetus as well as in training the new generation of professional

Mexican dancers. During the 1930s, the Campobello sisters choreographed mass dances that represented the revolutionary ideals that the Mexican government had sought to institutionalize and which had also brought them to power. While legitimizing the state, these dances also aspired to have universal appeal. As the context of the “frivolous” in the 1920s began to shift again towards a renewed sense of revolutionary nationalism contextualized by a global discontent with capitalism, mass dances such as *Ballet Simbólico 30-30* (*Symbolic Ballet 30-30*) attempted to represent México’s affinity and solidarity with an international movement for global socialist revolution.

I conclude chapter three by discussing how the desire for developing a genuinely modernized Mexican dance form that Pavlova had helped set in motion in 1919 began to materialize through three of the first dance schools in México City. First under the direction of Hipólito Zybin -a Russian dancer who stayed in the country after a short performance season with a group of Russian dancers, actors and singers- the Campobello sisters, along with other teachers, worked to institute classical ballet as the foundational dance technique for training professional dancers at the School of Dynamic Plastic Art in 1930. From 1932 to 1935, Guatemalan visual artist, Carlos Mérida, took the directorship of the School of Dance after the School of Dynamic Plastic Art was disbanded several months after its inauguration. Nellie Campobello became Mérida’s assistant and both emphasized the teaching of Mexican dances and rhythms as choreographic material performed by students trained in ballet technique. Francisco Domínguez was the director of the School of Dance from 1935 to 1937, the year that Nellie Campobello assumed the directorship of the dance school, a position she held for more than 40 years. Under her guidance, the educational institution became the National School of Dance in 1939 and the first professional degrees were conferred. During the 1930s These pedagogical

efforts defined a professional dancer as one trained in the most sophisticated ballet techniques available in the country by various Mexican and foreign teachers. These modernized dancers were also expected to be able to represent Mexican themes on the concert stage as well as in the open space of a large stadium crowded by members of the popular masses.

In chapter four, the final chapter of this dissertation, I examine significant ideological shifts that led professional dancers and their nascent modernized dance approaches to take a radically different direction in 1939 and 1940. As I do so, I draw parallels between dance histories in México City and New York City during the 1930s in order to discuss distinctive embodied ideological aesthetics that developed in these different cultural contexts. I argue that these distinctive embodiments of politics produced distinctive subjectivities while trying to render dance as a form of “real” legitimate modern art. I contextualize this final chapter with a discussion of Mérida’s continued advocacy for the modernization of Mexican dance and dancers. In 1937, he was the only one presenting on the topic of dance as part of the congress of the *Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (LEAR)* (League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists).¹¹ Contrasting his pedagogical methodology as a director of the School of Dance from 1932 to 1935, Mérida argued this time that ballet technique represented a “system contradictory to the laws proper to the human body instead of finding laws for the natural development of it” (1937 in Mendoza 1990, 146). He concluded that this “anachronistic” approach to dance training should be replaced by modern dance techniques imported from the U.S. if México truly wanted to join the modernist vanguard. In 1939, Mérida was directly involved in inviting Anna Sokolow

¹¹ LEAR was instituted by a group of artists and intellectuals in 1933 in order to encourage the production of politically revolutionary art. LEAR was considered the Mexican branch of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers established in 1930 by the communist organization Communist International in the Soviet Union.

and her group to travel from New York City to México City as well as in hiring her to lead the first Mexican modern dance company in the country, Ballet de Bellas Artes (Ballet of Fine Arts).¹²

The same year, Waldeen Falkeinstein¹³ arrived in México City from the U.S. Mexican audiences and critics remembered her from her first visit to the country in 1934 when she had danced as part of Michio Ito's group of soloist performers. Sokolow and Waldeen developed an artistic antagonism characterized by distinctive dance approaches they claimed to embrace. Sokolow claimed to produce a brand of universalist modern dance that did not have to rely on explicit references to any form of nationalism. She argued that dance could represent in an abstract form the *essence* of any culture without taking recourse to the culture's folkloric identifiers. She criticized some of Waldeen's followers for employing what Sokolow described as the "Welcome-to-Sunny-México" approach to dance making (Warren 1998, 75). Sokolow thought that such picturesque dance production compromised the universal potential of "real" legitimate modern art. Like Sokolow, Waldeen also embraced a modernist universalist discourse and was equally interested in developing her own abstract movement vocabulary. Both Sokolow and Waldeen combined their own abstract vocabularies with ballet, which continued to have currency in México City at the time. However, Waldeen was willing to employ dance steps,

¹² It was customary during the first half of the 20th century in México to use the word "ballet" as an adjective to describe a single dance or a dance group related to most dance genres provided the dance or the dance group was considered to have some legitimacy as a serious artistic production or organization. Artistic legitimacy connoted prestige, which ballet as a dance genre had enjoyed for centuries. In the case of the Ballet de Bellas Artes (Ballet of Fine Arts), it could have been alternatively called today *Compañía de Danza de Bellas Artes* (Fine Arts Dance Company). Similarly, the Campobello sisters' *Ballet Simbólico 30-30* (*Symbolic Ballet 30-30*) could have been renamed *Danza Simbolica 30-30* (*Symbolic Dance 30-30*).

¹³ In México Waldeen Falkenstein was invariably referred to in print and in person as "Waldeen," her first name. I will honor this tradition by referring to this dance artist as "Waldeen" and not Falkeinstein in this introduction.

costumes and sets that explicitly contextualized her dances as recognizably Mexican. Despite their similarities, the differences that in fact existed between Sokolow's and Waldeen's approaches to dance making were further magnified by the ways these artists discursively evaluated each other as artistically oppositional.

The aesthetic and discursive antagonism that developed between these dance artists mirrored the political tensions inherent in México's process of modernization within the context of its revolutionary nationalist project. Sokolow's first dances in México City had been regarded by some critics and government officials as too concerned with Spanish themes. She had indeed collaborated with some of the most influential Spanish exiles living in México who had fled Spain, then under the rule of dictator Francisco Franco. For this reason, the Mexican government did not renew Sokolow's contract and instead hired Waldeen to take the reins of the Ballet of Fine Arts in order to integrate a truly Mexican modern dance and develop a nationalist repertoire that could still have universal appeal. Sokolow managed to garner the private funding from some of her Spanish associates to form La Paloma Azul (The Blue Dove) whose short season ended prematurely when those associated with the project decided to include Spanish dances by Spanish dancers under the same artistic name.

In November 23, 1940, Waldeen premiered with the Ballet of Fine Arts *La Coronela* (*Female Colonel*), widely considered the first, truly Mexican modern dance piece. *La Coronela* represented not only a point of departure for the further development of Mexican modern dance, as the dance has been regarded, but also as a point of culmination. The desire of developing a Mexican dance form that Pavlova had helped to set in motion in 1919 seemed to have materialized in the dancing bodies that the National School of Dance had produced and who participated in dancing *La Coronela* in 1940. Pavlova's exotic *china poblana* had become

instead a female colonel leading the Mexican revolution on stage. Albeit nationalist in character, the dance aspired to have universal reach. In the words of César Delgado Martínez (1994), *La Coronela* was “an expression of the victory of a group of people who fight for their freedom” (23). In other words, it was hoped that any group of people fighting for their liberty could identify with the Mexican dance. *La Coronela* implicitly claimed, as the Campobello sisters’ *Ballet Simbólico 30-30* had in its own way, that the Mexican nationalist revolutionary struggle could serve as a universal model for pursuing freedom, for demanding people’s rights, for engaging in revolutionary action. *La Coronela* thus represented a form of indigenized, *mestizo* universalism.

At the core of my analyses throughout this final chapter, I examine the role of various dance techniques as embodied technologies that disciplined bodies while producing specific subjectivities. I extend this discussion to conclude this chapter by identifying three ways of thinking about modern artistic subjectivity during the 1930s in México City and New York City. Those identified as “bourgeois” generally embraced a notion of art that was not concerned directly or was not concerned at all with politics, for politics compromised the value of “real” legitimate universal art. As José Limón (1998) would put it, dances should be “works of art” not “propaganda tracts” (70). Borrowing William’s (1989) notion of the “bourgeois dissident”, I discuss a group of politically progressive artists whose aesthetic concerns, nevertheless, took precedence over their political proclivities. For them, dance as “real” legitimate modern art should be subtle in its references to the world while foregrounding the dance’s formal virtues. On the other hand, the revolutionary dancers were those who in distinctive ways engaged explicitly with revolutionary politics in hopes that their artistic work would contribute to influencing their own sociopolitical, economic and cultural contexts. For them, dance as “real” legitimate modern

art constituted an effort -by any means necessary, artistically and politically- towards social justice, towards a more egalitarian world.

In re-choreographing these dancing bodies and subjects, and their histories, I hope to create a space in which to imagine new relationships between dance and politics. I also hope that this writing gesture represents a symbolic move that brings the exercise of writing history and choreographing dances between México and the U.S. onto a stage where more enabling cultural, economic, and political collaborations may be choreographed.

CHAPTER ONE

Choreographing Homotopia in Constructing Elite Modernity:

Anna Pavlova in México City (1919)

Pavlova, all nations are thine,
No Country thy country alone.
Terpsichore who shall confine?
Has genius a land or a zone?
You have danced at the foot of a throne;
Republics have worship your shrine –
Pavlova, all nations are thine,
No Country thy country alone.

Pavlova, O dancer divine,
Thou art not one woman alone.
For thou art all women –the wine
That all of life’s lovers have known.
The love in thy eyes that has shone
Another has looked into mine –
Pavlova, O dancer divine,
Thou art not one woman alone
(Malloch qtd. in Money 1982, 246).

This poem speaks to the purported universality of Pavlova’s artistic genius that enabled her to transcend all nationalities, including her own. The poem reflects the endearment with which Pavlova was revered and embraced all over the world. There has been documentation of Pavlova’s influence in the development of dance practices in different countries but very little has been written, especially in English, about the impact of Pavlova’s work in México. In his 400-page book, from which the poem above is quoted, Keith Money (1982) summarizes in two pages Pavlova’s two visits to México (1919 and 1925) and qualifies them as a “chastening” experience.¹⁴ Contrasting Money’s assessment in what follows, I will discuss the extraordinary

¹⁴ Pavlova visited México two times (1919 and 1925); however, in this chapter I will discuss only her visit in 1919 as this was the time when her dance intervention had its most impacting effect in the ways Mexicans thought about popular and elite cultural production.

impact that Pavlova had on the development of concert dance in post-revolutionary México. In doing so, my questions and methodologies, as in the rest of this dissertation, are based on the fact that dance always explicitly and/or implicitly enacts sets of racial, gender, class, and sexual politics. Thus, as a means of knowledge production, dance participates as an active force in the formation of individual and collective identities.

Embracing this approach, an abundance of recent research in Dance Studies has demonstrated how dances produce progressive alternatives to the social codes and convention that characterize specific cultural contexts in a given historical time. In this chapter, however, I will examine how dances on the concert stage do not always effect progressive change but also seek the preservation of the status quo depending on whose interests are at stake. By analyzing multiple forces that contextualize the Europeanized ballets performed by Anna Pavlova in México City in 1919, I will discuss how her dances had a naturalizing effect; I will show how they preserved while they reproduced on stage the values and interests of the Mexican elites. While examining the constructedness of Pavlova's artistic "genius", I will discuss how the resonance between Pavlova's ballets and her "Cultured" Mexican audiences created a homotopic space—a social space where members of the elites could re-affirm themselves as a special class of civilized moderns. I will contextualize this argument within the sociopolitical context characterized by the "popular" and institutional currents of the Mexican revolution as well as the country's bourgeois capitalist and cultural aspirations. I will frame these competing interests within the context of the post-war new world order orchestrated by the League of Nations formed after WWI. This discussion will serve as a preamble for a genealogical analysis of the forces that coalesced to produce Pavlova's balleticized rendition of a Mexican folk dance, *El*

Jarabe Tapatio, and thereby contributed in forging an embodied emblem of the nascent modern nation.

At the end of my discussion of Pavlova's impact on the development of Mexican concert dance in the first half of the 20th century, it might be plausible to conclude that her contributions could have produced five additional lines for the opening poem above:

Pavlova, as all nations, México is thine
Our country has worshipped your shrine
Pavlova, O dancer divine
Your genius graced our dance
Pavlova, México is thine.

The encounter between México and the “genius” of the ballet, however, would be delayed for several years before she arrived in México City. On October 29, 1910, a Mexican newspaper published in English cited a note from the *New York Herald*, which reported that hundreds crowded the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City as it seemed that the star of the show was “Mr. Caruso”. However, it was not the opera that cause such excitement as the note reported but instead, “it was the Russian dancers. . . Miss Anna Pavlova and Mr. Mikael Mordkin” who drew the numerous crowds (*The Mexican Herald* 1910, 1). Although the review deemed the performance of “minor dancers” included in the show as not “specially commendable”, it noted that spectators did not seem to bother “as long as Miss Pavlova and Mr. Mordkin danced as they did. Their feet have captured the heart of New York” (*The Mexican Herald* 1910, 1). The note in *The Mexican Herald* also announced that Pavlova and Mordkin were billed to appear in México that Winter.

It was precisely in 1910 when the Mexican political and capitalists elites under 40-year ruler Porfirio Díaz organized with much pomp and fanfare the centennial of México's independence from Spain. Commemorative publications, edification of monuments, and large

parades were part of these celebrations. The Mexican elites carefully constructed representations of México that could project an image of the country as a modern nation. They sought to impress their political, economic and cultural modernity on international audiences. In this festive environment, bringing to México artists of Pavlova's stature, who already enjoyed international status as an exponent of the values and aesthetics representative of high Culture, could have represented an affirmation to the country's affinity with Europeanized high culture. But Mordkin's and Pavlova's potential for winning the heart of México, as they had in New York City, was to be delayed for a few more years. In the midst of these celebrations of independence, groups from the lower strata of Mexican society along with some intellectuals organized an armed insurrection that began a revolutionary process that sought to restructure México as a more progressive and inclusive country. It was probably due to this revolutionary upheaval that Pavlova's feet did not land in México until January 1919 after an extensive tour in South America and Cuba.

Between 1910 when Pavlova was first expected to perform in México to 1919 when she actually did, the Russian ballerina remained in México's heart as a universalized referent of high culture. In September of 1913 a newspaper article in México City reported how a group of Russian ballerinas traveled throughout Europe under the auspices of the Czar as part of his court's imperial ballet. In these travels, this "squad of ballerinas" befriended high dignitaries and politicians thus playing an influential role in diplomatic relationships with other countries. The author suggests that the most beautiful and enchanting of those ballerinas was Anna Pavlova who was scheduled to return to the "the New World" for performances in New York City. The article ends by posing the following rhetorical question within the context of residual, strained relationships between the U.S. and Russia after the latter's war with Japan: "would the Russian

Ballerinas [and their star Pavlova] re-conquest on behalf of their own nation the friendship of the American Republic?" (*Unidentified source* 1913, 1).¹⁵

With the advent of World War I in 1914 the same question begged a more complex, layered answer. On the one hand Russia, Germany and other countries fought against the allies of which the U.S., along with Great Britain and France, was a leading force. The belligerent and ideological antagonism between Russia and the U.S. was further exacerbated after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 when communism and its suspected sympathizers were demonized and persecuted. On the other hand, although a Russian national, Pavlova had already gained a stardom status that in the eyes of the international elites, including in the allied nations, had *transcended* the specificity of her nationality –now associated with an “evil” nation.¹⁶ In the context of residual Romantic idealism, her art was discursively constructed as gifted with the genius of *true* artistry. Her dancing body was conceptualized as having tapped for the realm of the universal –an elite discourse where high art was the means through which common humanity (read white) could be experienced and communicated to other receptive “souls”. While Russia and the U.S. continued as military and ideological war enemies, a Russian national, a *gifted* dancer –Anna Pavlova- could indeed “re-conquest” not only “the friendship of the American Republic” but also “capture the hearts” of people all over the world.

This is the Anna Pavlova that México admired even before she was ever seen dancing on a Mexican stage. The concreteness of her dancing practice had defied geography as a traveling,

¹⁵ The source of this article is partially illegible. I found this article in the digital archives at the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada in México City. I have a digital copy of the article in my own archives.

¹⁶ See Yutian Wong (2009) for an insightful analysis of the trope of the international artist as a utopian category employed to transcend difference based on gender, class, ethnicity and race as she discusses the “forgetting” of Michio Ito from canonical histories of modern dance in the U.S.

intangible, discourse of high culture and modernity – a modernity embodied distinctively in different contexts. Alice Vronska, a dancer with Pavlova’s company, asserted that in a time where ballet was in decadence, Pavlova was the principal figure that brought dance back onto the worldwide *cultured* stage. After claiming no intention to be “disrespectful to Christianity”, Vronska articulated her reverence for Pavlova as the one who had revitalized ballet as a respectable high art form. She assured that “the history of dance was divided into two eras, before Pavlova and after Pavlova” (qtd in Ruiz 1981, 24). In the dance world, Vronska’s suggestion that Pavlova’s decisive influence in the history of dance might rival if not surpass the influence that Christianity had in the Western world might not be an exaggeration. Pavlova certainly influenced dance practices in every place she visited, from ballet in the U.S. (Foulkes 2002), to classical Indian dances in India and abroad (see for example O’Shea 2007; Erdman 1987) and concert dance in México. Her influence played a significant yet distinctive role in the construction of cultural modernity in the powerful and weaker nations that revered her at the turn of the 20th Century. Her dance intervention in México City in 1919 contributed in furthering the social and cultural revolution that post-revolutionary governments sought to institute as part of a nationalist modernizing project.

The Mythology of “Artistic Genius”: On Becoming a Star

According to some critics, Pavlova’s influence on the development of dance in many parts of the world, however, has not been attributed to any contributions she might have made towards the advancement of ballet’s modernization. It was rather, as Fedor Lensky (1978) asserts, “her personal genius. It was unique, inalienable, inimitable. She was great because she was Pavlova, the sum total of a divine gift” (4). It seems that Pavlova’s presumed “divine gift”

was not necessarily contingent on whether or not she ever achieved “excellence” in ballet technique and how keeping a debate on this question magnified the *value* of her personal genius. In his biography of Pavlova written in 1931, Walford Hyden, Pavlova’s musical director, asserts that “. . . she was as technically perfect as it is possible for a human being to become” (4). In contrast, Natalia Vladimirovna Trukhanova, a theater artist who knew the acclaimed ballet dancer, relates that although Pavlova was one of the four best dancers of her graduating class at the Imperial School of Ballet, she was technically the weakest among them. Trukhanova said of Pavlova, “she possessed no particularly breath taking technique, nor did she strive for it”, (qtd in *Dance Magazine* 1976, 45). She admits, however, that Pavlova’s “spontaneous and candid temperament” surpassed the category of “‘the artistic’ and elevated her to the level of genius” (46). Similarly, although Hyden claimed that Pavlova have achieved the highest technical standard possible for a human being, he concedes that “it was *something more* than technique which caused her to be acclaimed everywhere as the greatest dancer” [my emphasis in italics] (1931, 4).

To describe that “something more”, Hyden refers to another abstraction: that Pavlova was “the embodiment of the Spirit of Dance” (4). Trukhanova concretizes more specifically what that “something more” was and how that intangible “Spirit of the Dance” might look in the materiality of a dancing body. For her, Pavlova moved in a way that she looked “airy and ethereal [as if] she floats and dissolves like a cloud . . . [and who] by virtue of her nervous temperament she had incomparable swiftness of motion” (1976, 45). It seems that Pavlova’s “personal genius” was not the projection of mere *perfect* technical execution of codified movement vocabulary. It was rather the complex, nuanced combinations of the qualities of her moving body –the apparent candid spontaneity of her quickness, lightness, softness and

suppleness- movement qualities that had been inspired by Isadora Duncan's modern dance and that have come to constitute Pavlova's genius. This cultivated physicality enabled Pavlova to communicate her full investment at the moment of dancing in a way that commanded absolute attention to her moving body. This fully committed yet extraordinarily fluid way of moving on stage was rarely seen in ballet, which at the time was a more postural and static dance form.

Despite this innovative ballet physicality, however, most people seemed to have been invested in constructing Pavlova as an artistic genius than a modernizing agent. Contrasting Mikhail Fokine's efforts to reform the Russian Imperial School of Ballet while Pavlova was a student there and Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes' influence in modernizing classical ballet, Pavlova continued making *conservative* musical, thematic and choreographic, choices (Lensky 1978). Although Pavlova worked with both of these men, she could not be totally persuaded by the modernizing impulse of their work. As Trukhanova (1976) recounts, "no matter how [Diaghilev] tried, in his phrase, 'to enlighten this ignorant deity,' his every attempt met the most inflexible resistance" (46). Hyden (1931) provides a plausible explanation for Pavlova's resistive stubbornness, and assigns responsibility for her conservatism to her audiences. He writes of Pavlova:

She made numerous attempts to break away from the *genre* of ballet to which her admirers had become accustomed; but her followers would have none of it. They insisted on seeing her once more in the ballets which already they knew. It was always the old favourites they clamoured for; and much as Anna Pavlova desired to present new ideas, new music, new *décor*, she could not contend against this overwhelming sentiment of her public (Hyden 1931, 13).

Pavlova's *failed* attempts to break away from the ballet that her audiences were accustomed to see and to "present new ideas" were probably conditioned by the modernizing impulse with which Diaghilev and Fokine produced *Schéhérazade* and "conquered Paris" in 1910 (Wollen 1993, 4). According to Peter Wollen (1993), the fascination with *Schéhérazade* was prompted by

the ballet's story and scenography, which "derived directly from the eroticized and sadomasochistic vision of the imaginary Orient" (6). A fascination with appropriating and representing the Orient in the Western world at the turn of the 20th Century fueled a new, yet colonialist sense of cultural modernity. In this context Diaghilev's Ballet Russes functioned as a modernizing agent. As Wollen (1993) asserts in reference to *Schéhérazade*'s success, "the Russian Ballet launched the new Orientalism, [Paul] Poiret [-a French renown fashion designer-] popularized it, and Matisse channeled it into painting and fine art" (3). It was perhaps this artistic, Orientalized Western modernity propelled by the Russian Ballet that, according to Hyden, Pavlova unsuccessfully "attempted numerous" times to join.

Succumbing to the conservative aesthetic demands of her audiences, however, seems to have been more productive for Pavlova in cultivating her "personal genius" rather than in developing an interest in embracing any modernizing impulse. In this context, debates as to whether or not she ever achieved "the highest technical standard possible for a human being" served to mythologize Pavlova as a "genius" even more. On the physical level, Pavlova certainly achieved a high level of proficiency in the execution of the ballet technique available to her at the time, but it was the nuanced movement qualities of her fully committed dancing that enchanted her audiences. On the ideological level, it was her "conservative" repertoire, musical and choreographic choices that affirmed her audiences' sense of identity and *moved* them in a way that only a "genius" could do.

While Pavlova's artistic genius was often associated with the "universal", it was paradoxically rooted in a specific culture and social class. According to Hyden (1931), Pavlova:

. . . brought a vision of loveliness that will remain when the pranks of distorted acrobats and poseurs have been forgotten. Classical grace and charm can never become *démodé*. She represented in her person the climax of an aristocratic restraint and delicacy in art

with centuries of tradition behind it, coming unbroken from the court of Louis XIV through the rare culture of Old Russia (11-12).

As Hyden dismisses lowbrow cultural practices, “pranks of distorted acrobats and poseurs”, as mere ephemeral fads doomed to oblivion for they were rooted in nothing but mundane banalities, he exalts the “Classical grace and charm . . . the climax of aristocratic restraint and delicacy” embodied by Pavlova’s dancing body. He solidly anchors these human, yet socially constructed, qualities in “centuries of tradition . . . unbroken from the court of Louis XIV” as if evoking part of the French culture deemed the highest symbol of Western cultural prestige and imperial power from the 17th to the early 19th century. Although filtered through her “Old Russian culture”, these aristocratic human qualities and the “intrinsic majesty of the classical” *apparently* transcended time and space, and therefore they could never be “démodé”. Pavlova’s *transcendental* dance purportedly attested to an assumed *universal nature* of high art as the means of production and communication of cultural and class superiority.

According to this argument, the *conservative* yet classical, aristocratic genius embodied in Pavlova’s musical, thematic, and choreographic choices represented a body of knowledge constitutive of high art. The production of this classical, aristocratic knowledge re-affirmed while it helped to establish a particular world order as conceived and valorized by a specific social class -those *owning* the means of this type of knowledge production. As a means of knowledge production, Pavlova’s *conservative* ballet practices reified rather than challenged the codes and conventions representative of the class that constructed, sustained, and benefited from her “genius” status. Her work and “personal genius” provided for these elitist beneficiaries a reaffirmation of who they and others were in the world and theirs and others’ place in the matrix of sociopolitical, economic and cultural relations. Pavlova’s *artistic genius* consolidated the

sense of belonging to those who belonged, provided a vicarious experience to those who pretended to belong, and patronized those who must content merely with desiring to belong.

Modernizing Genius in Constructing Homotopia: Shifting Locales, Shifting Roles

The tension between those who exalted Pavlova as an “artistic genius” of classical, aristocratic ballet and those who could consider her as a modernizing agent played out differently in the Mexican context. Diaghilev’s assertion that Pavlova was an “ignorant deity” who he could not “enlighten” captures the tensile relationship between her desire to satisfy her conservative audiences and the pull of modernity that Diaghilev was spearheading in the ballet in Europe. In México, Diaghilev’s categorization of Pavlova as a deity was nothing short of what those among the Mexican elites could have imagined her to be. Her status as a genius was reverently embraced in México as it was in Europe and the U.S. However, unlike Diaghilev, far from perceiving Pavlova as an ignorant deity needing his enlightenment, people in México revered her not only as an already “enlightened deity” but also as an enlightening modernizing genius. Upon her arrival in México City in 1919, this reverence was expressed in poems and reviews of her shows while insistently associating Pavlova’s high art to ancient Greece. Roberto El Diablo (1919) wrote, “Distinguished lady who has arrived . . . as in the best, sweetest days of Greece when everything in nature personified the human soul, when in the air, the earth, the sky, and the ocean, divine spirits palpitated and the universe all was ruled . . . by love” (18). The writer evokes Greece as a spiritual landscape where the universal can be made evident. He seems to equate this mythical space with México City as Pavlova arrived to reactivate this metropolis’ artistic potential.

In México as in many other countries, it was conventional practice at the turn of the 20th century to evaluate modern art in relation to Greek culture as the highest referent of civilization and high culture in the Western world.¹⁷ In México as in other “third-world” countries, internationalized high art and its implicit cultural prestige associated with ancient Greece were confounded with modernity –more specifically with cultural modernity. Just a few days prior to Pavlova’s arrival in México City, Alvaro de Alhamar wrote of dancer and violinist Norka Rouskaya’s performances in México City that the Russian artist “revived in our stages the winged grace of the Hellenic nymphs; her soft figure evoked breezes from Greece. . .” (1919, 3). Reviewing the famous cellist from Spain, Pablo Casals, who he referred to as a “virtuosic genius”, critic Carlos Gonzalez Peña (1919a) noted that the “noble motives of Saint-Saens work abounded in Hellenic luminosity (3). In a context in which ancient Greece had been constructed as the *universal* highest measure of civilization and high culture, Roberto El Diablo’s poem above established Greece as the legitimizing source of both Pavlova’s “genius” and her high art practices. Pavlova’s dancing body was expected in México as the highest embodiment of such cultural prestige. As a short promotional note published in January 22, 1919 described her, “Anna Pavlowa, the greatest and most perfect Russian ballerina, creator of the purest classical ballet, and whose universal fame has taken her to the throne of art, will finally inaugurate her brilliant season at the Teatro Arbeu in the present week . . .” (*El Pueblo* 1919a, 4). Her legitimized artistic stature as a universalized genius was embraced fully by Mexican elites in a time in which the reconstruction of *their* country’s modern identity was being contested by bourgeois and revolutionary forces.

¹⁷ Isadora Duncan would be the prime example of embodying Greek culture, at least in the first phases of her career, as an strategy to legitimize her dance as modern high art; see Ann Daly (1995).

Despite the armed uprising and the political shifts that the Mexican revolutionary movement put in motion, México City remained the center where elite culture and revolutionary ideology thrived alongside one another. The revolutionary and the bourgeoisie embraced distinctive modernizing projects characterized by a civilizing mission. While revolutionary forces attempted to *include* the masses in México's nationalist project of modernization, the elites embraced an *exclusivist* modernizing project designed to ensure their place in the pre-established Mexican social hierarchies. For the elite classes in México, as in other cosmopolitan cities in the Western world, a modern subject could not be the one engulfed only by the material modernity brought about by industrialization and technologies emerging in the historical contemporaneousness of the subject's condition. This modern subject would be presumably a mere product of the revolution's civilizing mission, the mere product of ideology and mundane materialism, an *uncultured* citizen. In the ideological imagination of the elites, a true modern individual would have to be a truly civilized modern subject, the one, indeed, with access to the material realm of modernity, however, not merely as a producer, laborer, consumer, but as a partaker in the ownership of the means of production and profit. Additionally, this truly civilized modern subject would have access to the *spiritual* realm that civilized cultural production grants to those with a presumably *inherent* capacity for apprehending spiritualized aesthetic beauty.

This civilized modern subject as imagined by the Mexican elites was the product of an enabling, yet Eurocentric, paradox adopted by the upper classes in "third-world" countries. This culturally reconstituted subject reflected the materiality of its technological contemporaneousness while also reviving the source of its purported spiritual nature, paradoxically rooted in the historical distance of ancient Greek culture. When Pavlova, according to Roberto El Diablo's poem above, arrived in México "... as in the best, sweetest days of

Greece”, she was already a universalized referent of the cultured-civilized modern subject. Her contemporaneous material, dancing body referenced the spiritual nature and cultural sophistication of a great civilization -Greece.

Mexican Dance critics as a *legitimized* class of cultural experts actively participated in establishing the discursive legitimacy of Greece as the universal source of a spirituality produced by the aesthetic work of high art. Gonzalez Peña, one of the main chroniclers of Pavlova’s shows in México City, was a leading figure in formulations of *cultured* artistic production in general. As he reviewed Pablo Casals’ music concerts, he described how sounds from the musician’s cello “begin to intimately associate with emotion: an emotion that first attaches to your soul as if caressing it and eventually grows and keeps on growing and growing until it finally overwhelms you...to the point of making you shiver with the vibration of divine drunkenness” (1919b, 3). Here, Gonzalez Peña establishes Casals’ ability to incrementally caress his audience’s *soul* to the point of “divine drunkenness”. In other words, the overwhelming emotional potency of Casals’ music leads the listener, present in the theater, to experience an alteration of their faculties as if in a state of “drunkenness”. However, this altered state of being must be of a special sort. The concert stage and theater house represented spaces in which people on stage and people in their seats could perform cultural propriety. There they could reaffirm themselves by performing highly restrained physical comportments and mannerisms associated with social prestige. For people among the elite classes who attended these *cultured* events, the drunkenness to which Gonzalez Peña refers could only be a “divine” one, a spiritual one, and who else than the Greek god Dionysus to propitiate it.

In ancient Greek mythology, Dionysus’ mystery cult (as well of Demeter’s) provided his followers with the possibility for individual salvation and immortality not offered by the gods of

Mount Olympus and their religions (Hollister 1996).¹⁸ As a mythical figure capable of inspiring Gonzalez Peña to relate intoxication of the senses with an aesthetically-induced spirituality, the ghost of Dionysus as evoked in art criticism could offer *cultured* audiences a metaphorical cultural “individual salvation”. However, as Gonzalez Peña articulates it, the intoxicating power of Dionysus filtered through high art could also offer to *Culturally* receptive audiences a collective, redemptive affirmation of class belonging and allegiance through a transcendental experience of cultural spirituality. Gonzalez Peña continued relating in his review of Casals’ concert:

the public applauded and applauded incessantly but not yet with that enthusiasm at first contained and then overflowing when it is revealed that the very subtle spiritual identification with the artist has been established, when all barriers had been broken, and when the musician and his audience though communal emotion become one and the same person . . . such enthusiasm was experienced when Casals masterly executed the marvelous “Concerto in Re” by Edouard Lalo . . .” (1919b, 3).

Gonzalez Peña reflects for his readers the gradual process through which Casals’ music takes his audience on a journey from “contained” to “overflowing” communal emotion, to a “divine drunkenness”, to an artistic “spiritual intoxication” of the highest order. Everyone with access to this exclusivist experiential and discursive space could become “one and the same person”. Gonzalez Peña re-constructs here a collective subjectivity for those present in the theater where all become “one and the same person”. Their bodies “shiver[ing] with the vibration of divine drunkenness” become discursively an intimately collective social body for which the promise of “universal” binding materializes within a spiritual aura.

¹⁸ Dionysus was a much more complex figure than merely the god of wine and I will be discussing other aspects of his functions in Greek mythology later in this chapter. However, I am emphasizing here some of Dionysus’ characteristics as the god of wine for this is how Gonzalez Peña is implicitly evoking the Greek god in his review of Casals.

My analysis of Gonzalez Peña's review of Casals' music concert is not incidental. First, Casals' series of concerts began just a couple of weeks before Pavlova's delayed but euphorically expected arrival in México City. More importantly, these two *geniuses* had the opportunity to grace the Mexican concert stage by performing together in one of Pavlova's productions. Second, the Hellenicized cultural knowledge re-produced by the critics and embraced by *Cultured* audiences informed Pavlova's critical reception which inevitably linked her to Casals on the artistic spiritual plane. As these two revered artists continue presenting their own work in the City, Leopoldo de la Rosa, a critic for *Revista de Revistas*, enthusiastically commented that "México [was] enjoying two spectacles of supreme art: the magic cello of Pablo Casals and the portentous wonder of Anna Pavlova's dances" (1919, 5). While commenting in the same article on both Pavlova's and Casals' supreme art, de la Rosa exalted the Russian dancer's spiritual prowess. He wrote:

. . . classical dance, the enlivened expression of the winged soul and transfigured in the attitude of the body . . . is today one of the supremely poetic arts such as that of Anna Pavlova, creator of the most spiritual dance, the most dreaming-like and ideal in the present times. It speaks to our souls with the suggestive and enlivening language of rhythmic attitudes and gestures. We understand better the capacity to fly, which is nothing but the consequence of the spiritual nature which our free soul someday ought to enjoy . . . Who has not wished to fly? . . . to dance is nearly to fly. When humanity dances, it finds itself in its most exalted moment of artistic passion and worship." (1919, 5).

De la Rosa produces an image of Pavlova as an embodied spiritual catalyst. Through dance, she becomes the "creator" of the spiritual. He proposes a metaphor different from Gonzalez Peña's but equally promising of *universal* spiritual binding. Rather than envisioning and/or experiencing "divine drunkenness" and "spiritual intoxication", the undertones of de la Rosa's descriptive imagery seem to suggest the metaphorical possibility of taking flight along with Pavlova. After all, as de la Rosa asks, "Who has not wished to fly?"

Pavlova arrived in México already mythologized as a weightless, gravity-defying swan. In his interview with Pavlova published as “Ana Pavlowa, el Pajaro de Fuego” (“Ana Pavlowa, the Bird of Fire”), Xavier Sorondo (1919) assures that “everything in her evokes the agility of a bird” (1). Her mere presence –off stage- commanded for him such winged-creature imagery. For the interviewer Pavlova was not only a “bird of fire” but “. . . always the reminiscence of a rare bird of light” (1919, 1). As Hyden (1931), stated, “all over the world the name of Pavlova [was] associated with ‘The Swan’, her greatest individual triumph” (13).¹⁹ Diaghilev assured Fokine that “only Pavlova! Only she has the ability to be a swan . . . there can be no substitute” (qtd in Vladimirovna Trukhanova 1976, 46). The creation of Pavlova’s swan persona -and dance piece- was inspired not just by what some perceived as her swan-like anatomy such as “the curve of her truly swanlike neck” (Vladimirovna Trukhanova 1976, 46) but also her near-flying ability to dance. Vladimirovna Trukhanova (1976) assured that even when “dancing *en pointe*, [Pavlova] floated without making the slightest sound, even when the orchestra was silent” (46).

In a poem written in Paris and translated in *Revista de Revistas* during the first week of Pavlova’s performances in México City, Julien Ochse poetically described Pavlova’s dancing body as a flying swan:

“Oh, Pavlowa! Tonight at the dusk of the scene
as you danced, I witnessed the vivification
of surreal dreams . . .
I saw the flight of the swan of unscathed wings which over the static pond slides
so enlivened and gravity-defying
that one could for a moment in the gloomy sky’s tranquil gala
see the radiant lightning of its flight . . . (1919, 16).

¹⁹ I will discuss in more detail *The Dying Swan* in chapter two as a dance that represented a universalized metaphor of the *human spirit* that struggled to thrive, a struggle with which many in the context of the Mexican revolution identified.

The figure of the swan further mythologized Pavlova as an anthropomorphic, otherworldly being on and off stage. She became a *universal* swan capable of producing for her audiences' a sense of collective transcendence as they took a metaphorical spiritual flight with the "bird of fire", "the bird of light". According to de la Rosa, the "portentous wonder" of Pavlova's spiritual dancing was capable of creating "the most exalted moment of artistic passion and worship". As I will discuss later in this chapter, there was no doubt that for Gonzalez Peña, Pavlova, an artist of Casals' caliber, was capable of creating that exalted moment when the artist and the audience become "one and the same person".

Pavlova's spiritual power as a genius of mythical proportions rendered the mundane materiality of the Mexican *cultured* theater as a quasi-sacred social space—a "homotopic" space. It was in this social space that members of a class of -not identicals but- privileged similars engaged in an exchange of embodied, visual, audible, and intertextual referents that reinforced identifications with the values and interests of their social class' own creation. Michel Foucault (1986) has postulated that heterotopias "are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which . . . all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). The utopic impulse in a heterotopia might be conducive of sociopolitical and cultural progressive exchanges among a diversity of participant factions coexisting in a given social space, with all the tensions that such processes entail.²⁰ Conversely, I will argue that in a homotopia, the utopic impulse would not be for diversity but for sameness, not for progressive utopia but for preserving utopia. A homotopia would be a site in which the preservation of the status quo through reproduction of sociopolitical,

²⁰ See Banes (1993) for how she discusses New York's Greenwich Village as a heterotopia in the U.S. during the early 1960s.

economic, and cultural values among similars would constitute the *ideal* world. Formulated discursively and choreographed physically through quotidian comportments as well as dances on the concert stage, this homotopic space is *effectively enacted* in the here and now rather than as an ever-longed-for imaginary possibility.

In this vein, far from being an “ignorant deity” needing Diaghilev’s “enlightenment”, Pavlova’s dancing body already *knew*; she embodied the knowledge that rendered her an agent capable of contributing in fulfilling Mexican elite’s aspirations for furthering *their* country’s cultural modernity. By dancing the embodied values and worldviews of the international, Europeanized classes, Pavlova created a homotopic space where individual and collective identities could be re-affirmed as belonging to an exclusivist class of cultured, civilized moderns.

Choreographing Homotopia: Pavlova as (her) *La Muñeca Encantada* (*The Enchanted Doll*)

After the armed insurrection of 1910, many capital owners in states throughout México moved periodically or permanently to the relative safety offered by México City as the country’s economic and cultural center. México’s economic and cultural development was being shaped not only by these migrating and local Mexican capitalists, artists and intellectuals inside and outside the government but also by “powerful businessmen and bankers from France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Britain, and some from the U.S.” as well as their relatives born in México (Salazar 2009, 22-23). Delia Salazar Anaya (2009) asserts that this “migrant minority, their business partners and national competitors” represented a societal model designed by the porfirista governing elites who based their public policies on French and British positivism in efforts to turn México into a more “prosperous and modern as well as a ‘whiter’, country” (23). Despite their distinctive interests, members of the “foreign colonies” living in México as well as

Mexican artists, intellectuals and business impresarios constituted the elites to which Pavlova's work initially appealed.²¹ Their shared interest in a post-revolutionary modernizing project was reflected in her high art already consolidated internationally. By aligning themselves with Pavlova's "internationalized" high art, these Mexican elites reaffirmed themselves not only as civilized modern Mexicans but also as members of an "internationalized", cosmopolitan class. These were the selective audiences that attended Pavlova's debut in México City on January 25, 1919 at the prestigious Teatro Arbeu.

Four days before that awaited opening, a writer identified as Buffalmacco published in the newspaper *El Pueblo* his interview with the Russian dancer. The critic assured his readers that Pavlova was a "... female genius, unique. If it was up to me [Buffalmacco], I will crown her empress of the vast [Russian] empire. And I am sure that all cultured Mexicans will agree with me ... I am not sure if I will be able to sleep tonight" (1919a, 3). Buffalmacco's enthusiasm indeed reflected that of many "cultured Mexicans", perhaps not necessarily to the point of going without sleep but certainly to enthusiastically crowd the theater in order to be in the same space with a *genius*. Gonzalez Peña confirmed Buffalmacco's prediction that all *cultured* Mexicans would join in reverencing the acclaimed dancer. In his review of Pavlova's first presentation in México City, Gonzalez Peña reported that "in attendance were old and young cultured aficionados and all the most relevant and distinguished among the Mexican society" (1919c, 3). Pavlova's first program in México City opened with *La Muñeca Encantada* (*The Enchanted Doll*) followed by *La Noche de Valpurgis* (*Valpurgis Night*) and ended with 7 *divertissements*.

²¹ Unless otherwise indicated, I will include members of these "foreign colonies" living in México when I refer to the "Mexican elites" for they were such an intricate part of the country's political, economic and cultural development.

Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña reviewed Pavlova's first presentation in México City, the former for *El Pueblo* and the latter for *El Universal*. Buffalmacco opened his review asserting that the show had been the “. . . most beautiful spectacle that currently exists in the whole world” and assured that he should have preferred not to be “obligated [as a critic] to comment on the feast for the only subsequent impression could have been silence, a devout silence that could sooth us with the internal vision of the landscape of our own soul through the night and not open our eyes until dawn” (1919b, 5). After noting Pavlova's enabling spiritual capacity, the reviewer briefly commented on how the audience “frantically applauded” in appreciation of *The Enchanted Doll*, a piece in which Pavlova and Alexander Volinine “demonstrated the first display of extraordinary agility and beauty” (1919b, 5).

Somewhat more skeptical, Gonzalez Peña did not find much artistic merit in *The Enchanted Doll*. He said of the first piece of the show, “let us confess it, the first impression was distantly far from satisfying our expectations . . . it entertains us, it captivates us, but it does not tell us anything new . . . I experienced, then, the first part of the program without seeing anything extraordinary happening” (1919c, 3). For Gonzalez Peña not even Pavlova and Volinine's “display of extraordinary agility and beauty” noted by Buffalmacco was worth mentioning. While Buffalmacco assured that audiences were very pleased with *The Enchanted Doll* as demonstrated by their “frantic applause”, especially during “the pas de deux between the enchanted doll [Pavlova] and the prince [Volinine]” (1919b, 5), Gonzalez Peña found the piece artistically hollow. To some extent, however, Buffalmacco echoed Gonzalez Peña's concerns, albeit more politely. The former admitted about Pavlova's first show in general, “at this time, what Anna Pavlowa has presented us has been the most simple of her repertoire . . . She has decided that our public gradually get to know the insignia of her sacred rite . . .” (1919b, 5).

These critics' assessments of Pavlova's *The Enchanted Doll* reflected the tension between their own needs as *legitimized* experts in aesthetic matters and Pavlova's elite audiences' desires to establish their cultural affinity with the "empress" of the ballet.

As art and dance critics, Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña had an implicit *responsibility* – always mediated by their own subjectivity and interests. They had to articulate in writing not only the formal aspects of their object of analysis, a dance piece, but also how a dance conversed with the codes and conventions that define its own tradition. In this process of analytical –or opinionated- reflection, the dance writer implicitly and/or explicitly reflected the discursive ideology and historical forces –past and present- that sustained the aesthetic tradition(s) to which the dance being observed had been related. Although to different degrees Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña dismissed *The Enchanted Doll* on artistic grounds, they missed the social impact the piece had for the particular audience present in the theater –“all the most relevant and distinguished among the Mexican society” (Gonzalez Peña 1919c, 3).

The day before Pavlova's company's debut, the newspaper *El Pueblo* published the general plot of *The Enchanted Doll*. The piece takes place in a toy store where an affluent Scottish family, *headed* by a prominent banker, witnesses a display of dancing dolls in hopes of purchasing one for the family's daughter. Disappointed by not finding the right doll, the banker heads out of the store with his family, but the salesperson offers to show them the most “precious treasure”, the most expensive of all the dolls in store –“The Enchanted Doll”. This doll's grace indeed enchants everybody around, including the banker's daughter. Her father pays the high price and orders that the human-sized doll be sent to their home the following day. During her last night at the store, the enchanted doll wishes to dance a farewell feast with all other dolls in

stock. She escapes from her package and invites all others to do the same as they dance together the finale of the dance (*El Pueblo* 1919b, 5).

The significance of *The Enchanted Doll* in artistic and social identity formation and reification was further magnified by the fact that the enchanted doll was none other than the acclaimed *genius*, Anna Pavlova. Through more complex movement vocabulary and costuming, the principal doll-ballerina distinguished herself among the mass of common dancing dolls-corps-de-ballet. Within the practice of ballet, the most distinguishably treasured among all dolls dancing on stage re-affirmed the individual artistic identity of the prima ballerina as a supreme being in a hierarchy of dancing bodies on and off the stage. At the same time, Pavlova also reified her own identity as an artistic *genius* while reaffirming her status in the upper echelons of the international ballet stage of her time and within the balletomane's stratified matrixes of prestige. Introducing herself to *cultured* Mexican audiences with this ballet solidified the reverence they had for Pavlova as the "highest exponent of *cultured* dance world-wide and who honored [them] with her visit" (Dallal 1989, 163).

As a catalyst for a homotopic space in which a transcendently *universal* binding might take place, *The Enchanted Doll* was exclusive for the few. In the ballet, it was difficult for the affluent family to find the doll that could please their taste. However, once the right one, the enchanted doll, was found, its highest price would not stop its purchase. In fact, purchasing the highly priced enchanted doll served as an affirmation of the family's affluence, its privilege, its distinctive place in the social and economic hierarchies. Being the enchanted doll –literally and figuratively-, Anna Pavlova, the "highest exponent of *culture* dance world-wide", marked its elite Mexican audiences with the lore of social prestige. She re-confirmed their affluence, their privilege, their distinctive place in the Mexican social and economic hierarchies. The enchanted

doll was literally accessible in the toy store on stage to those affluent enough to pay its high price. *The Enchanted Doll* was also not only literally accessible to the affluent enough to purchase a theater ticket to see the dance but also figuratively to the *cultured* enough to appreciate the extraordinary “agility and beauty” of Pavlova’s dancing body and to apprehend the transcendental spiritual radiance of her dancing *soul*.

While *The Enchanted Doll* might have not fully pleased the critics, for reasons I will discuss later, the dance provided for the most prestigious among Mexicans and foreigners living in the country the fulfillment of the promised *universal* spiritual binding discursively accessible to international elites. For elites in México as in other “third world” at the turn of the 20th century, the capacity to sustain high art spectacles purportedly reflected their country’s economic and cultural sophistication, which by extension *proved* their country’s capacity for modernization.

Pavlova’s choice of *The Enchanted Doll* as an introduction for her selective Mexican audiences provided the social space in which to reproduce and identify with the sociopolitical, cultural, and economic values that distinguished them as a class of similarly privileged ones. In this homotopic space, a social body of similars -Pavlova, her Mexican audiences, and also her temporarily *disenchanted* critics- reified their artistic and social identities. They reaffirmed themselves as a class of *legitimized* experts and owners of the means of Hellenicized cultural knowledge production -a privileged and exclusivists class of *cultured*, civilized moderns. In this context, the Mexican elites also confirm their culturally modern affinity with elites in the “first-world” through their identification with Pavlova’s Europeanized ballet repertoire. And for all this, Pavlova’s selective and distinguished audiences for *The Enchanted Doll* in México gratefully and “frantically applau[ded]”.

National and International Politics in the Construction of Homotopic Spaces

As *entrusted* expert critics, Buffalmacco's and Gonzalez Peña's implicit *responsibility* was not only to safeguard but also to re-define sociopolitical, economic and cultural values as reflected –or not- in aesthetic practices that re-affirm artistic and social identities distinctive of elite social class. Although the two dance writers did not emphasize the social impact that *La Muñeca Encantada* had for its selective Mexican audiences, these critics were equally partakers and beneficiaries of the cornucopia of social pleasures involved in re-affirming both their own identity as members of a class of similarly privileged individuals and also as trusted *legitimized* experts. As such, their *specialized* labor reflected the specificity of the reality of their own country, a country whose modernizing impulse was being shaped by its 9th year of armed revolution as well as events related to the end of World War I. In this section I will discuss the complex ways in which national and international politics intertwined with one another to produce the unique sociopolitical and cultural context in which Pavlova arrived to choreograph a homotopic space for Mexican elites and foreign business owners living in the country.

The impetus of the social unrest that started in northern México at the turn of the 20th century produced an armed revolutionary movement that spread throughout the country and enabled Francisco I. Madero to assume the nation's presidency. As this revolutionary movement ended 40 years of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship in 1910, El Plan de San Luis articulated the democratic ideas that Madero represented in the name of Mexicans. "Effective Suffrage. No Reelection" was the new political guiding principle of the nascent nation, a principle that subsequent Mexican president, Alvaro Obregón, assured "had served as the cardinal axis for the armed movement" (*Cronica Ilustrada*, 1968a, 4). This revolutionary movement, however, branched out into two streams. On the one hand, one of these streams was institutionalized by the

arms of the federal army under the orders of the incumbent president whose interests often conflicted with those of his associates, including army generals. As the revolution became institutionalized, these competing interests ended in a series of betrayals and assassinations spurred by the search for the institutional power that the presidency stood for. Such was the turmoil that in the first decades of the revolution several presidents took office for only a few months if not just a few hours. Pedro Lascuráin's presidency, for instance, began and ended in February 18, 1913, just in the interim hours between the assassination of president Madero and vice president Pino Suárez and as Victoriano Huerta, who had betrayed them, took up the presidency. The main presidential figures who led the institutionalization of the Mexican revolution in its first 14 years as they battled for power were Francisco I. Madero (November 6, 1911- February 18, 1913); Victoriano Huerta (February 18, 1913 – July 15, 1914); Venustiano Carranza (August 20, 1914 – May 21, 1920); and Alvaro Obregón (December 1, 1920 – November 30, 1924).

On the other hand, a second stream of the armed revolution was represented by groups of “rebels” who sought to pressure the new governments to enact the reforms for which many thought the revolution stood. Among many other leaders, Francisco Villa led some of these groups in the north and Emiliano Zapata led others in the south. Zapata had become disenchanted with President Madero as the latter was perceived to resemble policies akin to those embraced by sympathizers of the overthrown Díaz's regime. In November 28, 1911, Zapata launched El Plan de Ayala, a document in which he disavowed Madero as president and delineated his revolutionary politics (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968a). El Plan de Ayala stated in its 7th clause that:

By virtue of the fact that the vast majority of Mexican citizens in villages and towns do not own the land they step on at a given time, without opportunities to better in anything their social condition for the land, hills, mountains and rivers are monopolized by a handful of people, these monopolies will be expropriated from their powerful owners,

granting an indemnification for one third of their total lot, so that Mexican citizens in villages and towns can obtain legal rights for lands they can own to inhabit, labor and sow and thus improve in all aspects the current lack of prosperity and well-being of all Mexicans (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968b, 11).

Zapata's resolute impulse for agrarian reform made him and others like him a threat to the interest of the powerful land owners, among who were the newly elected Mexican presidents like Madero and Carranza. Although agrarian reform was a crucial factor that propelled the armed insurrection in 1910, presidents like Madero, Huerta, and later Carranza systematically resisted such reforms, even when these policies became institutionalized in the Mexican Constitution designed under Carranza in 1917. While these presidents negotiated demands for agrarian reform and their own interests as land owners by giving concessions as gestures that sought to merely please the more aggressive claims for land distribution, Zapata continued proclaiming that "the land belongs to the one who labors it" (film: "The Storm that Swept México").²²

During and after his life, Zapata's resolution gained him a reputation of mythological proportions. He was, and continues to be, seen as a "true hero" devoted to those from *below*. The epitaph placed on his grave attested to this popular sentiment, "To the most representative man of the popular revolutionary movement, the Apostle of Agrarianism, to the seer to whom faith never abandoned, to the immortal Emiliano Zapata this homage dedicated by his fighting comrades. . ." (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968b, 22).

The tensions between these two revolutionary forces, an institutionalized and a popular one, were constantly renegotiated and often intertwined. Although Villa was persecuted by both

²² I watched a screening of this film at the UCLA's Digital Screening Theater, 1422 Melnitz on November 18, 2010. The screening of the film directed and co-produced by Raymond Telles was organized by the UCLA Center for Mexican Studies of Latin America Institute as part of a series of activities commemorating the centennial of the Mexican Revolution. The film eventually premiered on PBS on May 15, 2011.

the Mexican and the U.S. military forces –in Mexican territory- at one point he became governor of the state of Chihuahua (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968).²³ However, the institutional stream of the revolution clearly contrasted the interests of those of the “rebels” as it was made clear, for example in Alvaro Obregón’s El Plan de Agua Prieta launched in April 23, 1920. In this document the soon-to-be president stated in article 17 that “the commander and chief of the liberal constitutionalist army and all other civil and military authorities that adhere to this plan [de Agua Prieta], will guarantee the rights of nationals and foreigners alike and will protect, very specially, the development of industry, commerce and all businesses” (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968a, 15).²⁴

Although the relationship between these two revolutionary forces oscillated between collaborative alliances and belligerent antagonisms, their political and social priorities were more consistently discernible. Leaders like Zapata represented for many the interest of the dispossessed whose claims for land reform fueled what his grave’s epitaph recorded as the “popular revolutionary movement”, a movement constituted by those who had been deprived from enjoying *their* country’s resources, including its land, even before and during Díaz’s dictatorship. On the other hand, economically, the institutionalized revolutionary forces pursued a modernizing project based on what would become consolidated as the foundational organizing

²³ In retaliation for crimes committed by Villa and his people in U.S. territory, president Woodrow Wilson sent 10, 000 U.S. troops across the México -U.S. border as part of an unsuccessful “punitive expedition” aimed at capturing and/or killing Villa.

²⁴ Just as Zapata’s Plan de San Luis have disavowed Madero as President in 1911, Obregón’s Plan de Agua Prieta, now in 1920, also proclaimed that the first article “ceases the citizen Venustiano Carranza from the exercise of the federacy’s executive power” (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968a, 15); Carranza was eventually assassinated by the troops of general Rodolfo Herrero. These are examples of some more of the many confrontations that characterized the struggle for power during the institutionalization of the Mexican revolution in its first decade (1910-1920), at the end of which Pavlova arrived in México City.

principle of contemporary capitalism. Concessions established through economic policies (e.g. taxation privileges) were intended to enable the middle classes and elites –to which leaders of the institutional revolutionary forces and their personal interests belong- to sustain a “healthy” and strong economy. All other political and economic compromises would be scornfully dismissed, especially by the Mexican bourgeoisie, as mere demagogical *populism*. In different forms, this elite-friendly institutional revolution enacted sociopolitical, economic and cultural policies that privileged, as the Plan de Agua Prieta stated, the protection -“*very specially* [of] the development of industry, commerce and all businesses” my emphasis], (*Cronica Ilustrada* 1968a, 15).

This consolidation of social stratification through economic policies was succinctly summarized in an editorial published in February 19, 1919 in *El Universal*, when Pavlova was already performing in México City. As if to question the validity of revolutionary claims for social justice, the editorial’s title placed within quotation marks the phrase “‘La Desigualdad Social’” (“Social Inequality”). As a response to an article published in *El Excelsior*, the editorial quoted Felix F. Plavicini –founder of *El Universal*- as refuting claims from what he called “la extrema izquierda” (“the extreme left”) and their “socialist landownership”. While exalting the “postulates of Mexican democracy”, he said, “the betterment of social conditions for the majority is not achieved through the distribution of wealth from the few to the many . . .” As Plavicini’s rationale implied that distributing wealth from the hands of the few to the tables of the many was not the solution to real social justice, he asserted that “industrialism” (read capitalism) owned the “modern world” and that it consolidated democracy while promoting the “strength” and “well-being” of nations (*El Universal* 1919a, 3). He wondered why the “proletariat” should not wish the existence of various capitals in order to establish businesses so that “salaries rise and abound” (*El Universal* 1919a, 3). Plavicini’s assertions reflect another of the premises of

contemporary capitalist dogma which justifies its neoliberal policies by promising the “creation of jobs” for which the proletariat, and the middle classes, should be grateful for –even if compensation and/or distribution of wealth continues to be significantly uneven between the few and the many. More significant in Plavicini’s rationalization is that the various capitals constitutive of his proposed redemptive “industrialism” not only reflected but actually “own[ed] the modern world” and promoted its characteristic hallmark –democracy. In early 1919, Plavicini’s concerns had particular relevance for México, a country whose democratic motto, “Effective Suffrage. No Reelection”, instituted by president Madero at the outset of the Mexican revolution 9 year earlier set the country in motion in a new process of modernization.

While in 1919 México’s modernizing efforts were being mediated by distinctive popular and elite revolutionary forces as well as the country’s anti-socialist, pro-capitalist bourgeoisie, such efforts were also influenced by the modernizing impulse being shaped on the international political stage. The end of World War I in 1918 propelled a process that reconfigured the *world* geographically and relationally. The peace conference that took place in Paris, France in 1919 gathered countries associated with the allies in redefining geographical and political boundaries consolidating the U.S., Great Britain, and France as the world superpowers and undermining Germany’s and Russia’s political and military force and influence. This geographical, political and military reconfiguration of the world produced a sense of belonging to a new world order in which rationality and civilization characterized the allied nations and their associates; on the other hand, irrationality and barbarism were imaginatively ascribed as purportedly inherent traits in those constructed as enemies. The conclusions and policies formulated in this peace conference were articulated in the Treaty of Versailles and in the creation of the League of

Nations, an institution intended to *mediate* international relations and avoid further military conflicts.

As an article by the Associated Press published in *El Universal* in March 28, 1919 reported, some of the conditions to join the League of Nations called on aspiring nation members to:

‘ensure all their citizens as well as foreigners residing in their territories, freedom of religion, protection of their personal and property well-being, freedom of press and exercise of suffrage as consigned by their constitutions or legislative acts’. These propositions will apply not only to the enemy countries but also to nations such as Russia, México and Costa Rica of which the two latter were not invited to take part in the meeting of representatives from belligerent and neutral nations to discuss the League of Nations (1).

For México, the peace talks and the League of Nations represented “. . . the future of the unsubstitutable foundation of universal justice and universal rights” (*El Universal* 1919b, 3) as hallmarks of the new world order designed not only by the militarily most powerful nations but also joined by the purportedly most rational and civilized. As México was excluded from this phase in the *democratized* promise of universal justice and rights as the new face of the postwar rational modern nation, the country continued reconfiguring its sociopolitical, economic and cultural elite discourses.

In this context, México’s government decided to compensate foreigners living in the country for the damages and losses they experienced as a result of the armed revolutionary movement. The Mexican-French newspaper *Le Courrier du Mexique* denounced that during the “. . . Mexican revolution [. . .] a large number of foreigners have been killed, wounded, [and their properties] subjected to theft and burning not as a result of war actions carried out by combat troops under responsible leaders but rather by isolated subalterns, gangs of bandits to which the revolution served as an excuse to unleash their most criminal instincts” (in *El*

Universal 1919d, 3) . Despite such denouncements, some nationalist forces resisted any measures that sought to compensate foreigners for damages suffered during the revolution on the grounds that more rights were being granted to foreigners than to many nationals (*El Universal* 1919c, 3). As the Mexican government decided to enact compensatory policies benefiting affected foreigners, *Le Courrier du Mexique* concluded that “the government’s decision [was] inspired on a principle of strict equality [in guaranteeing protection to nationals and foreigners alike], and that far from humiliating México [as some nationalist forces would argue], the decision exalts the country” (in *El Universal* 1919d, 3).

This compensation was certainly more than a mere moral amend; the decision actually reflected adherence to the demands of the League of Nation’s guidelines for membership, in this case to ensure all Mexican citizens as well as foreigners residing in Mexican territory “protection of their personal and property well-being . . .”. As the debate continued, there was increased consensus that “México . . . had the right to a life within the international concert” being orchestrated by the newly formed international institution (*El Universal* 1919b, 3). Juan Sánchez Azcona, president of the Mexican Chamber of Foreign Relations in the House of the Senate, assessed the critical importance of México’s inclusion in the League of Nations while he ensured that as a neutral nation, México would eventually be invited to be part of the forming international institution. Sánchez Azcona said in relation to his country’s desire to join the “international concert”:

A salient topic of discussion and commentary amongst serious people has been, in the latter days, the possibility that México become a part of the projected ‘League of Nations’; and this concern is justifiably of upmost importance, for this matter would profoundly impact our national life by determining the conditions in which our country will be placed amongst all other nations of civilized humanity” (1919, 1).

While México continued reconfiguring its sociopolitical, economic elite discourses, the country sought to construct its national identity as a postwar rational and cultured, civilized modern nation—a nation worthy of joining the newly formed “international stage” constituted by “nations of civilized humanity”.

In this context, the Mexican sociocultural arena provided another stage for solidifying cultural elite discourses in the construction of elite modernity in accordance to the newly reconfigured world order. As the preparations for the peace talks in Paris were underway in January 12, 1919, just several days before Pavlova’s arrival in México City, *El Universal* published an invitation to “A Grand Cultural Fiesta” organized by the newspaper to celebrate “the Advent of Peace.” The invitation read:

El Universal will celebrate the magnificent event of the peace treaties, that will be signed in Europe, with a fiesta of high culture and two contests: one of popular character and the other exclusively destined for intellectuals. With this gesture we want to highlight the importance that the end of the war has for all civilized peoples and the interest with which México sees the return of the world to its normal evolution (1919e, 2).

El Universal’s invitation includes México apparently as a default part of “all civilized peoples” and notes the country’s active involvement in “seeing how the world returns to its normal evolution”. The invitation seems to imply perhaps that the triumph of rationality and civilization would carry the world forward into its linear trajectory towards ongoing progress—a progress to which México looked forward after its own armed revolution. While the cultural fiesta was branded as a “fiesta of high culture”, the invitation appeared to be inclusive of various constituencies from the stratified Mexican society. The general public was invited to vote by using ballots provided by the newspaper to elect a young woman to preside the fiesta as the “Queen of Peace” and who would choose a court of honor of ten other young women. The contest of “popular character” called for anyone interested in participating to send as many

written guesses as they wished concerning the day and time in which the peace treaties would be signed. The other contest -“exclusively destined for intellectuals”- asked that in 300 words participants responded to the prompt, “how will the weak countries benefit from the peace treaties of Versailles this 1919?” (*El Universal* 1919e, 2).

It was also announced that the fiesta would take place in March at one of the principal theaters in México and that in order to give “major luster to the display of [high] culture, *El Universal* will gather a contingent of the most worthy elements in existence in México, from the letters to music and decorative arts” (*El Universal* 1919e, 2). The conglomeration of diverse social segments of the population in this “fiesta of culture” –“the most worthy elements in existence in México”; those in the “general public”, with access to buying and reading the newspaper; and intellectuals- seemed to be included as one Mexican social body cherishing the desires for inclusion in the world’s peace celebrations as part of the “civilized humanity’s” “international concert”. While democratic in intention, *El Universal’s* invitation simultaneously retains the clear demarcations amongst social groups, between those who can infuse the fiesta with social prestige through their cultured artistic talents; those who can think, reflect and write about matters of consequence; and those who can merely entertain themselves by guessing, as much as they wanted. Although these allegorical divides naturalize the production of *democratized exclusiveness*, *El Universal’s* fiesta and its structural organization intended to reflect *democratized inclusiveness*, valued as the hallmark of a cultured, civilized modern nation.

This *democratized exclusiveness* amongst cultured, civilized subjects emulating the new world order’s modernity also took place in Mexican sociopolitical elite protocol. Gonzalez Peña’s voice continued to be instrumental in articulating these discursive values not only when commenting about performances on the concert stage but also on the Mexican sociocultural

stage. On January 18, 1919, just a few days after he wrote about cellist Pablo Casals' concerts and just a few days before he reviewed Pavlova's first performance in México City, Gonzalez Peña commented on a Tea-concert offered by Mr. Rafael Nieto –Undersecretary of the Treasury. The Tea-concert was attended by “the most salient government personalities, members of the Honorable Diplomatic Body and the most distinguished of the metropolitan society” (Gonzalez Peña 1919d, 3). The line up of artists included none other than Casals whose music had proven, according to Gonzalez Peña's assessment a few days before, that all who listen could become “one and the same person” through a purported artistically-induced spiritual connection. But here, Gonzalez Peña's intervention extended from the local to the international level the imaginary, elitist Mexican homotopic space. In his review of the Tea-concert, he wrote:

among functionaries from civilized countries, it is frequent to congregate [. . .] the most distinguished of their social classes to attend events like the one I am writing about today. In Paris, like Washington, London and many other capitals, it is typical to gather at the official quarters of secretaries and ministries of the state compact groups of the most representative figures in society to enjoy each other's company while listening concert musicians, lecturers and poets. And it is to celebrate that Mr. and Mrs. Nieto establish here [in our country] such a Beautiful tradition (Gonzalez Peña 1919d, 3).

As Gonzalez Peña's comments imply how the creation of homotopic spaces, events like the tea-concert he is reviewing, is a typical occurrence amongst political elites in “civilized countries”, he calls for celebrating Mr. and Mrs. Nieto for establishing “such a beautiful tradition” in México. Thus, Gonzalez Peña implicitly suggests that México has the capacity and the social pedigree possessed by the “civilized countries” that constitute the newly emerging sense of postwar modernity. His evocation of Paris, Washington, and London -the three recently victorious allied nations and which constituted the new centers of political and military power in the *civilized* world- is here strategic. As an imaginative strategy, this evocation fueled his investment, and of people like Plavicini and other members of the Mexican elites, in imagining

México City as a cosmopolitan city, and México as a cultured, civilized modern nation worthy of participation in the newly reconfigured “international concert” of “civilized humanity”.

Integrative Dances of the Cultured, Civilized Modern: The Critic as Constructor of Cultural Discourse and Subjectivity

In the context of México’s impulse for joining the civilized modern world, I will discuss in this section the role that critics like Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco played in constructing cultural discourse as constitutive of elitist subjectivity. Upon Pavlova’s arrival in the country, México’s modernizing impulse resonated with Russian ballet in general and with some dances in the Russian ballerina’s repertoire in particular. During 1919 in México, romanticized notions of dance considered it, according to de la Rosa, as “ . . . the most complete and suitable art to express man’s intuition for the eternal harmony of the universe” (qtd in Buffalmacco 1919b, 5). More specifically, Buffalmacco (1919b) assured that “the ballet, as organized by the Russians, is universally considered the artistic culmination of the scenic arts” (5). On the surface, it may appear that Mexican dance critics thought of Russian ballet as a general category of the modern of which Pavlova was one of its most iconic representatives. However, unlike some charges in Europe and the U.S. that Pavlova was more a conservative than a modernizing agent, Gonzalez Peña’s and Buffalmacco’s reviews of her debut in México evinced that the Mexican context was different. There, Mexican critics could discern gradients of conservative as well as modern aesthetics in some of her ballets. Gonzalez Peña wrote:

Many of us went to the theater propelled by the desire to witness that wonderful revelation of art that contemporary ballet is. We wanted to see the harmonic association amongst the three sister arts: music, choreography and painting as the Russians have happily fused them in one unique art. Representing a captivating wonder around the world -for being more of our epoch and for more profoundly responding to our own way

of seeing and feeling –, this contemporary Russian ballet has come to substitute the old classical ballet (1919c, 4).

Gonzalez Peña draws a clear distinction between “contemporary” and “old, classical” ballet and delineates the criteria for distinguishing one from the other. “Contemporary” ballet is, according to the reviewer, the dance that harmonically associates the “three sister arts” of music, choreography and painting as the Russians had “happily fused them”. The “old classical ballet” is implicitly dismissed as being out of touch with Gonzalez Peña’s epoch and Mexicans’ own ways of seeing and feeling –a lack that the contemporary ballet would remedy. Many of the most relevant and selective from Mexican society, including Gonzalez Peña, went to the theater hoping that Pavlova and her company would satisfy their burning desire for witnessing contemporary ballet, that is, Russian ballet.

This was the measure against which Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña, as *legitimized* experts, had assessed *The Enchanted Doll* as a ballet that “was distantly far from satisfying” their expectations and which did not say “anything new” (Gonzalez Peña 1919c, 3). However, Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco appreciated some choreographic choices included in the same program and which resonated with their expectations of what contemporary, modern Russian ballet should look like. Both dance writers commented on the painter Sim’s intervention in *Walpurgis Night*, the piece that followed *The Enchanted Doll*. Gonzalez Peña noted that while the dance could not do justice to Goethe’s profound thinking, it was “partially successful” as a “beautiful visual experience” that “produces to the eye a drunkenness of color and movement” (1919c, 4). He asserted that Sim’s decorations and costumes “. . . are preciously beautiful; they possess the passionate colors that characterize the Russians and abound, primarily in the costumes, those delicate tones that exert in our vision a soothing effect” (Gonzalez Peña 1919c, 4).

Similarly, Buffalmacco affirmed that *Walpurgis Night* provided “the opportunity to see how the collaborative work of the illustrious painter Sim [whose every single designed] costume is a . . . definitive manifestation of good taste and delicacy of modern scenographic painting . . . for us entirely unknown” (1919b, 5). Finally, Gonzalez Peña highlighted how “. . . each artist [dancer] who steps on the scene, from the first to the last, has been entrusted with a significant role in the frame and is a vivid unit in the aesthetic whole” (1919c, 4). This choreographic observation summarizes literally and figuratively what for Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco contemporary, modern ballet is. Not just every artist but every art form included in the dance has been “entrusted with a significant role in the frame” and as “happily fused” by the Russians, each element is harmonically associated to represent a vivid unit in the aesthetic whole. Choreographically, every individual element contributes to the gestalt of the production. This artistic modernity articulated in contemporary Russian ballet -“its good taste and delicacy of modern scenographic painting” provided by Sim in *Walpurgis Night*- had been up to that time, according to Buffalmacco, entirely unknown in México.

The glimpses of modern ballet that Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco identified in Pavlova’s *Walpurgis Night* gave these critics reasons to hope for the Russian dancer’s *latent* artistic modernity to materialize on the stage. As if trying to appease, his own and his readers’ *spirits*, Buffalmacco reassure them that “there will be more ballets to come: *Raymunda*, *Las Siete Hijas del Rey Duende*, *Preludios* and many more that will leave, with all more reason, bravely impressed in our spirits a note of wonder” (1919b, 5). While Buffalmacco conciliatorily advises his readers that the best of Pavlova is yet to come, Gonzalez Peña’s tone is more demanding and his expectations more specific. He wrote:

The spectacle madam Pavlowa offered us is truly a beautiful note of art. But, as we feel it, we should say it: the cultured Mexican public expects in this season something that

responds to their [our] desires of knowing and admiring genuine Russian ballets. We do not want Gounod, we do not want “Enchanted Dolls”, for all that those dances may please us. What we want is to see modern and original works. We want Moussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakow [. . .] Glazounoff, Borodine, and Tchaikovsky. We also want scenographies by Bakst. To tell her [Pavlova] otherwise; to assure her that we would be content with classical ballets would be an inexcusable lie (Gonzalez Peña 1919c, 4).

Speaking on behalf of the “cultured Mexican public”, Gonzalez Peña acknowledges Pavlova’s artistry, but he is also clear that as pleasing as artsy classical ballets might be, the type of art that *Cultured* Mexicans are ready for is the modern. They expect, from Pavlova “modern and original works”. They want the type of Russian modern ballet that had “happily fused” movement, music and painting and which could speak more deeply to *their* Mexican contemporary reality at the onset of 1919.

The reserved optimism that these two critics initially experienced continued until they eventually embraced Pavlova almost unconditionally. Gonzalez Peña assuredly continued voicing his discontent whenever he experienced it. He was certainly harsh with *Giselle* as he identified the dance with short novels by Gautier. He suggested in that context that *Giselle*’s conventionalism made it “not even a dance, but a poor and inconsistent farce of the lowest taste that it is surprising that the Russian dance company includes it in its repertoire” (1919g, 3). He asked himself, “Do I need to say that such a dance does not correspond with the greatness of Anna Pavlowa?” He then addressed Pavlova directly, “Would you believe me something Miss Pavlowa? ‘Giselle’ is such a melodramatic soap opera unworthy of your artistic genius” (1919g, 3).

As critical as he could have been, however, Gonzalez Peña’s subsequent praise for the Russian ballerina, despite his initial critiques, seemed unbounded. Just a few days after Pavlova’s debut in México with the “disappointing” *The Enchanted Doll*, modern art as conceptualized and expected in México in 1919 was finally arriving with all its glory onto the Mexican dance

concert stage. In the same review where he disdainfully referred to *Romeo and Juliet* as a “French classical dance with which some of the ‘Grand Opera’ old people continue entertaining themselves [and which] doesn’t tell us anything of the portentous wonders of modern art” (1919f, 3), Gonzalez Peña superlatively praised *The Dying Swan*. He described how “gloriously” the piece ended the show and assured that “just to see Ana Pavlova in ‘The Dying Swan’, [he] would be willing to tolerate not just Juliet wearing vaporous petticoats but also Hamlet dressed as a butterfly” (1919f, 3). He then assured that Pavlova’s art, “like all that is genius, escapes the eternally miserable formulism of art criticism (1919f, 3).

It was in his review of *The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest*, however, where Gonzalez Peña’s enthusiasm for Pavlova was overflowing as he modestly bragged about his prophetic insights regarding Pavlova’s ability to deliver modern art.²⁵ One might ask why Gonzalez Peña, or any other critic, characterized *The Enchanted Doll* as a conservative classical ballet that does not offer “anything new” while on the other hand exalting a similar story ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest* as Pavlova’s first great triumph in México. One possible explanation is that as one of the most respected music critics in México, Gonzalez Peña might have based his dance reviews more on his musical knowledge and personal preferences than on his understanding of choreography. As his reviews of Pavlova made evident, he was knowledgeable of classical and contemporary international composers. In his pleas to Pavlova on behalf of *Cultured* Mexicans,

²⁵ In his review Gonzalez Peña claimed that:
although I am way far from being a prophet, I take extreme pride in having being accurate in my previous remarks in relationship to Anna Pavlova’s company. I said, [“]the cultured public of México wants pure art by the purest of all dance artists; The Mexican public wishes to know the great Russian composers who have made of dace a national art [“]. And I was not mistaken. The first great triumph –a triumph of great amplitude, splendor, and without restrictions - by Anna Pavlova in México was registered last night with the marvelous piece by Tschaikowski[sic], “The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest” (Gonzalez Peña 1919i, 3).

he demanded that what they wanted to see were “modern and original works”. He was referring, however, to musicians that *The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest* offered him, and to those he represented, the modern music they craved. He continued his review by lauding Tchaikovsky’s music as possessing “the Russian strength, the Russian ingenuity, the Russian passion” and by ranking it “among modern [music] as the most powerfully filled with a sense of epic universality . . .” (1919i, 3).

It could have been possible that Gonzalez Peña’s specialized knowledge of international modern music might have superseded his ability for a comparative choreographic reading of fairly similar dances. However, it was the way he perceived the combination of the three “sister arts” in *The Sleeping Beauty of the Forest* that made him see it as Pavlova’s first triumph in México. Without discussing the choreography and after exalting the role of music in this dance, the critic noted the power of one of the other three “sister arts” –dance. He referenced the traditional source of Western high culture and art to highlight the value of dance as art and its purported function as a conduit into the realm of the “universal”. He wrote, “the Greeks of the mythological period loved dance because through dance they could feel the mystery of life . . . they felt how they could mixed with the vibrations of the universe . . .” (1919h, 3). The “epic universality” of Tschaikowski’s music coupled, in this ballet, with the power of dance to embody and transmit the “vibrations of the universe”. Finally, Gonzalez Peña concluded that in *The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest*:

everything contributes to the miracle! Not just Tschaikowski’s music [...], but also the set decorated in conformity with the superlatively original spirit of the modern Russian scenography . . . a twin sister of music to which it complements and whose charms it prolongs. Everything in this magnificent ballet –including the winged feet of the nymphs [the dance]- unites to produce the most elevated, the most radiant of the aesthetic emotions!” (1919i, 3).

Gonzalez Peña gathers here the aesthetic evidence with which *Cultured* people in México have conceptualized contemporary art on the dance concert stage at the time. He identified the successful fusion of the three sisters arts with the Hellenicized sophistication and refinement that the Russian ballet had achieved and with which Anna Pavlova's company was now gracing the Mexican concert stage.

With similar superlative enthusiasm, Buffalmacco also boasted the accuracy of his predictions that the best of Pavlova was yet to come. In his review of Pavlova's *Amarilla* and *Chopinianas*, he asserted, "fulfilling my forecasts regarding 'the bird of fire' [Pavlova], the spectacle has gradually increased in aesthetic intensity. We cannot ask for a more superior aesthetic manifestation than this one. The spectator feels a spiritual fatigue produced by the delight of witnessing the bravery of the vision presented (1919c, 3). The aesthetic intensity of Pavlova's superior artistic manifestation produced a spiritual fatigue in her spectators that eventually turned into a spiritual revitalization expressed in a profusion of poetically hyperbolic expressions of admiration.

Buffalmacco himself dramatically synthesizes such reverent furor when he admittedly could not find words to describe the beauty of *The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest*. He acknowledged the fact that "we could have this supreme artistic manifestation [Pavlova in México]" due to the war in Europe (Buffalmacco 1919d, 7). He added, "I am a humanitarian and I have been deeply moved by witnessing very simple and ordinary events and sights in life, but in this occasion, grateful to the Gods, I can say without remorse: Blessed be the blood of the combatants" (1919d, 7). He unapologetically claimed that "it is not my fault, that Art is superior to everything else that exists in the universe" (1919d, 7). For Buffalmacco, as for many Mexicans, Pavlova's work in México catalyzed an aesthetic and spiritual revitalization that

paradoxically numbed his self-proclaimed humanistic sensibilities. Pavlova's art was indeed, as Tchaikovsky's music, of "epic universality" -a universality that transcended mere transient mortals whose "blessed blood" was been spilled in Europe during WWI and on Mexican soil as the country was reaching the final phase of its armed revolution.

This seemingly extreme "bloody" reverence for Pavlova certainly reflected a generalized, unbounded admiration for her. Both the audiences' and critics' distinctive expectations were fulfilled. From the beginning, the most distinguished among the Mexican society had expressed their unconditional allegiance to the *genius* of the ballet as they "frantically applauded" her *The Enchanted Doll* -even when that piece fell short of satisfying the critics' *specialized* aesthetic sensibilities. Eventually, Pavlova danced to superlative critical acclaim; the dances in her repertoire that included modern Russian scenography and music satisfied the critics' demands for ballets that could speak to what they conceptualized as the contemporary reality they shared with those they represented. As Gonzalez Peña reported, Pavlova garnered the "deserving" enthusiasm of the Mexican public. He wrote that as Pavlova stood on the stage after a performance, "the collective admiration of her public filled [the stage] with flowers and white doves that timorously flew as she witnessed, with emotion, how the large multitude had learned to understand and appreciate her" (1919g, 3). It seems that the multitudes and the critics alike "learned" to understand and appreciate Pavlova despite of the initial reservations that critics like Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco experienced. For Gonzalez Peña, however, Pavlova was not just about merely pleasing crowds; the stakes were a matter of civilization. He reflected that "it is not commonly appreciated how significant a Beethoven's sonata or a beautiful ballet *attitude* of Ana Pavlova is to ennoble and purify civilization" (1919h, 3).

The investment of critics like Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco in discerning Pavlova's ballets as civilized, modern works fusing the "three sister arts" reflected as it recreated the prevalent impulse among different elitist factions within the country to unite forces as they all aspired to join the civilized modern world. In claiming affinity to this potentially unifying sense of embodied modernity, these critics, as legitimized experts in cultural production and consumption, sought to create the discursive and contextual conditions for their elitist sense of gender, racial and sexual affirmation while consolidating it as a civilized and modern subjectivity.

Choreographies of Homotopia and Divergent Mexican Subjectivities

Embodiments of Class in the Production of Homotopic Elite Modernity

While Pavlova's conservative and modern ballets contributed in satisfying the elitist ideological needs of her distinguished Mexican audiences and the critics, the latter played an important role as *specialized* agents in the construction of México's cultural modernity. Their specialized aesthetic arbitration pretended to set the parameters of what *Cultured* Mexican's were ready for and what they should have expected from an artist of Pavlova's stature. In 1919 then, México's cultural modernity must embody not only the ideological values and interest of the international elites but also the contemporary aesthetic standards set by the dance international market at the time, even when locally-mediated by critics.

As I began to demonstrate in the previous sections and will expand in what remains of this chapter, Pavlova's conservative and modern ballets naturalized a stratified social arrangement. These dances, contributed in consolidating the place of the elites at the top of hierarchies of financial and cultural capitals associated with political power and social prestige.

The Enchanted Doll, for instance, enacted the privilege that the economically affluent enjoyed while garnering the social prestige and political influence their purchasing power afforded them. In the sections that follow, I will discuss how elite ideological values embodied in Pavlova's dances functioned to sustain this stratified status quo as *normative* but also how some of her dances aroused widely different responses and were either contested and/or appropriated by different social factions. In this process, I will analyze ballets such as *Amarilla*, *Raymunda* and the *Bacchanale* to expose the ways in which class conflated with race, gender and sexuality to constitute these ballets as normalizing choreographies of homotopia within a heteronormative frame of reference.

Reverent Admirers and the Religiously Devout

Pavlova's work not only elicited reverential admiration as well as aesthetic and spiritual revitalization—even in spite of the “blessed blood” of war and revolutionary combatants in Europe and México, but she also found some condemnation. While Alice Vronska, one of the dancers with Pavlova's company, claimed not to intend being “disrespectful to Christianity” while expressing how great Pavlova's influence had been (qtd. in Ruiz 1981, 24), a Mexican newspaper committed such religious sacrilege. A note published in *El Pueblo* (1919c) on February 12 reported that the religious association “The Children of the Virgin Mary” widely distributed an energetic written protest as her work mobilized this resistive group of Mexicans. They condemned an unidentified writer of a local newspaper who compared Pavlova with the Virgin Mary by referring to the Russian ballerina with a phrase from the Hail Mary that prays

“Blessed art thou among women”.²⁶ In a devoutly Catholic country, such affront was considered a blasphemy that merited not only condemnation by this group of resistive *modern* subjects, “The Children of the Virgin Mary”, but also the “minor ex-communication” by the Catholic church of both the blasphemous newspaper and Pavlova herself (*El Pueblo* 1919c). The clash between the ir/reverent admiration for Pavlova and the religious devotion of this group of Catholics exposed the porousness of a homotopia as a non-monolithic social space. For this group of Mexicans, it was religious dogma and not aesthetically-induced spirituality what constituted their own subjectivity within the confines of a nation seeking its cultural modernization.

Mexican Effeminate Pavlovians

As Pavlova decided, according to the newspaper report, not to respond to the religious bedevilments by “The Children of the Virgin Mary”, the enthusiastic response to her work on stage also extended to the living quarters of “aristocratic” Mexicans who could not express themselves openly in the emerging modern nation without persecution. A note published in *El Pueblo* (1919d) reported that the police was summoned by neighbors from the “aristocratic” Colonia Roma where a disrupting, loud party was taking place late at night. As the police arrived at the residence in question, the lights inside the home were shut down and guests began jumping through the windows attempting to escape. A total of twenty “effeminate” males were arrested and taken into custody, according to the note, not before having them dress like man. They were all wearing dresses and costumes “exactly as those dressed by Pavlova’s female dancer’s”, except for the owner of the home who was identified by his “perverted cronies” as the “beautiful

²⁶ For the sake of contextualizing the phrase, I partially quote the Hail Mary, “Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus . . .”

Volinine”, in reference to one of Pavlova’s principal male dancers. When arrested, he was wearing stockings in point of mesh and a skirt with hardened, undulated fabric [a tutu] “exactly as the one dressed by Pavlova in the ‘Dying Swan’” (*El Pueblo* 1919d, 5). The men were charged with moral misconduct and were booked with their names and feminized aliases; Eduardo Aroche, for example, was “Jericho’s little Rosie” and Heriberto Castillo was “Liz’s Flower”. The government of México City, the note affirmed, informed newspaper reporters that all the men arrested in the incident were candidates to be sent to the *Islas Marias*, a federal high-security prison in the outskirts of the state of Nayarit.

One of the men arrested, however, attempted to clear his name from the stigma of being identified as an “effeminate”. Heriberto Castillo Villasana, managed to visit a newspaper, *El Universal*, and begged to clarify that he was not the man identified a few days earlier in the note by *El Pueblo* as “Heriberto Castillo, ‘Liz’s Flower’” (1919d, 5). In *El Universal*’s “clarifying” note entitled “Did Not Dress as Pavlova”, the man assured that he was not the Heriberto Castillo arrested in the Colonia Roma for disrupting peace in the middle of the night while dressing “in Pavlova’s style” (1919e, 8). Albeit distinctive in a dramatic way from the devoutly religious “The Children of the Virgin Mary, this group of men disturbing an “aristocratic” space, where mobilized by Pavlova’s work in México during 1919. Whether or not Mr. Heriberto Castillo was “Liz’s Flower”, a group of “effeminate” men inspired by Pavlova and her dancers choreographed for themselves a male, eroticized femininity -an “effeminacy” that challenged early 20th century Mexican moral norms safeguarded and persecuted by the state.

Embodiments of Homotopic Femininity

One has to keep in mind that in order to achieve perfection . . . the pose of the head has to be artistic and the chest has to retain the correct posture while the back remains straight.

The upper part of the body should be as free as it could rotate on an axis. The lower part should look as a pedestal supporting the upper body. Either while walking or staying still, the weight of the body must rest on the feet. The articulations of the knees should move with ease as the rest of the lower body moves majestically and apparently unconsciously . . . she who desires to highlight her natural grace . . . must study, above all, the great paintings and sculptures which model lines and postures. The line is important . . . the correct attitude for each individual can only be achieved through their own ability, with lots of patience and training of the body (Printemps 1919a, 13).

Although they could have been, these specific choreographic instructions were neither for one of Pavlova's ballets nor for a section of the training regiment in preparation for one of them. Indeed she had the "artistic head", the "majestic movement" and "natural grace". Her chest and back were always in the "correct posture", at the right time. Her *rare* physicality, according to Gonzalez Peña, belonged to the most rarely seen "virtuosity" (1919e, 3). Although the detailed physical prescriptions above were not specifically geared towards constructing an effeminate male body either, they were meant to choreograph femininity. These choreographic instructions were included in an article intended to instruct Mexican women in the art of walking with grace. Weekly advisory articles for women, published in *El Universal's* section for women as "Pagina Femenil" (Female's Page), covered topics on "Social Education" from the right way of conducting oneself in the street, to marriage, the virtues of the measured coquette, and how to adhere to social propriety protocols while in the theater and in other social events (Printemps 1919b).

Carlos Gonzalez Peña, the dance critic, also made his voice heard in matters of gender roles and the feminine in Mexican society while his words had echoed abroad as well. A note emitted by the office of *El Universal* in New York City reported that an editorial by *The Evening Post* published on January 10, 1919 not only applauded but also transcribed excerpts from an article by Gonzalez Peña published in *El Universal Ilustrado* a few days earlier in México City. According to the report, The New York City publication " . . . advised the Americans to profess

in the quotidianess of their lives profound courtesy for the beautiful female gender, always offering them a seat while riding on a crowded subway as well as having all sorts of other considerations that a true gentlemen and educated man owes to the most beautiful half of the human race (*El Universal* 1919d). In his etiquette advisory, Gonzalez Peña implies the stereotyped grace, delicacy and fragility of the woman who ought to be protected and treated with special considerations by a man –an interpersonal performance that renders him an educated, gentlemen while perpetuating her position as the subordinated weaker gender.

In addition to Pavlova’s cultivated, “rare physical virtuosity”, it was also how her dancing body choreographed femininity that highlighted her *genius* on the Mexican concert stage. Her “swan-like” neck could gently and ever so slightly tilt downward while her gaze softly wandered away. Her bent wrists gradually moved to rest on her chest, just above her heart, and as her upper body ever-minimally twisted to one side with different inflections so as to convey shyness, content, or coquette. She could look upward as if transcending the mundane materiality of the stage, elbows and wrist subtly bent while extending her arms to the sides as if offering her open chest, her heart, to a higher power or to the beloved on stage. The delicate subtleties of her neck, her gaze, her elbows and wrists, her open arms and slightly twisting torso, the softness of her straighten feet as her pointes carried her gracious body all epitomized the embodiment of feminine innocence, restraint, grace, delicacy and Beauty. In 1919 Pavlova’s feminine dancing body produced the idealized feminine woman that Mexican elites had also learned to cultivate, in the same way that many prudishly Victorianized western modern nations had at the turn of the 20th century.

Racialized Class and Sexual Normativity: Pavlova's Amarilla and Raymunda

Far from being a generalized threat to Mexican religious and sexual morality, however, Pavlova's feminine dancing body and Europeanized ballets re-produced on stage both racialized class divisions and heterosexuality as the norm. In his review of Pavlova's *Amarilla* Gonzalez Peña described the Russian ballerina's performance as if he had witnessed "Pain dancing! Pain with rhythm! Pain animating a Hellenic marble without losing its eurythmic qualities" (1919j, 3). He lauded the ballet as a "prodigious dance for whose achievement it is required –I believe, I feel- to elevate one's self above the human condition while condensing, concentrating, a great sum of humanness" (1919j, 3). Such prodigiously dramatic embodiment of human pain resulted when the young Amarilla, personified by Pavlova, falls in love with an earl. In Gonzalez Peña's words, Amarilla's excruciating pain resulted from "not having 'blue blood' in her veins and thus not being able to concretize a romance with somebody from a different class" (1919j, 3). But Amarilla was not only from a different class; she was a gypsy. The class and racial differences between the *impossible* lovers – an earl and a gypsy- were choreographically highlighted in the ballet by contrasting on the one hand, the "elegant, aristocratic, and fluid" minuet to which the earl, his wife and their aristocratic entourage danced (1919j, 3). On the other hand, the dance also employed music that Gonzalez Peña characterized as more conducive for the physicalization of pain, "barbarous music . . .of furious rhythms . . . music that devastates and sweeps away with the force of a hurricane all that it encounters . . . music for gypsies" (1919j, 3). The musical choices, as carefully described by the dance critic, functioned in the dance as normalized distinguishers of the refined, white aristocracy and of the barbaric Other's excruciating pain for not being one of the same as her beloved earl.

Class and race were also conflated within a heteronormative frame in Pavlova's *Raymunda*, however, with inverted gender dynamics than in "Amarilla". In *Raymunda*, the principal female character is the one who implicitly performs racial over class privilege. The beautiful "blond" Raymunda awaits in a medieval castle the return of her fiancé, Jean de Brienne, who as a crusader is fighting in the "Holy Land" (Gonzalez Peña 1919k, 3). In the interim, a Muslim Moor young man, Abdurachman, falls in love with the young Raymunda and begins to court her as the celebrations for the upcoming return of Raymunda's betrothed continue. The young woman danced and danced continuously in expectant celebration until she falls asleep. Through a "cautionary" dream, the "Virgin Blanca" guides Raymunda to envision her beloved, Jean de Brienne, who suddenly turned into the figure of Abdurachman, the Muslim Moor young man who had expressed his love interest to Raymunda. In the dream Abdurachman could not take a "no" for an answer and as if "possessed by a brutal rage", he attempts to stab Raymunda to death (Buffalmacco, 1919e, 8). However, perhaps by a miracle of the Virgin Blanca, the knife falls off from the enraged young man's hand. While awoken, Raymunda rejected Abdurachman's romantic advances, even when he offered her a coffer full of jewelry.

In the ballet *Amarilla*, the female gypsy responds to the impossibility of engaging in a romantic relationship with somebody from a different class and race by dancing her excruciating pain until she falls to the ground "annihilated, inert" to the sounds of "barbarous . . . music for gypsies", (1919j, 3). Similarly in Raymunda's dream, Abdurachman responds to the blond young woman's rejection with an equally destructive expression of unrestrained emotions. However, in *Amarilla*, the young female gypsy's "irrational" response to the impossibility of love, expressed through increasingly dramatic dance movement, turns into self-destructive exhaustibility. In *Raymunda* the Muslim Moor young man turns his "irrationally enraged" behavior towards the

young Raymunda, the object of his rejected love interest. In the case of Abdurachman, his racial *incompatibility* with the blond Raymunda leads Gonzalez Peña to somewhat mockingly and disdainfully express how “obvious” it was for himself, and implicitly for the audience, such love *impossibility*. As if projecting his own racial prejudices, the critic asserts as a matter of fact that “of course the maiden [Raymunda] did not accept Abdurachman’s riches and gifts, for all things in the world, she is the beloved of *a* Jean de Brienne!” (Gonzalez Peña 1919k, 3).

While it is true that at Raymunda was already in love and engaged with a racially similar man of her social class –a man perhaps equally rich but racially different from Abdurachman– what disciplining function a ballet could have by choreographing the rejection of a rich Muslim Moor’s love and riches by a beautiful French blond? What did it mean to perform and praise ballets such as *Amarilla* and *Raymunda* in Europe in the 19th century and in México in 1919 when these ballets insistently choreographed non-white subjects’ “irrationality” expressed as unrestrained emotional outbursts and/or as a violent rage? What world is produced by choreographies of the restrained, beautiful and fragile feminine figure of the woman who ought to be protected, contemplated, cherished, pursued and loved by a man, a *similar* in terms of race and/or social status? As racialized choreographies of class and heteronormativity, Pavlova’s ballets such as *Amarilla* and *Raymunda* functioned both in the world of the stage and in the world of the viewer not only to naturalize the values and interest of a class of privileged similars but also to perform their purported superiority.²⁷

²⁷ While ballets such as *Amarilla* and *Raymunda* normalized both possible and impossible racially and socially sanctioned love stories among mortals, other ballets told love stories between a mortal and an otherworldly anthropomorphic creature. In Pavlova’s *El Despertar de Flora*, for instance, Flora and her nymphs receive visitors from the Greek pantheon of gods. Apollo, Mercurio, Ganimedes, Hebe and Cefiro, who will wed Flora, celebrate the betrothed couple by dancing and offering, by Jupiter’s mandate, a drink that will guarantee the spouses’ eternal youth (Gonzalez Peña 1919e). It seems like in many “third world” countries at the turn of the 20th century, these ballets re-inscribed some of the cultural

The triumph of civilization over the potentially corruptive pleasures of the flesh: Pavlova's "Bacchanale"

These heteronormative passional encounters between racial and social similars, however, were always finely tuned. For different purposes at the turn of the 20th century, representations of the body were strategically choreographed to sublimate its sexual nature. Writing for *Revista de Revistas* on February 9, 1919, Laura Méndez de Cuenca relates how she had seen Pavlova ten years earlier dancing on European stages to mostly cosmopolitan audiences as the Russian dancer “was being already conceptualized as the world’s prima ballerina” (13). Méndez de Cuenca assures that at the time Pavlova was competing with other important dancers-choreographers such as Rita Sacchetto, Isadora Duncan, and Ruth St. Denis, all of who were also enjoying international recognition.²⁸ After praising some of the distinctive attributes of these three dance artists, Méndez de Cuenca suggests that Anna Pavlova was the synthesis of all three. She wrote:

aspirations with which Mexican elites identified. In ballets like *El Despertar de Flora*, the possibility of love between a beautiful mortal women and a mythological god -specially a Greek mythological god and other figures- reified heteronormative passional encounters within a white *universe* re-created on stage. At these same time, these ballets also enacted implicitly the purported *natural* relationship between high art, its discursively *inherent* spiritual nature, and its constructed *direct* link to ancient Greece as the highest referent of high culture in the Western world.

²⁸ For the purposes of my discussion, all I will say about Sacchetto in what remains of this chapter is what is included in this footnote. Rita Sacchetto (1880-1959) was one of the first to form an independent dance company in Germany (1916-1918) with students from her own school. She built a reputation for staging dances modeled after famous paintings. She eventually became a movie star and alternated between cinema and dance. Her dance and teaching, however, was often characterized more as pantomime than ballet. (source: Karl Toepfer. *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1997, pp, 235-237. UC Press E-Books Collection, 1982-2004 (formerly eScholarship Editions): University of California Press; retrieved on March 19, 2012: <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft167nb0sp&chunk.id=d0e5726&toc.id=d0e5716&brand=ucpress>)

Anna Pavlova is very distinct: she is one of the mentioned above and she is all of them together. Her dominance is in the air, the air that knows how to keep her suspended, lightly standing on the ground, while her body arching extraordinarily performs a beautiful and spectacular pirouette. She bends, she raises, she travels across the stage measuring it with the minimal part of her feet on pointe, and with the agility of a bird, she jumps into the arms of her male dance partner with whom she dances a variety of artistic group formations (1919, 13).

If in her comparative article Méndez de Cuenca assumes implicitly how Sacchetto, Duncan, and St. Denis achieved distinctive articulations of high-art, for her it was Pavlova who figuratively transcended the mundane by means of her “dominance” of the air, “the air that knows how to . . .” sustain her afloat. It was precisely this dominance over gravity -Pavlova’s volitional triumphs over falling back down from the toes of her point shoes- that might have appealed to Mexican elites as they tried to reconstruct *their* nation within the precariousness of an environment undergoing an armed and sociopolitical revolution.

In her article, however, Méndez de Cuenca fails to acknowledge that not triumphing over gravity but to surrender to it, to play with it was an implicit part of Duncan and St. Denis own artistic projects. For them artistic legitimacy and prestige no longer depended on an “artificial” body suspended on the tip of its toes. Thus, in more gravitational, down-to-earth iterations of the transcendental, Duncan and St. Denis articulated the spiritual discourse already *naturalized* as inherent in the aesthetic experience of high art, which Pavlova had also embodied. Duncan relied on the source of civilization in the Western world –Greece- while St. Denis embraced the “exotic Orient” as her source of inspiration, a practice much in vogue in the early 1900s in different registers of cultural production. Although employing very distinct approaches to dance making, Duncan and St. Denis strove to render their dance practices discursively spiritual as an attempt to legitimize dance as a serious art form at the turn of the 20th century.

In the context of this legitimizing project, embodiments of spiritual discourse in dance functioned to desexualize the body –specifically the female body-, to rid it of the mundanity of its flesh, to contest its vulgarity performed on the commercial stage at the time. Instead, dance as a legitimate art form must call attention to the body’s assumed spiritual *essence*, to exalt the body as a spiritual conduit.²⁹ This emergent embodied modernism reiterated Western dualism that placed the body as an instrument of an inner-self, mind, soul, and/or human spirit. However, rather than discursive “salvation” these dance innovators’ work produced the desire for and a sense of “freedom”, individual freedom. While the work of these early modern dancers reconstituted corporeality in general and the female body in particular as a generative agent in reconfiguring social norms, they also constructed a homotopic space for an exclusive social body of affluent similars for who the historical juncture into the 20th century created an atmosphere of tolerance for aesthetic innovations. For their sophisticated and affluent patrons, dancers like Duncan and St. Denis not only revolutionize dance making practices but also produced embodiments of their own modern times and desires. The patronage of these artists’ distinctive choreographic projects ensured for them and their mostly white audiences spaces in which to realize the promise of “universal” binding while also cultivating a sense of individual freedom. This abstract sense of universal binding and individual freedom were materialized within a spiritual aura produced by a cultured, civilized modern and strategically choreographed desexualized dancing corporeality.

²⁹ See Daly (1995), *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*; Desmond (1991), “Dancing Out the Difference: Cultural Imperialism and Ruth St. Denis’ ‘Radha’ of 1906”; and Foster (2001), “Closets Full of Dances: Modern Dance’s Performance of Masculinity and Sexuality”.

Although the strategic desexualization of the body functioned similarly in Duncan and St. Denis' solo work³⁰, in what follows, I will discuss how this desexualized corporeality functioned in one of Pavlova's ballets as she, "with the agility of a bird", like Méndez de Cuenca stated, passionately "jumps into the arms of her male dance partner" (1919, 13).

Now Dance for Me the Bacchanale

Now dance for me the Bacchanale,
Pavlowa, Bacchus' airy sprite,
And we shall tread the fields of folly
Through purple gardens of delight.
However mad your merry measure,
However amorous your sighs,
Wherever lies the path of pleasure
There I shall follow with my eyes
(Malloch qtd. in Money 1982, 246).

Pavlova's *Bacchanale* also embodied desexualizing choreographic strategies that relied on Western spiritualized aesthetic discourse. It framed the paradoxical performance of desexualized eroticism, longed for and "refined" enough for the enjoyment of Mexican elites in 1919. Unlike Duncan and St. Denis, Pavlova had no stakes in any legitimizing project either for her dance form -ballet, her own work, or her artistic identity. Ballet as a dance form had been established and also enjoyed royal prestige for at least two centuries as many ballets in Pavlova's classical repertoire had. At a young age early in the 20th century, she had already gained the status of an artistic genius and stardom that led her to be seen by many as "the world's prima ballerina" (Méndez de Cuenca 1919, 13). Although free from any demands for legitimization, Pavlova's *Bacchanale* and its dancing desexualized eroticism functioned similarly to Duncan's and St. Denis'. Pavlova's *Bacchanale* represented an embodied affirmation of the power of

³⁰ While Duncan did mostly solo work, St. Denis, often collaborated with her husband, Ted Shawn, and other dancers, in addition to her solo dances.

western spiritualized aesthetic discourse as the purported universal means through which humanity could realize the highest state of civilization. Choreographing sexual desire, eroticism, and passion within a spiritualized discursive frame allowed for the modern, international elites, including those in México, to negotiate in the public sphere their own sexual “nature” and their civilized sense of propriety. This spiritualized display of tamed sexuality and eroticism within the acceptable parameters of the high-art theater re-affirmed members of this class of similars their carefully mediated “likeness” with the sophisticated ways of the ancient Greeks and Romans –the pillars of Western civilization.

In Pavlova’s *Bacchanale*, reason –one of the discursive hallmarks of Western civilization- made representations of erotic pleasure possible without falling prey to the corruptive potential of the flesh. Reason kept the civilized subject within the realm of measured and refined pleasure and away from unrestrained hedonism and vulgarity. Several years before her first visit to México, Pavlova and Mikhail Mordkin enchanted European audiences with performances of the *Bacchanale*. London’s *The Graphic* said of Mordkin that his “. . . sense of joyousness keeps his *Bacchanale* dance far away from the spirit of corruption to which it might very readily degenerate” (qtd. in Money 1982, 104). There could not be for these dancing representatives of high culture and values any corruptive degeneration even “amid much rushing about [and] occasionally froz[ing] in sensual poses during an adagio section [or] after a torrid chase [that] ended with Pavlova falling to the ground in a state of ecstatic exhaustion” (Money 1982, 91). Money (1982) continues to relate what he thinks the audience must have seen (92). He noted that Pavlova and Mordkin:

let their billowing veil drop, threw rose garlands at one another, ducked and twisted with almost animal vigor, and even went into kissing clinches; Mordkin was wildly extroverted and untrammled, and his sheer physicality brought out the vamp in Pavlova.

Together they struck gold in this autumn bacchanal, which proved itself a display of finely tuned eroticism (92).

As much animal vigor and kissing clinches or as much wild extroversion and sheer physicality that this display of sexual desire, eroticism and passion may have, it could never and must never be animal enough. Rather, it must be finely tuned and measured, finely stylized and choreographed.

In 1919 Pavlova danced the *Bacchanale* with Alexander Volinine in México City. Gonzalez Peña lauded the piece relying on his peculiarly writing style that privileged glorifying the artist as “genius” and left us wishing more for knowing about the dance. He said, “I am not fond of vain eulogies. It really frightens me to squander adjectives; I fear that they will then serve me no more . . . - But, would I be allowed to express a simple praise for Miss Pavlova’s interpretation of the ‘Bacanal’. . . ? Anna Pavlova identifies herself in such a way with the spirit of Glazonow’s music as a fountain’s trembling water does in reflecting the surprised and ingenuous face of the one who peeks into it” (1919i, 3). As in most of his reviews in which Gonzalez Peña makes the measure of success of a dance contingent to the music, he praises Pavlova’s superb ability to physicalize Glazonow’s music with such likeness and fidelity as if the dance was the mirrored “facial” reflection of the music.

Perhaps more eloquently, a series of drawings and the cover of a magazine spoke to what Pavlova’s *Bacchanale* might have looked like in México. Under the title “Una Vision de la Antigua Helade”, (“A Vision of Ancient Greece”), E. García Cabral (1919, 12) drew figures of Pavlova and Volinine that evoked scenes from Pavlova and Mordkin performances of the *Bacchanale* in Europe as described by Money (1982). There are drawings of the dancers “freez[ing] in sensual poses”; a drawing of them “rushing about” while covered in their “billowing veil”. There is one of Volinine holding Pavlova’s waist as he kisses her breast area

while she arches her back and head backwards and her arms bent wrapping around the back of her head seemingly in complete surrender to the pleasure of the moment. There is one drawing of Pavlova laying on the ground probably after “falling . . . in a state of ecstatic exhaustion” while her pursuing lover stands on her side in continuous longing for her.



Figure 1. Anna Pavlova and Alexander Volinine in the *Bacchanale*. Drawings by E. García Cabral, *Revista de Revistas*, February 9, 1919: 12. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México City.

It seems that García Cabral approached his drawings with the equal “finely tuned eroticism” that according to Money (1982) characterized Pavlova’s performances of the *Bacchanale* in Europe. However, it seems that García Cabral also decided to magnify female eroticized pleasure in one more of his drawings. In February 2, 1919 the cover of *Revista de Revistas* featured his very realistic, full-page, colored drawing of Pavlova dancing the *Bacchanale* –by herself. The drawing choreographs Pavlova’s dancing body at the very moment of ecstatic pleasure, full of movement yet momentarily suspended on the underside of her right foot’s toes. Her left knee points frontally as it follows the natural trajectory of the body suspensively falling forward. Her supporting right leg slightly breaks at the knee joint creating a curve continued by her spine, neck and head arching backwards. From the supporting underside of her toes to the crown of her bending head, Pavlova’s body resembles an arching bow, an arching bow made out of supple muscles in complete relaxation at the moment of trustingly giving way to the pull of gravity. Her left foot hanging on the air is pointed enough to conform to ballet conventions for dancing feet aesthetics but relaxed enough to signify the freedom, the looseness of the body. Her left hand holds a bunch of grapes behind her body at waist height. Her right arm extends diagonally upwards holding another bunch of grapes as her wrist bends sharply pointing up while her fingers spread out opening up the palm of her hand thereby releasing the grapes. Her scanty translucent, red-dotted dress billows as it reveals Pavlova’s curvy body. One of her breasts is visible through the transparent dress while the other is already fully exposed. Her closed eyes, her arching body, her thrown-backwards head, and her loosely relaxed joints effectively portray Pavlova’s state of complete abandon in this bacchanalian moment of the most eroticized sort. Her mouth slightly opens not as in grasping air to sustain her physical, dancing

activity but as if just to let a current of fresh air flow in as a natural response to a sustain inhalation produced at the very moment of eroticized pleasure.

There are significantly different implications between Cabral's drawings of Pavlova and Volinine erotically interacting in the *Bacchanale*, on the one hand, and in Cabral's choreo-drawing of the solo bacchanalian Pavlova in the cover of a magazine, on the other hand. There is a certain ambiguity in the latter that lends itself to possible readings that could represent a challenge to conservative moral mores during 1919 in México. This choreo-drawing representation of a solo bacchanalian seems to open up the space to mobilize Mexican bacchanalian female subjectivities -both heterosexual and homosexual. As an exercise of female agency, performing as and/or gazing at this solo bacchanalian woman created an opportunity for women to appropriate spaces for experiencing erotic and sexual pleasure under their own terms –even if it was secretly as in the case of the “effeminate” men arrested at a private party in the aristocratic Colonia Roma for dressing in “Pavlova style”. However, while reading García Cabral's drawing of a solo Pavlovian bacchanal at the moment of ecstatic pleasure as an opportunity to imagine sexually non-normative female subjectivities, the drawing could also be problematic. García Cabral's choreo-drawing may reproduce patriarchal heterosexuality in which a male artist fantasizes about female eroticism and sexuality as he produces female representations. Certainly, the layering of multiple readings and/or functions that Cabral's choreo-drawing might have had, they were framed by patriarchal heteronormativity. As dominating social organizing principles, patriarchy and heteronormativity not only determined the codes and conventions that defined normative sexuality but also set the basis for persecuting so-called deviants.

In the case of Pavlova's *Bacchanale*, the ballet choreographed the aestheticized boundaries of prudent restraint and pleasure. The dance signified a choreographic achievement in

representing the purported power of reason and its conquest of the base, instinctual passions of the flesh. As a choreography of the tensile interplay between pleasure and civilized restraint - contextualized within an aesthetically-induced spirituality-, Pavlova's performance of the *Bacchanale* reconstituted while it depoliticized the referential source of the dance. Her ballet rid Bacchanalian rites of any subversive political activism with which Bacchanalian women were associated and which often led to challenging the status quo as well as those in power in ancient Greece. As a result of this process of "spiritualized" transfiguration, a once politically activist body was re-choreographed as a "modern" bacchanalian, who along with her pursuant lover could achieve their civilized subjecthood.

Pavlova's performance of the *Bacchanale*, as most of her other ballets, in México City in 1919 further encouraged the notion that art, including dance, ought to be a depoliticized human activity and should concern itself exclusively with matters of the "soul" and aesthetic "beauty". However, as I have tried to show in this chapter, explicitly and/or implicitly dance always produces a politics. Pavlova's ballets were invested with profound political implications. They produced homotopic spaces in which the social identities of the dominant classes were re-affirmed while their values and interest were reproduced and naturalized. In other words, although some people like the "Children of the Virgin Mary" protested the heretic glorification of Pavlova and a group of "effeminate" men appropriated her dances and style, in various ways, her ballets effectively created a homotopically affiliated audience amongst the Mexican elites and foreign capitalists participating in the construction of modern México. While the fusion of the "three sister arts" –dance, music, and scenography- in her modern ballets reflected and recreated a sense of elite unification for those in México invested in joining the modern world, specific ballets such as *The Enchanted Doll* consolidated for them their class privilege and

affinity with European culture. Ballets like *Amarilla* and *Raymunda*, distinctively conflated this class privilege with gender and race while reifying heterosexual courtship as the unquestioned normative standard for romantic and sexual human relations. Despite of the fact that García Cabral's choreo-drawing of the solo bacchanalian Pavlova might have opened up spaces for women to challenge normative heterosexuality, Pavlova's *Bacchanale* choreographed the synthesis of sexuality and chastity in ways that her elite audiences could *realize* the superiority or their moral character and civilized *nature*.

Up to this point, I have focused on how Pavlova's Europeanized ballets constituted various ways of choreographing homotopic spaces for her cultured Mexican audiences, a process contextualized by notions of European modernity being universalized as the model of the new world order orchestrated at the end of WWI. In the next chapter, I will discuss how as part of their nationalist modernizing project of nation formation, the bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites in México strove to indigenize the enabling paradox that coupled European modernity and ancient Greek culture as the highest standard for cultural sophistication and social prestige. I will emphasize how in this context, Pavlova transgressed the implicit class allegiances she established with her distinguished Mexican audiences through her homotopic dances. I will discuss how she re-choreographed a folk dance, thereby contributing in redirecting the course of the development of concert dance in México.

This first chapter represents the beginning of what will trace the remaining of this dissertation, that dances simultaneously enact complex functions with political implications, some of them explicitly and some others implicitly, some of them to reproduce existing values, others to challenge them, and yet some others to present new alternatives for being and impacting the world.

CHAPTER TWO

“Eliticizing” the Folk and the Popular in Constructing *Mestizo* Modernity: Anna Pavlova’s

Refined *El Jarbe Tapatío*

Building on chapter one, I will expand on how Pavlova’s *forged* status of artistic “genius” enabled her to become an agent of change in 1919 as part of México’s efforts in consolidating its identity as an emergent modern nation. In chapter one, I discussed how Pavlova’s ballets contributed in creating a homotopic space in which the Mexican elites could re-affirmed themselves as members of a class of civilized moderns ready to join the emerging new world order after WWI. Dances such as *The Enchanted Doll* enacted for members of the elites the social and economic privilege that their buying power afforded them. In addition to naturalizing racialized class relations, Pavlova’s ballets such as *Raymunda* and *Amarilla* also choreographed human romantic interactions within a heterosexual framework as the norm. While employing some of the same assumptions about a specific “human nature”, the *Baccanale* choreographed the erotic in such *refined* ways that the dance could demonstrate how modern civilized people who, by virtue of their superior moral character, could not succumb to the passions of the flesh in an unrestrained manner. Among this dances, Pavlova’s more modern ballets successfully fused what the critics called the “three sister” arts –dance, music, and scenography- in ways reflective of various factions’ desires for national unification. In this chapter, I will examine some of the nuanced differences between those who were more concerned with establishing their affinity with European culture and those more interested in synthesizing aspects of European culture in efforts to develop a distinctive national identity.



Figure 2 . Newspaper Advertisement for Pavlova's *Fantasia Mexicana* and *El Jarabe Tapatio*, *El Universal*, March 23, 1919: 8. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México City.

Neither el jarabe tapatio nor anything else has been implanted as a Mexican icon by the deed and grace of the National Spirit,³¹ rather, it has been the result of complex social movements, contingent to economic and political determinations as materialists as the capitalist accumulation in the process of import substitutions . . . and of social class appropriations. There are no essences but dominations and hegemonies hidden in purportedly natural processes of signification

(Alberto Híjar Serrano 2004, 12).

Mexican scholar Híjar Serrano's quote above will further inform the genealogical approach that I will employ in this chapter as I examine answers to the following questions: How can the present and the past, the "civilized" and the "savage", the "universal" and the local dance together . . . in the same body . . . in a Mexican folk dance? In this process, I will analyze various sociopolitical, economic and cultural genealogies in order to construct a metaphorical textual "dancing floor". This "floor" will serve as the stage on which to imagine Anna Pavlova dancing

³¹ In this phrase, Alberto Híjar Serrano makes an ironic allusion to a phrase commonly evoked by Mexican Catholics: "por la obra y gracia del Espíritu Santo" ("by the deed and grace of the Holy Spirit").

her famous *The Dying Swan* and also a Mexican folk dance, *El Jarabe Tapatío*. I have chosen to introduce this chapter with a discussion of *The Dying Swan*, which follows below, for the multiple meanings that this dance embodies. As a universalized metaphor of modern spiritual and physical resilience, Pavlova, as a dancing swan striving in the midst of her own ordeal became the ideal body to synthesize México's own revolutionary struggles and modernizing aspirations. For these qualities, as I will show in this chapter, she became the ideal universalizing agent to embody the *essence* of the nation.

In this discussion, I will examine how Pavlova negotiated her interests in Mexican popular culture and the class allegiances that through her homotopic dances she had established with the Mexican elites. In addition to analyzing a multiplicity of national forces involved in México's revolutionary nation formation, and which contextualized Pavlova's intervention in the country, I will highlight how an internationalized, cosmopolitan class ideology moved across international boundaries with explicit and implicit civilizing effects. I will also relate these neocolonial maneuverings to practices of auto/exoticism as part of nation formation in "third-world" countries like México as they search for greater self-definition and self-determination.

De/Constructing the Genius: Dis/Embodying the Modern and the Universal in Pavlova's

The Dying Swan

Lights up, "Dying Swan" Stand by . . . go:

Her firm, straight legs on pointe support her body as her white tutu reflects tiny percussive motions produced by quick, petit steps taken to maintain her equilibrium, and metaphorically, to assert a hold over her life. Like a winged creature, her arms waver incessantly in undulating motions to her sides before reaching up as if begging for the strength to endure her

inner ordeal. But all this to no avail; her body seems to have given up as she collapses to the floor. At different moments her shoulders physicalize both the presence and the lack of the vital energy that keeps her alive. Her arms hang to the sides as if lifelessly hinging at the shoulder joint; the softly bent wrists, elbows, and neck signal a momentary emptying of her life-sustaining energy as well.

Yet she recovers her standing position on pointe and retraces the physical path that had brought her down. She performs variations of her bird-like arms wavering in front of her, to her sides, above her head gazing upwards as if clamoring to maintain her body floating, flying, only held by the tip of her pointe shoes. Her vocabulary incrementally accentuates her delicate nature, her extreme vulnerability. When she falls back down one more time, she travels the same pathway she traced when she previously collapsed. However, this time, in standing back up, her body seems to falter; it trembles hesitantly before a sudden burst of energy enables her *inner spirit* to lift up her frail body once more. As her arms continue wavering to the sides, sometimes reaching upwards, sometimes hanging lifelessly from her concave shoulders, she strives to transcend a seemingly inevitable fate. She keeps on defying the forces that try her physical strength, through her inner determination, her will power to live.

At one point, her head reclines forward; she gazes downwards as if acknowledging the ground whose gravitational pull has already claimed her body twice. For the first time her quick, petit steps take her around the space seemingly with no defined spatial orientation; her wing-like arms spasmodically burst in different directions. It looks as though this dancing creature is entering a state of despair –an always refined and stylized despair. She falls to the ground once more but this time her body seems to crumble. Her arms bend more sharply, contrasting the sustained quality that had characterized her struggle, and they now deflate as if life-sustaining

energy is escaping her more forcefully. The gravitational pull that she had once defied with dignity as she held aloft her feminine, soft, gentle and ethereal body seems now, for the last time, to claim her entire physical mass. As her body gives up its physical strength, its inner determination, its will power to live, the weight of her arms, her torso, and her head entirely surrender into the last embrace of gravity's pull as the upper body bends over her extended leg resting on the ground. In a few dramatically short seconds, her body succumbs to its inevitable end –death itself.³²

Lights stand by to slowly fade outGo!

The Dying Swan was choreographed by Michel Fokine for Anna Pavlova in 1905 and it became one of her signature pieces. This short dance enabled her to showcase her extraordinarily complex and nuanced spontaneity, the product of her quickness, lightness, softness and suppleness. These qualities seem to have combined to create what her admirers called her “genius”. As showcased most vividly in *The Dying Swan*, Pavlova demonstrated the ability to communicate her full investment at the moment of dancing in a way that commanded absolute attention to her moving body, in a way that deeply *moved* her audiences all over the world.

México, a country undergoing the turmoil of its armed sociopolitical, economic, and cultural revolution, was not an exception. As Carlos Gonzalez Peña wrote after witnessing *The Dying Swan* performed by Pavlova in México City in 1919:

Last night the spectacle ended gloriously. Just to see Ana Pavlowa in ‘The Dying Swan’ [. . .] we should reverently bow before this ideal miracle of grace, delicacy and spiritual comprehension . . . the art of Ana Pavlowa, like all that is genius, escapes the eternally miserable formulism of art criticism. In witnessing this art, what rationalism does not seem insufficient. . . Emotion, remains, intimately, it possesses us . . . when she appears, Ana Pavlowa. Is she a woman? Is she a Swan? Do we even know it? (1919f, 3).

³² Choreographic reading based on viewing of Pavlova’s *The Dying Swan* on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMEBFhVMZpU>

For this Mexican critic, Pavlova's artistic genius transcended the faculties of reason that sustained art criticism as her extraordinary swan-like feminine body transported her audiences in a metaphorical spiritual flight. Critic Luis A. Rodriguez (1919) also exalted Pavlova as "the divine genius of the dance, the one who with roses and myrtles has crowned Terpsicore, the smiling Greek goddess", the one and only dancer capable of aestheticizing pain and death in such a way that the critic effusively exclaimed after witnessing the piece, "How beautifully do swans die!" (10).

Although enthusiastic assessments of Pavlova's *The Dying Swan* highlighted the redemptive power of her artistic genius, Rodriguez also captured what Pavlova set in motion as she softly bourréeed on the tip of her pointe shoes, moving across international concert stages and social spaces. He wrote, "...your cosmopolitan soul has the exquisite Greek purity, the voluptuousness of the Orient, the French gallantry from the times of the Louises [...], the extravagance and craziness of modernity, the subtlety of spiritualism, and the intrinsic majesty of the classical" (Rodriguez 1919, 10). Rodriguez conceptualized the body as the container of an interiority –the mind, the will, the soul- whose dictates were expressed through the body as its docile instrument. For him the "soul" that animated Pavlova's body was a cosmopolitan one for it embodied the most prevalent discourses that sustained the pillars of Western culture, and its colonizing enterprises: Orientalism, ancient Greek culture as the legitimizing, highest standard for human civilization as expressed through high art and class, an aesthetically-induced spirituality, and Western modernity. Thus, Pavlova's "cosmopolitan" soul materialized in some of her dances an Oriental mystique –appropriating and representing the "Orient"- as a source of originality, redemptive spirituality, sanitized erotic engagement, and paradoxically, as an identity against which the West defined itself within the context of colonialism. Yet Pavlova was

discursively constructed as gifted with the genius of *true* artistry. Her artistic source was certainly not only her Oriental mystique but also her “exquisite Greek purity”, with which although filtered through France -deemed a center of Western cultural prestige and imperial power from the 17th to the early 19th centuries- enabled Pavlova to “crowned Terpsichore, the smiling Greek goddess”.³³

Finally, as Rodriguez (1919) noted, Pavlova’s “cosmopolitan soul” embodied as she danced “the extravagance and craziness of modernity”. While *The Dying Swan* retained aesthetic values of classical ballet –costuming, music, and vocabulary, it also choreographed the epistemological shifts of its time. The apparently conservative classical ballet piece embodied the modernist impulse being produced at the turn of the 20th century. Pavlova, Fokine and many others had been enchanted by Isadora Duncan’s modernist expressivity of the human spirit in ways that began to detach the body from physical and ideological constraints that had characterized dance production in the 19th century. As Pavlova summarized it, “we added to our ancient technique [ballet] the abandon and classic beauty of Isadora Duncan’s sublime art, augmenting the power and sensitiveness of our instrument [the body]” (Pavlova [undated], 65). In very distinctive ways, Duncan’s dancing and Pavlova’s *The Dying Swan* highlighted the resilience of the human soul, the human spirit –that inner force, the will power to live, to be free, to transcend, even its own *container* and *instrument*: the body.

At the turn of the 20th century, the modernist aesthetics explored by these women embodied a *universal* spiritual quest that resonated with México’s struggles and aspirations as a post-revolutionary modern nation. In the midst of almost seven years of bloody armed

³³ For almost 40 years prior to the armed insurrection of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, Porfirio Díaz’s regime championed French culture in México as a source of identification and social distinction for the Mexican bourgeois elites.

insurrection, the Mexican Institutional Congress approved México's new constitution in 1917 under Venustiano Carranza's presidency. Although the document set the bases for agrarian reform, benefits for the labor sector, and a lay, free education for all Mexicans, popular revolutionary movements continued fighting for the implementation of those basic rights. In 1919 when factions of the armed revolutionary movement were still actively fighting, the country's stability as well as its aspirations as a modern nation faced a constant struggle experienced distinctively by different factions among the population. In this context, many embraced *The Dying Swan* as a universalized metaphor of the *human spirit* that struggled to strive, to forge ahead, to lift one's self up again and again. For some, *The Dying Swan's* arms wavering incessantly, sometimes with seeming uncontrollability yet always in a stylized manner, in order to remain standing on the tip of her toes reflected the country's determination to stand up on its own feet, with grace. As the embodiment of spiritualized modernity, Pavlova's signature ballet represented the hopes that many Mexicans had for triumphing over their tribulations hoping that their *inner* national spirit could thrive as they led the country's efforts to join the modern world.

For many other Mexicans, however, specially those invested in developing a nationalist revolutionary identity for the country, *The Dying Swan* as a universal prototype of spiritual and physical resilience did not reflect the slightest traces of the Mexican *body*. While the ballet satisfied the ideological needs of those who affirmed themselves as members of a class of civilized superiors through the consumption of Europeanized embodied culture, others wanted a hybrid culture more reflective of México's *mestizo* "nature". Albeit the ballet's universal *essence* continued to be appealing for these revolutionary nationalist Mexicans inside and outside the government, they wanted to develop a form of expressive culture that could still have universal

appeal but that it could also express their unique identity as Mexicans. In the weeks that followed Pavlova's presentation of *The Dying Swan* in México City, she would synthesize her interest and admiration for Mexican folk and popular culture in one of the dances she choreographed in association with some of her Mexican collaborators. In what follows in this chapter, I will trace some of the genealogical threads that led to the transformation of the universal swan into an iconic female figure representative of México's popular culture, a *china poblana*. In this new Mexican persona, the body of the dancing swan, Pavlova, still referenced the prestige embodied in universal spiritual modernity as the hallmark of sophisticated modern art, but such universalism was then indigenized by the distinctive cloths, colors, and rhythms of México.

In this still precarious environment of revolutionary struggle, president Carranza sent troops to guard the train in which Pavlova and her company traveled from the port of Veracruz to México City upon her arrival in the country. Somewhat sensationalistic, Money (1982) describes what could have been Pavlova and her dancers' experience in their journey from the coast to the raising, yet imperiled cosmopolitan city: "The girls [Pavlova and her dancers] were appalled to see the corpses of bandits hanging from poles beside the railways track" (272). As México was choreographing its own ups and downs, the country received the one who as a struggling swan had constantly triumphed over adversity by lifting up her willful body on the tip of her ballet shoes, the genius of the ballet –Anna Pavlova. During her stay in the country, the dancing Europeanized *universal* swan would also grace the Mexican concert stage by embodying the universal and the local as a *china poblana*.

Auto/Exotifying Encounters: Towards an Indigenized *Mestizo* Modernity

With the Mexican revolution of 1910 a tumultuous period of nation formation took place in México. Competing “popular” and institutionalized revolutionary forces distinctively attempted to benefit the country’s indigenous people and working classes while often clashing with the bourgeoisie’s capitalist interests in constructing and presenting México to the world as an emerging modern nation. In the quest for a post-revolutionary identity, this modernizing project exposed the tensions between México’s indigenous “past” and its *mestizo* “present” as well as the Eurocentric frames that determined what it meant to be modern at the turn of the 20th century. In 1916 the influential Mexican anthropologist, Manuel Gamio, looked forward to a “new nation of blended bronze and iron” (qtd. in Hedrick 2003, 5) in allusion to an increasing interests in *mestizaje* –a blend of México’s indigenous and European influences- as the defining racial make up of the new modern nation. Tace Hedrick (2003) suggests that people such as Gamio and first minister of education José Vasconcelos (1920-1926) helped establish the “primacy of a mestizo state” (5). In a manifesto addressed to the new generation of artists in the Americas in 1921, David Alfaro Siqueiros, an influential Mexican muralist, pointed towards a new *mestizo* modernity.³⁴ He warned against artistic production that did not respond to “the vigor of our great racial faculties”. He called for the integration of both the contemporaneousness of modernity’s dynamism and the influence of the works of Mayan, Aztec, and Inca painters and

³⁴ See Irene Herner’s “What Art Could Be: A Revolutionary’s Struggle, From Pistol to Palette” (2010). In her essay, Herner traces the forces that led Siqueiros to advocate for a *mestizo* modernism. The Autry’s Museum’s *Convergence* magazine, in which Herner’s essay was included, was published concurrently with the museum’s exhibition “Siqueiros in Los Angeles: Censorship Defied”.

sculptors (Siqueiros 1921).³⁵ The institutionalization of the means of cultural production -the formation of artists and the provision of funding and spaces for showcasing their art- became the driving force in this *mestizo*, nationalist project. This new state-sponsored artistic production selectively included México's "living" and "dead" indigenous cultures as well as the European influences the country embodied after the Spaniard invasion-conquest of México in 1521. The new nationalist, *mestizo* arts created an environment of cultural richness that served as a unifying source of renewed identity and modernizing aspirations during and after the revolution.

In this context, foreign artists and intellectuals who visited México articulated their own *fascination* with the rich culture of their host country. In collaboration with local artists, intellectuals, and government officials, these foreign visitors offered artistic tributes as gestures of gratitude that implicitly validated and contributed in redirecting México's nationalist and modernizing efforts. A few days before Pavlova's arrival in the country in January 1919, violinist and ballet dancer Norka Rouskaya was leaving México City for a short season in the southern state of Yucatan. Rouskaya had been an accomplished international artist who coincidentally had performed "with enviable success" in Lima, Peru when Pavlova was also dancing there (Clitandro 1919, 7). Rouskaya, like Pavlova, had arrived in México City, as an embodied referent of Hellenized high culture, which discursively circulated around the world as the "universal" model for the highest standards of human civilization. Writing for *El Universal* in January 13, 1919, Alvaro de Alhamar assured that Rouskaya's "spins and eurythmic dancing . . . animates classical dances with intense artistic truth and evokes the spectacle of dancing

³⁵ In this publication, Siqueiros directed "three contemporary directives" to sculptors and painters of the "new American generation" –referring to artists in Latin America. His manifesto was published in May, 1921, in *Vida Americana*, a magazine for "intellectuals, merchants and those involved in the industrial sector". The four-page publication is included in Tibol, (1996, 17-20).

nymphs in ancient Greece. (3). From the privileged position of artistic legitimization that associations to Greek culture granted to artists like Pavlova and Rouskaya, these artists could exercise the power to imagine and construct their own rendition of what they found interesting if not exotic in the places they visited.

Rouskaya's fascination with México, as one chronicler reported, led her to "patiently study the Aztec civilization under the guidance of knowledgeable archeologists so as to immerse herself in the culture and show us upon her return [from Yucatan] some dazzling indigenous dances . . . accompanied musically by the inspiring maestros Miramontes and Falchebba and decorated by costumes designed by Carlos E. Gonzalez"³⁶ (Alhamar 1919, 3). Clitandro (1919) admirably acknowledged that Rouskaya –an artist whose art had *proven* universal appeal- had been "the first dancer to have the graceful gesture of relying on our country's past as a source of inspiration in order to pay a tribute in honor of the bronze races [Aztecs] that had dominated this lands" (7). As an expression of her fascination for her host country, Rouskaya relied on México's distant past to articulate her artistic gesture of admiration and gratitude. However, mediated by Mexican *experts*, Rouskaya's artistic musings would not pursue, as her Mexican costume designer assured, "a historical truth [. . .or] an archeological reconstruction for the enjoyment of educated old people [. . .] but rather it would seek to theatricalize, to give color and brilliancy to the spectacle" (E. Gonzalez qtd. in Clitandro 1919, 7). Orion (1919) predicted in *El Universal* that "the polychromatic and suggestive decoration, with enchanting and attractive exoticism" would help to highlight Rouskaya's "eurythmic figure" and "irradiating beauty" (3). Rouskaya and her contingent of Mexican associates would rely on the most glorious and colorfully brilliant that they could *remember* as the dance artist learned "to feel the pre-Columbian era" (Clitandro

³⁶ Not to be confused with the dance critic, Carlos Gonzalez Peña.

1919, 7) and as they articulated the most exotic theatricalization of the “bronze races” they set up to honor.

Rouskaya’s interests in dance representations of México’s great Aztec civilization, *existing* in a glorious distant past, were enabled by Mexican artists and archeologists whose cultural and artistic sensibilities were shaped by a revolutionary emerging sense of self. Their renewed emphasis on *mestizaje* as a marker of modern racial identity was the product of what Hedrick (2003) would characterize as “the simultaneous feeling of a familial intimacy with indigenous people and a social (and temporal) distance from them” (6). In other words, in addition to the marginal social statuses to which indigenous communities had been systematically relegated, Mexican progressive and conservative elites, selectively *imagined* the indigenous existing in two temporal categories. In her essay “Los Pobres en el Centenario” (“The Poor in the Centennial”), Verónica Zárate Toscano (2009) discusses how representations of the “indios vivos” (“live indians”) and “indios muertos” (“dead indians”) were strategically *exploited* during México’s celebrations of independence in 1910.³⁷ In general, the “indios vivos” existing in the present are marginalized and deprived from the distribution of the country’s wealth; they are stereotyped as lazy, uneducated, and inherently incapable of refinement. On the other hand, the memory of the “indios muertos” existing in a glorious distant past has been exploited as representative proof of México’s *glorious* cultural heritage; they have been re-imagined as people of great pre-Columbian civilization and wisdom.

³⁷ Zárate Toscano’s (2009) essay was included in a series of special issues published by the magazine *Proceso* in commemoration of México’s bicentennial celebrations of independence held in 2010. Most essays included in the series offered critical perspectives on the legacies of México’s independence and the Mexican Revolution.

The contingent of artists and intellectuals collaborating with Rouskaya and those who in the coming month collaborated with Pavlova related to the “live” and “dead” indians [sic] in distinctive ways. It was not only the “dead indians”’ *memory* but also any vestiges of their great *wisdom* and artistic sophistication found in the lives of some “live indians” that was rationalized as part of the newly reconfigured modern Mexican subject –its sense of self and its *mestizo* body. At the same time, the privileged social status of these knowledgeable collaborators allowed them to sublimate any perceived negative associations their own *mestizo* bodies might had with “live indians” (Hedrick 2003).

This carefully crafted and socially mediated *mestizo* modernity, however, did not constitute a stable identity. Soon after Pavlova and her ballet company’s arrival in México City, Buffalmacco interviewed Alexander Volinine and Vlasta Maslowa, Pavlova’s principal dancers, and enthusiastically reported on the “cultured” and “affable” personality of these dance artists (1919f). During their conversation, the interviewer recounts that Maslowa asked a “curious question: are you completely Mexican?” (1919f, 7). “By curious”, Buffalmacco seems to imply that Maslowa was not just “eager to know or learn something”, as my computer’s dictionary defines the word, but also to imply the “strange” and “unusual” nature of her question. While Maslowa’s query might genuinely expressed eagerness to know or learn something, for Buffalmacco, a Mexican, her question might seem to be strange and unusual. Was Maslowa curious to know whether her interlocutor had any European blood or if he was an intact indian, a completely and “authentic” Mexican? Was Buffalmacco, puzzled by Maslowa’s question for he probably never before had to question his identity as “completely” being a Mexican, a combination of indigenous and European influences, a *mestizo*? Buffalmacco does not comment on what the question might have implied but reports that he answered in the “affirmative” –that

he was completely a Mexican. Maslowa then responded that in “Hispano-America she was interested above all in the Incas [from Peru] and the Aztecs [and that] she felt a profound attraction for the indian’s primitive arts” (1919f, 7).

In this relational space of uncertainty and multiple defining possibilities, the various forms that Mexican and foreign artists and intellectuals’ musings about México and Mexican identity took during 1919 were always invested with profound political implications. Through cultural colonial enterprises during the 19th and early 20th century, countries of the “first-world” reproduced and disseminated a Eurocentric enabling paradox that juxtaposed two seemingly opposing temporalities. This paradox consolidated a notion of modernity that reflected the materiality of technological and scientific contemporaneousness following a straight line of progress. At the same time, it also referenced and/or revived the temporally distant but highly venerated ancient Greek culture as the “universal” foundation for human civilization. It is in this colonial context that “third world” countries like México experienced national and international political junctures that produced the conundrum that elites in primarily non-white, “third-world” countries confronted as they engaged in an endless quest to catch up with modernity. For these countries the pursuit of modernity consists not only in gaining technological and scientific advancement but also in constructing a local identity while at the same time demonstrating cultural sophistication by having universal appeal to and resonance with the civilized “first-world”. In their efforts to achieve greater self-determination and self-definition either through independence or revolutionary movements, “third world” countries engage in paradoxical processes of national identity formation that reflect the awareness that one can never, or perhaps won’t even want to ever, fully be its defining other.

I will propose here that one way of responding to the complex demands of constructing this tensile national identity with modern aspirations in México after its armed revolution was to *indigenize* the enabling paradox that prescribed for the rest of the world a “universalized” yet Eurocentric notion of modernity. The strategic indigenization of this Eurocentric modernity was represented by México’s efforts to produce and exalt a localized modernity -a modernity that attempted to naturalize a Euro-mesoamerican culture as constitutive of México’s *mestizo* modern subjectivity. The *roots* of this emergent subjectivity were located not only in a paradoxical contemporaneousness founded on Greek’s illustrious distant past but also in the country’s own distant but glorious civilizations, the Aztecs, Toltecs and Mayans, whose legacies had been fading over 400 years of colonization. As México developed its own enabling paradox in 1919, the country’s aspirations were threefold: to rise to the standards of its contemporaneous emerging new world order after WWI, to have “universal” appeal and understanding as demonstrated through foreign and national cultural production, and yet to remain distinctively Mexican.

Flirting with the Local: The Transgressive Anthropomorphic Swan

Just as her own dancer, Maslowa, and Rouskaya had been, Pavlova was equally fascinated with México’s glorious distant past. She made very unique efforts to engage intimately with contemporary expressions of the country’s colonial history and *mestizo* identity as she thought how to best to articulate her own gesture of gratitude and admiration for the country that revered her so fervently. Upon her arrival in México City, Pavlova acknowledged that Mexicans had great appreciation for music and that “rhythm was in their veins” (Buffalmacco 1919a, 3). According to Gonzalez Peña, Pavlova and Alexander Smallen, her

musical director, said of the Mexican public that “in musical instinct and good taste there [was] no other [public] in America that surpasses it (1919j, 9).³⁸ As she befriended government officials, artist and intellectuals, Mexican socialites often invited her to events in her honor. The Club Alfonso XIII for example organized a social dance as a tribute to her and to which only “distinguished people form the social ‘elite’” were invited (Romero 1919, 3). For Pavlova, however, her social interests and sense of “good taste” seem to also have included the popular and the folk.

She and her dancers were more fascinated by the nationalism expressed by the people they saw in the streets and various other places they visited: their traditional clothing, their food, their music, and their dances. Among the most “picturesque” places in the city, her favorites were *Zochimilco* (Gonzalez Peña 1919L, 9; Buffalmacco 1919a 3) and the Chapultepec Park where the photographer Muñana took a few photos of her (*El Universal* 1919q; *El Universal Ilustrado* 1919). According to Gonzalez Peña, Pavlova was “powerfully interested” in México’s archeology and was studying the country’s history (Gonzalez Peña 1919L, 9). During her visit to the National Museum, the Russian Consul in México City, Mr. Vladimir Wendhausen, obtained exclusive access to galleries closed to the general public. There, Pavlova and her dancers marveled, specially, with the sections devoted to archeological artifacts and codices.³⁹ Perhaps Pavlova’s most daring and endearing gesture in getting a “good taste” of *authentic* México was

³⁸ “America” here refers to the American continent. This is what “America” means for many people in Latin America.

³⁹ “Ana Pavlowa Visito el Museo Nacional” (1919). Unknown source, I have a digital copy of the article in my archives which I can share upon request.

trying a purely *authentic* Mexican drink: a *pulque*!⁴⁰ At the time, very few if any people of high class in México City would ever drink a *pulque*. Pavlova not only eschewed the negative connotations that Mexican elites held against the drink associated with people of low class but also as Gonzalez Peña reported incredulously, “be amazed! She found it delicious” (Gonzalez Peña 1919L, 9).

Notions of “good” and “bad” taste embraced by Mexican elites defined, for members of their class, not only drinks but also what theaters and artistic productions were worthy of their social distinction. As her debut in México City neared, Pavlova expressed worry as to how the Mexican public would respond to her dance work. She inquired if Mexicans have seen “modern ballet” and was “modestly afraid” that her spectacle would not impress people as it always had (Sorondo 1919, 1). It could have been this apprehension about potentially disappointing Mexican audiences that led her to visit local theaters incognito in order to learn about “the psychology of the public” (Sorondo 1919, 1). According to Buffalmacco (1919a), Pavlova wanted to visit the Teatro Lirico for this venue’s unique interest in popular expressive arts, so that she could have an idea of what nationalists and autochthonous artistic productions look like (3). While interviewing Pavlova, Buffalmacco tried to persuade the dancer of the “insignificancy of those theatrical manifestations” presented at the places she wanted to visit (1919a, 3).

⁴⁰ *Pulque* whose original Nahuatl name was “iztac octli” (white wine) is a somewhat viscous alcoholic beverage of a milky color and it is produced by fermenting the sap of maguey (agave) plants. During the pre-colonial era *Pulque* used to be a sacred drink for some people among the Aztecs but after the Spanish conquest its consumption became very common and often ‘abused’ by all sectors of the population. Just at the turn of the 20th century, European immigrant beer brewers campaigned against the consumption of *pulque* by claiming that beer was a more “rigorously hygienic and modern” drink. By that time, *Pulque* consumption began to be associated with peasants and others among the lower classes in México (Magdiel; Wikipedia)

For critics like Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña, experts that safeguarded Mexican elitist sense of aesthetic taste and moral propriety during 1919, places like the Lirico and the Principal as well as popular and nationalist productions presented there, were more than repugnant. Gonzalez Peña characterized the Principal as a “theater stuck for twenty-five years in a culturally ‘minor genre’ infamous by the stunts of two generations of whores, and by the coarseness of thousands of pseudo plays characterized by vulgarity and lack of common sense” (qtd. in Lavallo 2002). For him the popular, nationalist productions presented at the Teatro Principal were nothing but “stinky miasmas of [an] old sewer (Gonzalez Peña qtd. in Lavallo 2002). Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña reflected the social class demarcation prevalent in México City during 1919 and which determined, in their *imagined* modern México, what type of expressive arts and what venues were conducive to the fulfillment of their class’ elitist interests (Anderson 1983).⁴¹ Their own standards for aesthetic taste were part of the product of and the re-producers of an exclusionary economy of social prestige that sustained systems of class stratifications that kept members of different classes in their *corresponding* places as the “natural” state of affairs. For these Mexican art critics, these venues and artistic productions were not suitable for imagining México in the emerging “civilized” world order spearheaded by the League Nations after WWI.

Pavlova was not persuaded by Buffalmacco’s and Gonzalez Peña’s characterizations of the popular, nationalist productions presented at the Lirico and Principal as deplorable. She was determined to transgress the ideological class demarcations that these critics insisted in re-affirming through their labor as *legitimized* aesthetic experts. After trying to persuade Pavlova of

⁴¹ In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) discusses the formation of nationalism as the product of different interests that diverse groups of people have at stake in imagining what unites them as a nation.

the inconsequential nature of the lowbrow shows and venues she wanted to visit, Buffalmacco reported that “she insisted and assured me that she would go to the Teatro Lirico” (1919a, 3). Such was Pavlova’s determination that her interviewer confessed, “I was no longer able to contradict her. She imposed herself with a simplicity that I had not ever seen in any woman before” (Buffalmacco 1919a, 3). With this stubborn determination for learning about México’s popular, nationalist expressive arts, the “genius” ballerina, the ambassador of international elites was enabled to revolutionize concert dance in México City. She imprinted her indelible mark in the country’s cultural revolution by re-choreographing a popular folk dance –*El Jarabe Tapatío*.

Tracing Genealogies of Pavlova’s *El Jarabe Tapatío*

The historical developments of *El Jarabe Tapatío* –the inclusions that are often traceable and the exclusions that are, for different reasons, forever erased- are as complex as those in the historicization of any other dance. For the purposes of my discussion, I do not have interest in the origins of this folk dance other than to mention some highlights of its background in order to contextualize its position in the Mexican social and political imaginary during 1919 when Pavlova re-choreographed it. What I hope to demonstrate in this discussion is how Pavlova’s *El Jarabe Tapatío* embodied some aspects of México’s multilayered history of colonization and its sociopolitical and cultural revolution. I will frame this argument within a discussion of the country’s nationalist attempts at redefining its *mestizo* identity while cultivating a burning desire to join the modern world.

As in any other form of cultural production, the origins of *El Jarabe Tapatío* are complex and elusive. Josefina Lavalle (1988) cites *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México* as the first historical record that makes references to *el jarabe* as a performance genre being danced during

the 1790s. The book records various artists who incorporated different elements in their performances of *el jarabe* at different historical moments, but Lavalle (1988) stresses that there was no evidence of what some of those changes might have been, “much less what were the steps and choreography” that composed the different developments of this dance genre (155).⁴² The origin of the word “jarabe” is equally uncertain but different sources concurred that the word signifies a complex combination of different elements especially in the preparation of a syrup-like remedy. On the other hand, the word “Tapatío” refers to that which is from the state of Jalisco. Although “Tapatío” seems to anchor *El Jarabe Tapatío* to a specific region in México – Jalisco- the dance has no single origin. Like a “jarabe” syrup-like remedy, *El Jarabe Tapatío*’s choreography combines aspects of various regions from throughout the country not just in movements and visual motifs but also in the various musical tunes it includes from the musical genre called *sones*. *El Jarabe Tapatío* is a courtship dance performed by a *charro*, an elegant horseman traditionally from the state of Jalisco, and a *china poblana*, a traditional female figure from the state of Puebla and whose *origin* is equally complex. In English, *El Jarabe Tapatío* is often referred to as “Mexican Hat Dance” for the *charro*’s *sombrero* (hat) plays a central role in the dance. As for its various functions in the multiple forms it has taken for three centuries, Amparo Sevilla (1990) asserts that el jarabe –as a dance genre- has served “as a contestatory expression in the sexual and political terrain; as a symbol of identity during struggles against the invasions by other countries, and as a festive expression among the revolutionary masses during the Mexican Revolution” (163). In what remains of this chapter, I will discuss how Pavlova’s *El*

⁴² In her essay, Lavalle (1988) explores some of the developments and multiple factors that contributed towards the “nationalization” of *El Jarabe*.

Jarabe Tapatío integrated those three dimensions in ways that her dance embodied some of the sociopolitical discourses and debates that characterized México during 1919.

Similar to the elusive origins of *el jarabe*, it is not clear either how Pavlova developed an interest in performing Mexican dances during her visit to México City. It is highly likely that Pavlova had some direct contact with some of the *tiples* – performers who danced, acted and sang in revues and *tandas*⁴³ - presented at venues such as the Lirico and Principal and which she visited to learn more about popular, nationalists artistic productions. The *tiples* Eva Pérez, Mimi Derba, Columba Quintana and Marieta Fernández performed in a show in Pavlova’s honor (*El Universal* 1919r, 7). With the intention that Pavlova could learn about nationalist music Leopoldo Beristain organized in this tribute a series of Mexican songs with music directed by maestro Manuel Castro Padilla, who would eventually collaborate with Pavlova. As a present, Beristain gave Pavlova a pair of wax figurines representing a *charro* and a *china poblana* -the central figures of *El Jarabe Tapatío* (*El Universal* 1919o, 7). A newspaper article reported that the event was so emotive that the *tiples* came over to Pavlova’s box seat and dropped a multitude of rose petals on her head as Berinstain, being so emotional, “wetted three kerchiefs” (*El Universal* 1919o, 7).

In speculating about the genesis of the idea for this tribute to Pavlova by the “humble” *tiples* and about Pavlova’s own interests in performing Mexican dances, Lavalle (2002) formulated three questions. She asked, “would it have been Anna herself who wished to learn about and get close to artistic expressions from Mexican popular culture? Was the idea of choreographing a balleticized dance with Mexican themes in Pavlova’s mind as a genuine and

⁴³ *Tandas* were part of a “populist” performance genre characterized by dances, music and sketches associated with rural, uneducated, and/or unrefined performers and audiences and which took place in settings considered by some as of very low if any social prestige.

sincere homage to the public of a country that has so warmly received her? Or did any of her promoters with ‘twisted tusk’ want to exploit, with hidden intentions, a flattery to the Mexican public?” (642). As I discussed earlier, Pavlova seemingly had a strong personal interest in learning about México’s popular and nationalist dances even when Buffalmacco tried to persuade her not to do so. While she wanted to know about “the psychology of the public” (Sorondo 1919, 1), she also wanted to situate herself within México’s cultural landscape as an attempt to ease her fear of disappointing her Mexican audiences. However, rather than seeking a single answer for a single question, I will address Lavalle’s queries to create analytical spaces in which to excavate some genealogical complexities of Pavlova’s *Jarabe Tapatío* -its sociopolitical, economic and cultural implications.

As Lavalle suspects, promoters might have had something to do not only with organizing a *Mexicanized* show in honor of Pavlova but also with the fact that the Russian ballerina developed a desire to dance Mexican vernacular dances. In merely two of his 425-page book, *Anna Pavlova: Her Life and Art*, Keith Money (1982) summarized Pavlova’s visit to México in 1919 and categorized it as “chastening”. Writing from an intended “objective” nevertheless eulogizing perspective⁴⁴, Money seem to imply by “chastening” that there were no gains –artistic and/or financial- for the “genius” dancer.⁴⁵ Suggesting that people were not attending Pavlova’s

⁴⁴ Perhaps as a move to validate his biography of Pavlova as “objective”, Money (1982) assures that Muriel Stuart, Pavlova’s long time company member, “most gallantly read my final texts, and was not appalled” (415).

⁴⁵ I have no way of corroborating whether or not Money read sources in Spanish, or more sources in English in addition to the one mentioned below, for his two-page summary of Pavlova’s “chastening” experience in México. Having done extensive archival research of primary sources -mainly newspapers and magazines- written in Spanish, I have found it difficult to take Money’s assertions as anything more than an opinionated assessment, probably founded on insubstantial research or misleading sources. Money does not include a bibliography in his book and includes very little bibliographic references within his text and/or as footnotes even though in his section “Sources” at the end of his book he says, “rather

shows, Money reports that one of his sources, the *Musical Courier*, published in English in México City, “turned a cold-blooded eye on the events under the headline that read ‘Pavlova Dances –So Do Her Prices’” (no date provided). The quote focuses on how prices to see Pavlova had been gradually decreasing significantly and conjectures that “Perhaps she [Pavlova] will cheapen her work more still, as it is not nearly so popular” (*Musical Courier* qtd. in Money 1982, 273). If this was Money’s only source on which his claims are based, he’s assessment of Pavlova’s visit to México City in 1919 is for certain partially inaccurate. An abundance of articles in Spanish contradicts how the *Musical Couriers* dramatizes and totalizes Pavlova’s apparent “failure” in México City.

Money accurately admits that Pavlova’s season in México began very well and that “she was received as a great start of the theater” (Money 1982, 272). Gonzalez Peña corroborated this fact in his review of Pavlova’s debut by reporting that “in attendance were old and young cultured aficionados and all the most relevant and distinguished among the Mexican society” (1919c, 3). Money (1982), however, proceeds to decry that:

unfortunately, the novelty of regular ballet performances in México City soon wore off, and it proved regrettable that Pavlova was persuaded to outstay her initial welcome. Accounts of the company’s ‘triumph’ in México have glossed over the fact that the visit went sour soon after the grand opening, which had been graced by the top echelons of society. They did not choose to book seats for the full season, and there was a disheartening slump in sales. Dandre’ and the impresario sought to repair the damage by extending the season in all sorts of makeshift ways, including performances in a bullring. It was a desperate endeavor, and a dying fall to what had been an amazing saga of artistic toil (273).

than pepper the text with source numerals, I have tried whenever feasible to incorporate the sources into the body of the text or into an adjacent footnote” (pg. 415). In the two pages in which he mentions Pavlova’s visit to México in 1919, however, it seems that it was not “feasible” to include any bibliographic references. However, he includes a direct quote from the *Musical Courier*, an English written source which Money does not situate but which might have circulated in México City at the time of Pavlova’s visit there.

It is undeniable that after the initial frenzy for Pavlova's debut, there was a significant decrease in attendance to her shows, but as reports by newspaper and magazines written in Spanish evince, such apparent public apathy lasted only for a few days.⁴⁶ Four days and five additional shows after Pavlova's debut in January 25, Buffalmacco lamented in *El Pueblo* that "it causes true sadness that the Mexican public, up to this point, has not learned how to respond appreciatively to [Pavlova's] festivals (sic) in order to save [our] cultural and spiritual prestige, a prestige severely compromised today . . . it is true that we are going through a crisis, but let us not say that there is no money" (1919c, 3). Echoing Buffalmacco but with a voice so passionate, almost emulating a devout prophet of high culture, Gonzalez Peña delivers in the name of civilization and *Culture* a rather moving plea to Mexicans, "those who possess plenty" and "those who possess little". For various reasons, which I will address later in this section, I quote at length Gonzalez Peña's words after his enthusiastic review of Pavlova's performance of *Amarilla*:

. . . I shall add how inexplicable it is that the Mexican public who claims to be cultured and who has always known how to stimulate and support artistic events has not attended en masse and with the desirable constancy to the unique spectacle⁴⁷ that the [teatro] Arbeu currently offered to us. What has it been of our rich? Are they continued, unfortunately, going to bed early or playing cards? What has it been of the enthusiastic multitudes that acclaim Novelli, Hoffman, Italia Vitaliani, and Teresa Mariani?

Ana Pavlova is a testament that heralds the beginning of the regeneration of our theatrical spectacles. After 8 years in which we have to endure so many detestable buffoonish individuals and so many appalling actresses, rioters of comedy; after 8 years

⁴⁶ I want to acknowledge here that in reconstructing history based on newspaper articles and notes –and on any other archival resource for that matter– might not always necessarily represent "factual" accounts of events but the reflection of the writer's interests and desires and/or possibly –as in some of the notes, articles and reviews related to Pavlova– designed for marketing purposes. The complications of this research and writing methodology reflect some of the challenges that equally apply to the historical account produced by the historian, in this case, me.

⁴⁷ "Spectacle(s)" [*espectaculo(s)*] in this context refers to artistic events. However, critics like Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco use the term more often to refer to high culture events rather than lowbrow shows.

of cheap films and grotesque *zarzuela*.⁴⁸ Ana Pavlowa has arrived to share the good news that art has not die for México's theater stage.

If we don't listen to her voice; if Ana Pavlowa's season is a financial failure, we ought to bid farewell to art spectacles [in México]. The chronicler [Gonzalez Peña] considers his responsibility not to foster a criminal silence in this matter. This is a matter of *civilization and Culture* [my emphasis]. Why those who have plenty don't spend a little? Why those who have little don't decide to give some? It is worth abstaining from attending overdramatic shows and ill zarzuelas represented by mediocre histrionic individuals, even for six months, in order to see Ana Pavlowa only once! (1919j, 3).

As *legitimized* experts in matters of *civilization* and high *Culture*, Gonzalez Peña

and Buffalmacco placed in Pavlova their highest hopes for revitalizing their country's capacity to apprehend the redemptive spiritual power with which art with *universal* reach anoints those with constant access to such discursive aesthetic practices. Invoking the conviction of a prophet, Gonzalez Peña seems to ask his readers to imagine Pavlova as an artistic messiah "who has arrived to share the good news" -a new embodied gospel whose spiritualized aesthetics would purify and redeem the Mexican theater stage. Both critics lament the currently deplorable state of México's artistic production and how its cultural and spiritual prestige has been severely compromised (Buffalmacco 1919c, 3). More specifically, Gonzalez Peña asserts that it has been "8 years in which we had to endure so many detestable buffoonish individuals and so many appalling actresses [...] 8 years of cheap films and grotesque *zarzuela* (1919j, 3). Gonzalez Peña is here directly alluding to the 8 years that had lapsed since the start of the armed Mexican revolution in 1910. For him, the new nationalist sociopolitical and cultural policies that revolutionary governments sought to institute beginning in 1911 seem to have had a negative effect in the country's cultural production. For these critics invested in developing and safeguarding an epistemology of "refined taste", democratic attempts inclusive of the lower strata of society would be demonized as "demagogy", "political correctness" and/or mere

⁴⁸ *Zarzuela* is a Spanish traditional form of musical comedy; a light Spanish opera.

“populism”. In this case, the Mexican revolution and its resulting “populist” artistic productions not only contaminated but also compromised México’s cultural and spiritual prestige, which in the eyes of Gonzalez Peña and Buffalmacco, only Pavlova, the contemporary “genius” of *Cultured* dance, could save. However, the artistic purification and salvation of México’s artistic production rested not solely in Pavlova’s dancing body. By exhorting “those who have plenty” and “those who have little” to attend Pavlova’s shows, the critics rendered the public active participants in their aesthetically spiritual civilizing project. For if Pavlova’s dancing voice was ignored and her season was not profitable, México would be culturally doomed, condemned to cultural damnation.

These critics’ passionate, quasi-spiritual pleas along with other factors, including those noted by Money (1982), stirred a gradual increasing interest in Pavlova’s shows among different factions within Mexican society. In merely a few days after the critics’ decrying notes, Gonzalez Peña (1919f) declared that “judging from how substantial attendance at the Arbeu [theater] was last night, it would not be too venturesome to say that the public has beginning to realize the high aesthetic import and thus Cultural significance of Ana Pavlova’s spectacle, and that the public is determined to support it” (3). From then on until Pavlova’s farewell to México at the end of March, newspapers reported how “against the anticipatory opinions of the pessimists,” people filled out all the tiers of seats wherever she danced as a note in *El Universal* (1919f) assured that the public “fervently applauded [Pavlova] who has come to give us the ineffable gift of her unique art” (1). Her performance at the Arbeu on February 11th was “totally sold out” (*El Pueblo* 1919e, 7). Some notes qualified Pavlova’s “constantly sold out shows” at the Principal and Arbeu theaters as “the most brilliant season there has been in this metropolis [México City]” (*El Universal* 1919g, 8). Others assured that Pavlova’s success at the Granat Theater had been “so

grandiose and resounding that the thousands of people who were unable to get a ticket [to see the dancer and her company] insistently requested [promoters at the Granat Theater] that the show be repeated” (*El Universal* 1919h, 3). Indeed, a note reported that for one of Pavlova’s matinees, sixteen thousand people attended for they were attracted by the divine and “incomparable” Russian ballerina’s prestige and immense art, thus “paying one of the most enthusiastic homages ever received by an artist” (*El Universal* 1919f, 1).⁴⁹

This fervent enthusiasm for Pavlova might have resulted from materialist and ideological interests that underscored negotiations between theater impresarios and the revolutionary government that sought to popularize high art as a democratic gesture for inclusion of the masses in México’s nationalist, modernizing project. As reported by a short note in *El Universal* on February 8, “in order to promote *Cultured* spectacles, the government of México City has reduced by fifty percent the tax contributions paid by the company that hired Pavlova [at the Arbeu theater]. This concession was granted in exchange, as promised by Pavlova’s promoters, to organize several shows at reduced prices if their petition was accepted” (1919m, 8). As Money (1982) noted, it seems that Pavlova’s promoters attempted different strategies to make of her shows a success. After impresarios at the Arbeu were granted a break on city taxation for Pavlova’s shows, newspapers began to announce that the venue would present “the grandiose company of classical ballet, ‘Anna Pavlowa’” in an “short economic season” (*El Universal* 1919n, 7). Apparently, the tax break extended to venues other than the Arbeu as a note asserted that “deserving of praise is the Granat Company [owners of the Granat Theater] for offering to the Mexican society a marvelous spectacle in such conditions that all social classes will be able

⁴⁹ For some additional notes and reviews reporting on Pavlova’s apparent success in México City, see for example *El Pueblo* 1919f; *El Universal* 1919i, j, k, l).

to enjoy [Pavlova's] shows given the outstandingly reduced prices" (*El Universal* 1919o, 7). As it was negotiated by impresarios and the government of México City, reduced prices were made available so that all social classes could enjoy Pavlova's shows in exchange for tax breaks that could enable companies that hired her not only to buffer potential financial losses but also to hopefully increase profits.

The materialist and the ideological were also reflected in the ads and reviews that marketed Pavlova's shows at the different venues where she was presented. Referring to Pavlova's shows at the Granat Theater, a newspaper note implied a generalized awareness that Pavlova's presence in México was such a formidable opportunity "for popularizing selected art [read high art] and make it available to all social classes" (*El Universal* 1919h, 3). Another hopeful note reported that "the attitude of the immense public in attendance [16000 people] is a manifested proof that México can support spectacles of the import of the one we are all fortunately enjoying today . . . the enthusiastic acclamation that Pavlova and artists in her extraordinary company received yesterday represent an encouraging sign for those of us who desire the *Cultural* development of our popular classes" (*El Universal* 1919f, 1).

Pavlova herself best articulated her experience in México City during 1919. In an interview published in *El Pueblo* by Buffalmacco, Pavlova affirms

I have achieved great successes in all of America, but the Mexican public is very special. My spectacle has been a novelty in the whole continent. I have been the only one who has presented the Russian ballet in America and thus it has been well received in many places. But [in those places] the interest has been circumscribed to the intellectual classes. It has not been the case here [in México]. Here, everybody likes music and dance. I have seen before my eyes, in this very land, the most numerous public in the entire world. Neither in the United States nor in any other place so many people attend at the same time a spectacle of the type like mine. Furthermore, something else really rare has occurred to me here: in México, I have worked in five different theaters, something it has never happened [to me] before. Isn't this a record . . . ? Isn't it? [. . .] The Arbeau, the

Principal, the Iris –in Mrs. Mayendia’s show-, the Plaza El Toreo and the Granat (1919g, 3, 5).⁵⁰

In this interview published a few days before Pavlova’s departure from México City at the end of March, the acclaimed ballet dancer summarizes her visit to the country with apparent enthusiastic appreciation. Her observations –that she performed for the first time in five venues in the same City and that her shows were not attended only by the “intellectual classes” but also by the “most numerous public in the entire world”- are telling. There seems to be substantive evidence, at least as reported in newspapers in Spanish and by herself, that her visit to México City in 1919 might not have been as “chastening” as Money (1982) summarizes it in two pages in his 425-page book. The evidence points to the contrary. Pavlova’s work in México proved to be a defining force in how Mexican performing arts on the country’s post-revolutionary concert stage would continue to develop. This analysis also reveals how re-historicizing her visit to the country in 1919 exposes materialist, ideological, and aesthetic interests that were being contested as different factions imagined and endeavored to construct their own modern México.

In presenting evidence that contests Money’s assertions (1982), I am not interested in whether or not Pavlova’s visit to México was an artistic and/or financial failure or success for her and theater entrepreneurs. Also, I have no interest in tracing Pavlova as a “genius” of the ballet by exposing the *complexities* of her personality as many biography-like historical accounts of famed individuals do to convey an effort in trying to achieve an “objective” portrayal. I am interested, however, in the *complexities* of her personality as far as these analyses reveal the

⁵⁰ I am relying here on a newspaper article in which Buffalmacco quotes Pavlova verbatim –within quotation marks- from an interview with the dancer. While there’s always the possibility that an author might intentionally or unintentionally “inflate” his/her account, Buffalmacco’s account could have been contested by Pavlova at the time of publication if his recounting was not accurate. I am taking here the dance critic’s article, and other articles throughout this chapter, as a reliable source with all the complications and limitations that archival resources such as newspaper articles and ads cannot escape.

processes by which Pavlova became an enabled agent of change in México. In developing my “interested” historicizing project in this section, I have chosen to place my reflections in conversation with Money’s somewhat dismissive account of Pavlova’s visit to México City for a specific reason. I hope this juxtaposition elucidates what is at stake in narrating the “history” of an individual as an artistic genius on the one hand, and on the other hand what is at stake in examining the multiple forces that produce and situate an individual in a historically mediated vortex of conflicting and competing interests involved in the construction of a modern nation. I am interested in how these conflicting and competing interests were embodied and enacted by Pavlova’s choreographic work as she presented her Europeanized ballet repertoire and while she danced *El Jarabe Tapatio* on pointe as a gesture with implicit democratizing implications.

Popularizing High Art: The Materialist, the Ideological and the Dancing “Humanitarian”

Pavlova’s adulatory remarks about her positive experience in México City in 1919 might have been taken by some as a mere gesture of protocol attempting to please her interlocutors –the people of México. In the same vein, Lavalle (2002) questioned whether or not Pavlova’s interests in performing dances with Mexican themes could have been conceived as a mere flattery for the Mexican people. Lavalle (2002) asked, “was the idea of choreographing a balleticized dance with Mexican themes in Pavlova’s mind a genuine and sincere homage to the public of a country that has so warmly received her? (642). A note published in *El Universal* asserted that the extraordinary artist, Anna Pavlova deserved all the encomium for having “zestfully” agreed to be part of the series of more inclusive shows; the note read, “more than a business venture, it is a beautiful gesture with which Anna Pavlova and the Granat Company have promoted selected art by making it accessible to all social classes” (1919o, 7). While this newspaper note demonstrates

how Pavlova's zestful willingness to partake in "popularizing" high art is framed by the Granat impresarios' business interests, there was little doubt for Buffalmacco about the authenticity of Pavlova's genuine gesture of appreciation for the Mexican people. He assuredly stated:

all that the illustrious Russian artist [Pavlova] has told us about our country and our ways, we believe it without reticence for it is not possible that her intention is only to merely curry favor with the public; she does not need such low recourses. She imposes herself with the force of her art. Her sincerity and enthusiasm are authentic . . . her treatment is that of a lady who has not ever being and actress" . . . We who have met numerable [renown] theater people . . . can assure you of that truth [the authenticity of Pavlova's sincerity and enthusiasm for México] (Buffalmacco 1919g, 3, 5).

In an act of self-validation, Buffalmacco evokes an imaginary collective "we" while implicitly claiming his authority as a *legitimized* expert by establishing his opinion not only as trustworthy but also as final. The writer uses the adjective "actress" here to denote a person who in the context of acting in a theater performance pretends to be who she is not -her words, and actions are not a truthful reflection of the actress' moral character; what the actress says and does in this context is a farce, not real, not genuine. In other words, Buffalmacco contends, that Pavlova is not "acting" -pretending to be what she's not, what she doesn't feel. Her words are, according to him, a truthful, genuine and authentic reflection of what she thinks and feels for México and its people -rich and poor. Buffalmacco's readers must take his words -the words of the expert "who knows"- for granted. His words must leave no doubt as to whether or not Pavlova's motivations for dancing Mexican dances represented, as Lavallo (2002) queried, a ". . . genuine and sincere homage to the public of a country that has so warmly received her" (642).

Whether Pavlova's words and deeds were genuine or not, it was the confluence of competing material and ideological interests in "popularizing" high art that carved a space in which her own inclusive interests for the masses played a significant role in making classical ballet accessible to "all social classes" in México City. According to different accounts on her

life, Pavlova had an apparent genuine interest in bringing ballet to the people, people who typically had no access or interest in the ballet in every place she visited. As Muriel Stuart, one of Pavlova's closest company members, noted:

there is a side of Pavlova that [...] has not been stressed enough [...]. The books talk about her love for flowers and puppy dogs and things like that, but she was also a great humanitarian. Her great power was to understand human beings and humanity [...]. It was a power to move you. There [could have been] miserable conditions, no dressing rooms, bad stages, but nothing stopped her. Pavlova danced everywhere. Her artistry overpowered all the conditions. She just wanted to bring dance to everyone (qtd. in Horosko, 1976, 63-64).

Alice Vronska, another of Pavlova's dancers, corroborated that while touring with her company, Pavlova "was very simple [...] and] would become fascinated by anything [...]. She felt great compassion for poor people, especially for children and the elderly" (qtd. in Ruiz 1981, 24). For artists of Pavlova's stature, certain degree of prestige and/or material security afforded for them the luxury of taking artistic and financial "risks" while making their art accessible to popular classes. As a gesture of the artist's "humanitarian" generosity and/or as a performance of their progressiveness, these inclusive artistic ventures are invariably tied to the business interests of the impresarios with whom these artists work.

Framed by the impresarios' and Mexican government's own distinctive interests, Pavlova's "great power [...] to understand human beings and humanity" as well as her "compassion for poor people" was perhaps what propelled her dancing body into spaces of wildly different social pedigrees in the collective effort to popularize high art and to cultivate an interest for choreographing dances with Mexican themes. After Pavlova had danced for a few weeks at the prestigious Teatro Arbeu, she opened a season at the Teatro Principal, the venue that Gonzalez Peña characterized as the mud hut of the *tandas* and where he assured that thousands of vulgar and coarse "pseudo plays" and "two generations of whores" performing their

“infamous” stunts were typically presented (Gonzalez Peña qtd. in Lavallo 2002, 641-642). He rationalized such seeming paradox with the following words:

In México’s theater life we are about to witness a surprising phenomenon: Art has transferred from the Arbeu to El Principal . . . The Arbeu, ennobled by a long tradition of culture, dignified [by a series of international figures]. . . [Well, the Principal will] be purified by opening its doors to that wonder of winged grace, of light, of diverse genius that is Anna Pavlova’s Art . . . who will convert into subtle perfumes –at least for two weeks- the stinky miasmas of that old sewer” (Gonzalez Peña qtd. in Lavallo 2002, 641-642).

This “purifying” gift of Pavlova’s art would *perfume* the “miasmas” of “sewers” other than the Principal. She was able to summon 16,000 people at the “Circo de la Condesa”, an outdoors bullfight ring also known as “La Plaza de Toros ‘El Toreo’”. Just two weeks prior to her debut there, a wild female lion fought a bull as part of a “magnificent” program offered by the Grand Rivero Circus (*El Pueblo* 1919e, 7). In the same venue, a group of comedians from Spain presented a buffo-bullfighting-burlesque show, which included an act in which Charlot, one of the leading comedians of the troupe, would “imitate in some of his acts the genius Anna Pavlova” (*El Universal* 1919p, 8).

Despite the “coarse” and “vulgar” nature of the shows usually presented at “La Plaza de Toros ‘El Toreo’” and venues of the like, Pavlova “zestfully” agreed to perform there. Having Pavlova performing in spaces considered by some as of ill repute evinced the fact that it was no longer sufficient to count exclusively on the appreciation and patronage of the elites in order to sustain constructs such as “good taste” and “high art” as implicit mechanisms of social and cultural domination. Collective efforts to “popularize” high art, indirectly through lax taxation and directly through reduced prices, effectively generated the massive popular patronage to sustain Pavlova’s shows. Such efforts produced some financial capital for the impresarios and some ideological capital for the revolutionary Mexican government as it legitimized its

democratizing efforts. On the other hand, while the critics were forced to expose and negotiate their own ideological biases as members of the elites to whom their work as *legitimized* experts served and re-affirmed, Pavlova's exposure to the popular masses satisfied her "humanitarian" sensibilities.

Civilizing Mission and Interclass Colonization in Popularizing High Art and/or

"Eliticizing" the Folk and the Popular

In my analysis of Pavlova's performances at various venues in México City, I am not intending to reproduce a totalizing notion of international and national upper class domination while assuming a presumably passive mass of receptors among the popular classes.⁵¹ My intention here is to highlight how sets of values that justify and sustain the interests of the ruling classes from the "first-world" are embodied by "third-world" elites as a self-affirmation of belongingness to a *shared* cosmopolitan, modern "reality" –a colonized, subordinate "reality".⁵² I

⁵¹ Some of Michel Foucault's work has been criticized on these bases and for which people like Michel de Certeau has offered some alternatives (see for instance his *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984).

⁵² I will condense in this footnote, On Constructing "Reality", some aspects of my own readings of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977); Marcel Mauss' "Techniques of the Body" (1973); and Susan Foster et. al.'s introduction to *Corporealities* (1996). I will do so in order to contextualize my discussion about the role that artists, dancers, government officials and critics played in creating a sense of modern national "reality" and identity within a neo-colonial context, a discussion that I will develop in what remains of this chapter.

Colonial efforts to "civilize" have been invariably tied to international relations mediated by military interventions, the creation of economic dependencies, and scientific discourses. However, for these efforts to take effect, a network of native nationals inside and outside the government must serve as the agents that help institute a sense of national *shared* "reality". In the name of "the people" –especially of the middle class thought of as the sustaining pillar of a "healthy economy"- the political and economic elites in a democratic capitalist society negotiate their own interests through complex legalized systems of "checks and balances" designed with the intention of monitoring their own distinctive powers. In their complex relationships, the actual owners of capital and a network of *legitimately* "elected" and/or "appointed" public officers function as the administrators of the means of knowledge production in the service of governance. Through public and/or private funding, subsidized complex networks of *legitimized* authorities and experts produce bodies of discursive and embodied knowledge. These various

want to suggest how in this, explicit and implicit *cosmopolitanized* complicity, the bourgeois and institutionalized Mexican revolutionary elites exerted an “inter-class colonizing” force. They naturalized class divisions through the selective inclusion and exclusion of cultural production that also served to legitimize the revolutionary state. In the realm of cultural production at the national level, the ideological interests of the Mexican elites contextualized discourses and practices enacted by artists such as Pavlova and critics like Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña. The combined labor of this complex network of *legitimized* authorities and experts produced a unique nationalist sense of social and cultural “reality” in which Pavlova’s high art dancing spoke

bodies of specialized knowledge are implemented in the form of social policy that regulates mechanisms of selective inclusions and exclusions in the allocation of resources as well as in distinctive modes of cultural production and representation. These knowledges are employed in exercising the power to discipline, to punish, to include, and to exclude, while establishing parameters for how to perceive and experience “reality” (e.g. the reality of the “nation” and the subjective “reality” within a stratified body politic composed of national productive and obedient subjects). The constructed entitlement to a *legitimate* authority and expert status discursively validates the presumptuous superiority of these agents in the higher ranks of a hierarchized power-knowledge relations matrix to ensure the safeguarding and expansion of what has been established as “reality”.

As an exercise of power, this sociopolitical and cultural stratification based on “power-knowledge relations” activates carefully designed systems of metrics sustaining economies of punishments and rewards. This disciplinary economy determines inclusions and exclusions according to an abstracted social contract to which all subjects in a civilized democratic society *must* conform. In naturalizing a contractual sociopolitical, economic, and cultural “reality”, a fully successful disciplinary machinery ensures that *legitimized* authorities and experts *specialized* in surveillance and policing techniques. Through enforcing technologies, these *specialized* agents procure the citizenry’s adherence to the abstracted social contract that binds them all. More perniciously, successful disciplinary strategies and technologies insure that individual members among the citizenry voluntarily learn to surveil and police not only others but also their own self in accordance to the internalized parameters and prescriptions regulating an established “reality”.

It is in this “reality” that distinctive techniques of the body are employed by specific groups of people to coersively and/or voluntarily train themselves in the bodily comportments and occupation activities that distinguish them among others in a socially stratified “reality”. This mundane, day-to-day physical training constitutes the subject’s corpo-reality –a “reality” in which the racial, gendered, social, and sexual subject learns to *know* who he/she is, what principles *must* organize his/her experience, what is moral and immoral, what is normative and deviant, what is civilized and what is savage. His/her corpo-reality determines for him/her what is aesthetically tasteful and what is repugnant, what is meaningful art and what is not, and how these metrics determine the subject’s “proper” place in the matrix of power relations, and of what her/his place makes him/her deserving.

powerfully, albeit distinctively, to various people about a new sense of Mexicaness, one that was “populist” yet elitized.

In the collective efforts at “popularizing” high art within the context of México’s revolutionary inclusive ideals and social policies, it was significant how the numerous “deliriously enthusiastic” public who admired Pavlova’s dancing at “La Plaza de Toros ‘El Toreo’” gave hope to those “who desire[d] the Cultural development of [México’s] popular classes” (*El Universal* 1919f, 1). As a democratic gesture, popularizing high art provided the masses with a sense of inclusion in the country’s nationalist body politic moving towards progress. This national moving forward included the “cultural development” of these popular classes, thus making high art accessible to them would contribute in that civilizing project. In the case of Pavlova’s high art, dances from her Europeanized repertoire remained virtually untouched in terms of its aesthetics. Her dances retained the balletic physical vocabulary and choreographic codes and conventions that embodied the values and interests of the elites that for hundreds of years had contributed to establishing classical ballet as the dance with the highest aesthetic standard in the world. Although mere exposure to Pavlova’s ballets was no guarantee of “civilizing” a viewer from the lower strata of society, the hopes for a more civilized nation sustained the strategically selective opening of spaces for the popular masses to be included in the country’s journey towards a more democratic modernity –an always socially stratified democratic modernity.

Discursive practices associated with efforts to popularize high art and/or to elitize the folk and the popular were deeply entrenched with one another. These two approaches to reconfigure expressive culture operated simultaneously on ideological and concrete fields of experience motivated by a civilizing impulse. A whole cadre of *legitimized* authorities and

experts in Mexican history and post-revolutionary *mestizo* cultural production enabled Pavlova's interests in *modernizing* processes of selective re-choreographing through which "lowbrow" cultural practices were "elevated" to the realm of high art. Unlike her Europeanized dances, which remained *intact* when made accessible to the popular masses, "eliticizing" a folk or popular dance, such as *El Jarabe Tapatio*, implies an inevitable alteration. Processes of eliticization selectively reconfigure the dancing body and the individual or collective movements of body parts at one given moment; the amount of effort exerted in the ways the body moves in space; the ways the body should interact with others. Most importantly, the combination of these selective choreographic reconfigurations must cultivate a body that *appropriately* portrays the identity of a refined, civilized modern subject. A successful eliticization of a folk or popular dance, then, creates, while it naturalizes, the widest possible ideological and physical distance between the *creators* who consequently "own" the eliticized dance, and the culturally *unsophisticated* bodies that originally produced it in its "raw" form.

In discussing the production of "primitiveness" and luxury in tandem with the manufacturing of exoticism within a colonialist context, Savigliano (1995) notes that after the appropriation of goods from the "third-world" by countries of the "first-world", "the next necessary step consisted in reshaping all that was *raw* and *primitive* so as to make it fit for the imperial tastes (rebaptized 'international' and/or 'cosmopolitan' after the French Revolution)" [my emphasis in italics] (83-84). That is, reshaping the "rawness" of goods and cultural production among the autochthonous and the lower classes from among colonized countries of the "third world" produces the auto/exoticization that satisfies the imperial desire for the production and consumption of exotic others. According to Savigliano (1995), this is an imperial maneuvering that also keeps "the dominant among the colonized in their place –as subordinates

to the Western empire” (9). As *localized* accomplice agents, the “dominant” Mexican classes inside and outside the government consolidated auto/exoticized identities and modes of representation that sustained contemporary neocolonialism via inter-cultural collaborations and inter-class appropriations. I will argue that these processes were at the core of México’s revolutionary nation formation and that they were framed, if not “re-shaped”, by the interests of those to which “third world” countries are dependent on economically, technologically, and culturally. In other words, as much as the *powerful* nations of the West need a subordinate Others to define themselves as civilized and modern, the construction of national identity in “third world” countries is intertwined with a complex political economy of inter-national dependencies as well as the imperial desire for a constant supply of colonized exotic Others.

The processes of transforming *El Jarabe Tapatío* from its “raw” form to its “eliticized” version embodied México’s histories of international and inter-class colonization. These same processes were an integral part of the country’s national identity formation and required many participants with different stakes. The impresarios and government officials framed the artistic pursuits of foreign artists and their Mexican “native informants”. While the critics revealed the sharp ideological divide between the upper and lower classes, audiences of various social strata sustained Pavlova’s shows during her visit to México City in 1919. These processes involved in how *El Jarabe Tapatío* became such an embodiment of México’s post-revolutionary identity also required members of the “internationalized”, “cosmopolitan” class of Mexican exiles returning to the country in the midst of its sociopolitical and cultural revolution.

Re/Constructing the Nation: Towards Choreographing Eliticized *Mestizo* Modernity

In this section I will expand on Savigino's (1995) discussion of neo/colonial maneuvering that employs appropriations of the "raw" and the "primitive" from the "third world" and that are discursively rendered "'international' and/or 'cosmopolitan'" by countries of the "first world". In the same context of imperial desire for exotic others, I will emphasize, how the "raw" and the "primitive" from the Mexican lower classes were appropriated by the Mexican elites as part of institutionalized efforts to modernize the country and to sustain its cultural revolution.

Under the pseudonym of Jerónimo Coignard, the highly respected art critic Francisco Zamora became a fervent advocate for the formulation of a *genuinely* Mexican art to be created from "the spontaneity and primitiveness of the humble classes" (qtd. in López 2006, 29). Coignard saw this form of "Mexicanized" art as revolutionary and capable of leading México toward its "nationalist modernity and aesthetic liberation" (qtd. in López 2006, 29).⁵³ José Vasconcelos, the widely influential first Minister of Education in México, regarded the lower classes "as uniformly uncultured yet redeemable by Western humanism" (López 2006, 29). Although Vasconcelos, Coignard and others differed in some respects in their approaches to the production of culture, their efforts were characterized by an "unbending" elitism. These *authorities* and *experts* implicitly shared the idea that cultural expressions created by the popular sectors had no "direct value except as *raw material* for elite artists" [my emphasis in italics] (López 2006 29). These modernizing attempts sought to transform México's indigenous and

⁵³ Coignare was referring in this quote to a performance of a re-staged rendition of *Fantasia Mexicana* as part of México's Centennial festivities in 1921. *Fantasia Mexicana* was originally choreographed by Pavlova in collaboration with Best Maugard and others in 1919.

popular culture into products of national pride and distinction by eliticizing it –*refining* it, and *whitening* it.

In his essay on ways of “exalting indianness” in México during 1921, Rick A. López (2006) refers to the class of cosmopolitan artists and intellectuals inside and outside the government who returned from exile in Europe in order to join the nationalist project of rebuilding the nation based on its indigenous and popular cultures (23). Among this group of Mexican cultural architects, Adolfo Best Maugard played a significant role in producing Pavlova’s *Fantasia Mexicana*, a short series of Mexican Folk dances in which *El Jarabe Tapatio* figured as centerpiece. Through his own aesthetic language and theory of Mexican art, Best Maugard attempted to demonstrate that the modern, cosmopolitan artist could reconfigure popular arts in ways expressive of the nascent modern nation. (López 2006, 28).

Best Maugard was born in México City where he lived before moving to Europe with his family at the age of nine years. He returned to México when he was 22 years old in 1913 to collaborate with anthropologist Franz Boas in illustrating Mexican archeological catalogues edited by the newly open, state-sponsored School of Archeology (CENART, BMP 59). After 1918, Best Maugard participated in the Outdoor Schools of Painting (Escuelas de Pintura al Aire Libre) as he developed his own theory of Mexican art based on his studies of popular artistic expressions and pre-Columbian decorative designs. Finally published in 1923 as the *Metodo de dibujo: Tradicion, resurgimiento y evolucion del arte mexicano* by the recently instituted Secretariat of Public Education under José Vasconcelos, Best Maugard concluded that seven basic geometric elements found in popular and pre-Columbian art constituted “all representation or figuration of *reality*” [my emphasis] (Los Editores qtd. in Best Maugard 1964, 7). The same year, Best Maugard relocated to the United States where he stopped painting for some years,

began teaching his artistic theory and methodology and published a few more books (CENART, BMP 59).

During his stay in México, Best Maugard's ideas and methodologies influenced artists and teachers such as Rufino Tamayo, Leopoldo Méndez, Agustín Lazo, Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, Carlos Mérida, and Miguel Covarrubias (Unidentified author, document in CENART, BMP 59) –the latter two would become crucial figures at different phases in the development of modern dance in México. As Best Maugard's theory of Mexican art was instituted in México City's School of Art, he pleaded that:

we must love [popular art] for it is part of ourselves, of our idiosyncrasy. Rather than falling into servile imitating of imported arts [...] expressed in artistic languages not our own and therefore lacking our own characteristics, imported arts would need to slowly be assimilated, mexicanized before they could be used as part of our own expressions [...] Now, if we have in México a genuinely Mexican art, it would be a shame to neglect the use of our own artistic elements in giving form to our emotional world as well as to ignore our obligation not only to know it, but also to make it known to the people by incorporating it as an integral part of our public educational system [...] It is undeniable that to foster the evolution of our national art –and with this we want to say, popular art- is to strengthen a sense of nationality, it is to build nation [my emphasis in italics] (1923, 1964, 52-54).

As many other influential figures amongst the cosmopolitan class of cultural architects, Best Maugard refers to the pronouns “we”, “our”, “ourselves” as if to assume a unified, homogeneous national identity. He seems to ignore the day-to-day experiential and material implications of class differences between people like himself and those whose “popular art” he identifies as foundational in the creation of *genuinely* Mexican artistic expressions. As Savigliano (1995) has noted, class can also be a key element in exoticism when “the social practices of the poor –again food, fashion, music, and dance- [are] ‘borrowed’ and ‘refined’ for the pleasure of those who

could afford them” (Savigliano 1995, 92).⁵⁴ In the case of *El Jarabe Tapatio*, class, imbricated with race and ethnicity, became an additional auto/exotifying element in fulfilling the imperial desire for racial, ethnic and/or class-based exotic others –a desire designed and performed by foreign as well as native colonizing agents.

Among the Mexican leading experts in *borrowing* and *refining* –in other words, eliticizing- “social practices of the poor . . . for the pleasure of those who could afford them”, Gonzalez Peña (1919m) notes the labor of two of them. He says that as Pavlova planned on paying homage and saying good bye to México, two young artists who knew about Pavlova’s interests in Mexican popular dances “took it upon themselves to bring her lovely idea to life [under the title] ‘Fantasía Mexicana’” (3). He assures that Best Maugard and J. Martinez del Rio “dilettante of exquisite taste”, were the ones who conceived the idea of having “a popular scene” where a small group of dances centered around *El Jarabe Tapatio* with music by Manuel Castro Padilla (Gonzalez Peña 1919m, 3). In his own review of the piece, Buffalmacco added that it was not just the “good taste” and “good artistic sense” but also the “spiritualism” of these “three *paisanos* [co-nationals] that exalted *our* popular dances in ‘Fantasía Mexicana’” (1919h, 7). As Buffalmacco, Gonzalez Peña implicitly addressed a specific readership as he highlights Best

⁵⁴ As Savigliano (1995) identified in relation to “Excelsior”, a spectacle presented in Milan in 1881 and which celebrated the “triumph of Civilization over the dark forces of Ignorance”, “. . . class was the key to exoticism. The social practices of the poor –again food, fashion, music, and dance- were ‘borrowed’ and ‘refined’ for the pleasure of those who could afford them” (92) (see also López’s (2006) “The Noche Mexicana and the Exhibition of Popular Arts: Two Ways of Exalting Indianness” for an example on how people like Best Maugard, Dr. Alt [Gerado Murillo], Roberto Montenegro, and Jorge Enciso appropriated the crafts, “food, fashion, music, and dance,” from among the ethnic and popular classes to construct a sense of Mexicaness. López (2006) discusses how once “refined”, these cultural expressions were displayed in events such as the “Exhibition of Popular Arts” and the “Noche Mexicana” in 1921 as part of the celebrations of the centennial of México’s independence.

Maugard's contributions in Pavlova's *Fantasia Mexicana* for its promising far-reaching possibilities in the articulation of a *new* Mexican artistic production. He wrote:

Let *us* pay above all a tribute of effusive admiration to Adolfo Best [Maugard]. He is the first Mexican painter who tries something Mexican on the theater stage, enchanting for the originality and good taste with which he staged the short work. Just imagine a wide black background with colorful decorative designs and from which an Uruapam floral motif in a jar stood out.⁵⁵ That is all! But as this [simple] scenery captivates *our* eyes, it makes *us* think about the many enchanting things contained in the vernacular arts of *our* country, things that pass before *everybody's* eyes every day, and which can only be grasped, discovered, by artists who, like Adolfo Best, seek for interpretations of profound beauty in the artistic work. Add to this the beauty of the costumes. Inspired in that inextinguishable and unexploded lode that is our old national costumes and dresses, Best has stylized the *china poblana* with a richness of color, with a capricious seduction of lines that suggest to *us* a thousand beautiful possibilities that represent what it could be applied in the future to painting [...] to popular songs and dances. Best also renewed, in part by turning it to its *primitive* purity, the *charro* attire [my emphasis in italics] (Gonzalez Peña 1919m, 3).

Just as richly colorful and seductive as Best Maugard's staging of *Fantasia Mexicana* was, so was Gonzalez Peña's classist assessment of the production. While exhorting his readers to pay an effusive tribute to Best Maugard for being the first Mexican painter trying something "Mexican" on the theater stage, the critic renders the cosmopolitan artist a sort of magnifying lens through which to re-appreciate and re-value popular culture with such "originality and good taste". Gonzalez Peña dismissed the fact that the so-called "something Mexican" had been performed for many years in events he had categorized as "coarse . . . pseudo plays characterized by vulgarity and lack of common sense". He ignored the fact that those "vernacular arts" had been performed by generations of people he had referred to as "whores" and Luis A. Rodriguez as "the most abominable clownish individuals from our lowest social

⁵⁵ The correct spelling of "Uruapam" is "Uruápan" and it is the name of a city in the state of Michoacan. Buffalmacco (1919h) described the Uruápan floral motif as being "of a vigorous and radiant chromaticism that fits perfectly with the greens, yellows, and reds in the *china poblana's* and *charros'* costumes" of *El Jarabe Tapatio* (7).

strata” (1919, 10). Gonzalez Peña dismissed the fact that those “enchanted things” had been performed in spaces he had qualified as “mud huts of the *tandas*” and as “stinky miasmas of [an] old sewer” which, according to him, the genius Anna Pavlova would “purify” and “convert into subtle perfumes” (Gonzalez Peña qtd. in Lavalley 2002, 641-642). For him the Mexican theater stage that Best Maugard was helping to *purify* was the one in which *real* high art -or eliticized popular art- could be presented by *worthy* artists and appreciated by “old and young cultured aficionados and all the most relevant and distinguished among the Mexican society” (Gonzalez Peña 1919c, 3).

Gonzalez Peña’s and Buffalmacco’s *nationalist* pronouns, “we”, “our”, “everybody” homogenize a class of those who know while implicitly claiming participation in the ownership of the cultural practices originally produced by a class of bodies demonized by or excluded from the critics’ own classist categorizations. For them, it is the internationalized, cosmopolitan artist - the one who knows how to probe the “inextinguishable and unexplored” territory of the popular, the folk and vernacular- who can expose the “profound beauty” in it and communicate it to those who *understand*. According to Gonzalez Peña artists like Best Maugard have the power to *discover* and *borrow* as they transform the “raw primitiveness” of the popular masses’ dances, music, foods and clothing into *refined* and whitened exotic commodities for the consumption and the “pleasure of those who could afford them”. This eliticized cultural production created by members of a cosmopolitan class sustained an epistemology of refined taste that would inform the articulation of modernized Mexican artistic representations.

Being the first *refined* Mexican production on the dance concert stage, Gonzalez Peña accurately concludes that *Fantasia Mexicana* had an incalculable import. The importance of this choreographic work rested, as he put it, on the “wide perspective that it opens before our eyes,

the vast horizons that it represents for the future development of a great and genuinely national art” (Gonzalez Peña 1919m, 3). Buffalmacco (1919h) concurred with his critic colleague while also reporting how “the public applauded and erupted in celebratory yelling as they demanded an additional curtain call to recognize the contribution of the authors [Best Maugard, Martinez del Rio, and Castro Padilla]” (7). Pavlova had successfully contributed in catalyzing these hopes for a truly nationalist art. The fervent nationalism she found in México gave increasing impetus to her personal interests in and appreciation for Mexican popular culture. In regards to Mexican culture and *Fantasia Mexicana*, she enthusiastically yet modestly said:

“México is very interesting. In all of America, it is the country that preserves its tradition more intact than anyone else and the one that distinguishes the most for its originality . . . as far as I am concerned, I marveled myself wearing a *rebozo* (shawl) or any other thing that has this traditional [Mexican] stamp! That is the reason why I staged ‘Fantasia Mexicana’ with so much endearment. The work might not be good enough, I do not know, but people have liked it very much!” (Pavlova qtd. in Buffalmacco 1919g, 3, 5).

Just as Rouskaya, Pavlova had her own cadre of Mexican collaborators in conceiving, producing and choreographing her *Fantasia Mexicana*. This group of authority-expert Mexican collaborators would ensure that the work be not only “good enough” but also “authentic enough”. Pavlova’s delight for the colorful and the exotic resonated with her Mexican cosmopolitan associates whose inter-class appropriations negotiated the need to mark the nation’s difference as unique while also aspiring to satisfy the demands of the international market for exotic cultures. In this auto/exoticizing and inter-class colonizing context, the Mexican elites *learned* to embrace popular, folk and vernacular arts –provided they were somehow elitized- as representative of the nation.

Embodying Eliticized *Mestizo* Modernity: Dancing The Nation

El Jarabe Tapatío –the product of Pavlova’s and her collaborators’ labor- propelled the folk dance to the ranks of an iconic national embodied symbol of México. However, at the same time that Pavlova formed alliances with Mexican *cosmopolitan* artists and intellectuals, she transgressed the sacrosanctity of class allegiances that demarcated specific spaces for particular dance productions. She not only performed in places considered by Mexican socialites as of ill repute, but she also engaged corporeally with people who performed there by learning their dances. During the actual corporeal and choreographic transition of *El Jarabe Tapatío* from its “raw primitiveness” into its “eliticized” form, Pavlova learned the dance steps from Eva Pérez Caro –one of the “humble” *tiples* who had participated in a tribute in her honor at the Lirico.

After considering various claims as to who might have taught Pavlova the steps of *El Jarabe Tapatío*, Lavallo (2002) concludes that it was Pérez Caro who taught Pavlova the popular Mexican dance. Among her most conclusive evidence, Lavallo cites a photo by Tinoco published in *Revista de Revistas* in March 30th, 1919 and which the caption identifies “Pavlova and the *tiple* Eva Pérez, who directed the traditional dances” (20). Lavallo (2002) notes that a series of additional photos of Pérez Caro and Pavlova dressed as a *china poblana* might suggest that “a more significant sympathy between them” might have developed as a result of frequent contact during their collaboration (647). I will assume here Lavallo’s conclusion not so much to satisfy a need to *clarify* or establish the “origins” of Pavlova’s *El Jarabe Tapatío* steps. Instead, I will adopt her conclusion in order to *imagine* the corporeal exchanges that might have taken place in the transmission of *El Jarabe*’s “raw primitive” moves and steps as they were *translated* into balleticized moves and “eliticized” steps at the tip of a pair of pointe ballet shoes. To engage in this reconstructive imagining process, I will construct a textual snap-shot of what could have

been the experience of Pavlova's "interpreter", implying she had one, while she took lessons from Eva Pérez Caro.⁵⁶

Pavlova's "Interpreter"

Madam Pavlowa was very good at remembering the steps but she had a difficult time executing them with the force that Eva wanted. "It was Eva who suggested to her to dance the steps on pointe. [Madam] Pavlowa tried it and she found it easier, while at the same time she thought that dancing the steps on pointe would prevent her from getting injured as she tried to learn these steps that were so foreign to her".⁵⁷ While Madam Pavlova was on pointe, Eva directed with her right hand Madam Pavlowa's left leg back and forth in a swinging motion for four counts before ending by emphasizing a stomping of the foot, for *El Jarabe Tapatío* has many steps that emphasize stomping the floor either with the heel or the whole sole of the feet. Mr. Pianowsky, Madam Pavlowa's assistant ballet master (Money, 1982), protested that it was not necessary to stomp that strongly for the mere touching of the floor with the tip of the pointe

⁵⁶ In what remains of this section, I will rely on methodologies that construct a plausible-fictional character(s) and which have been applied in enabling a critical reconstruction-rereading of colonialists maneuverings and of sexist encounters and rebellions [see for example Savigliano's (1995) "Tango and the Political Economy of Passion"]; of "kinesthetic connections" and cultural appropriations [see for example Priya Srinivasan's (2007) "The Bodies Beneath the Smoke or What's Behind the Cigarette Poster: Unearthing Kinesthetic Connections in American Dance History"]; and of the corporeal experiences of a critical observer [see for example Priya Srinivasan's (2009) "A 'Materialist'-ist Reading of the Bharata Natyam Dancing Body: The Possibility of the 'Unruly Spectator'" and Lena Hambergren's (1996) "The re-turn of the *flâneuse*"]. I have chosen the character of the "interpreter" for its multiple functions as the translator not only of language but also, like the historian-theorist, as the *interpreter* of historical events. However, the "interpreter" in this text will only function as an acute witness. Piecing together *factual* information from various sources, the "interpreter" will narrate a fictional yet plausible first-hand witness account of how Pavlova learned and performed *El Jarabe Tapatío* steps. As any interpreter, the one in this text embodies an inevitable level of untranslatability and therefore will not assume responsibility for whatever it is ungraspable in movements of the body, in the sociability of kinesthetic interactions, in the words spoken, and in the historical distance that can never be fully translatable. Any attempts at *translating* what this "interpreter" *witnessed* and recounts in the following account are fully my responsibility as *the* historian-theorist of/in this text.

⁵⁷ This is a quote from an interview that Lavalley had with Eva Pérez Caro's niece, Eva Arreola (qtd. in Lavalley, 2002: 647).

ballet shoe conveyed the intention of “stomping” while looking less aggressive. He remarked that a lighter “stomping” and a lighter dancing body in general communicated the delicacy and gracefulness that characterized an elegant dance. He also noted that lighter touches communicated how educated the dancer’s body was by demonstrating how the dancer’s training helped “her” control her muscles. It really seemed like Madam Pavlowa felt more at ease being “suspended” in the air, as if maintaining her body floating, flying, only held by the tip of her pointe shoes.

During lessons, Madam Pavlowa was already dressed in a china poblana skirt and Eva wanted her to master the traditional figure-eight swinging motions of the skirt that happen recurrently in the dance. Madam Pavlowa was having fun trying it but at some point she stopped and held the skirt to both sides of her body with very shaped, rounded arms. She extended her left leg toward the front and rested her pointed foot on the floor while her right leg bent a little bit. Her torso was a little twisted to her right while her neck seemed to be elongated as if reaching towards the sky. As she held this pose, her wrists slightly hinged back and forth as she delicately and subtly moved the part of the skirt held by her hands. She asked, “how does this look?” “Beautiful!”, Mr. Pianowski rushed to respond. Madam Pavlowa wanted to highlight the beautiful form of the body with her rounded arms while adorning it with the beautiful china poblana dress. She wanted to make El Jarabe Tapatío more elegant but at the same time she wanted to keep as close as possible to the authentic dance. She told me to ask Eva if she thought that the more delicate and subtle movements of the skirt still evoked the original dance. *Eva’s face was beaming and said that Madam Pavlowa looked “hermosa”.*

When we all saw Madam Pavlowa dancing longer combinations of steps with more graceful suspensions; with lighter steps; with a more elongated legs, torso and neck; with more smooth, gliding motions rather than hops; and with more poise poses, everybody, including Eva and me, realized how much beautiful and elegant the dance looked. After almost two weeks of

intensive work, our El Jarabe Tapatío had been gracefully refined and made more elegant; our dance was now held at the tip of the ballet pointe shoes of the most famous ballerina in the world, the empress of the ballet, Madam Pavlova.



Figure 3. Pavlova dressed as a *china Poblana*. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City.

“Bajo los puntos suspensivos de tus pies, mi raza palpita . . .”

“Under the suspensive pointes of your feet, my race palpitates . . .
And in the decisive moments of you Jarabe [*Tapatío*]
precipitates its blood in an uncontrollably wild torrent
[...]
and as such a triumphant dance slipper
the quetzal’s feathers

and the sturdy fruit of the *nopal*
are left under your Russian and celestial feet plants . . .”
(Fernández Ledezma qtd. in Ruiz 1981, 23).

This poem echoes the “interpreter’s” account on the choreographic transformation of *El Jarabe Tapatio* from its “raw” to its “refined” version. Pavlova’s whole ballet body –its emphasis on lines, her precisely rounded arms and attitude of lightness and elongation- served as the means for the “refinement”, and the artistic “elevation” of the folk dance. However, as this dance was characterized by intricate footwork and stomping feet that seemed to call attention to the relationship between the dancer and the ground, Pavlova’s pointed and lighter balleticized feet movements took a prominent role in this eliticizing process. Hyperbolically, the poem above metaphorically reduces México’s complex racial, *mestizo* history to the minuscule areas under the tip and under the feet plants of Pavlova’s ballet shoes. Under her suspensive pointes, the heart of a whole race palpitates as its blood floods in a wild torrent. Under her feet plants, the quetzal feathers evoke the iconic bird of Central America and México.⁵⁸ The quetzal feathers under Pavlova’s feet plants also evoke *Quetzalcoatl* -the “feathered serpent” –, one of the most prominent deities in the Aztec pantheon. Under the plants of her ballet slippers, “the sturdy fruit of the *nopal*” evokes the image of a *nopal* on which an eagle devouring a snake became the emblem stamped on the Mexican flag as a symbol of independence from Spain. The same iconic image of an eagle devouring a serpent on a *nopal* marked the site where the Aztec city of *Tenochtitlan* would be founded in the 14th century.⁵⁹ This is the historical ground on which

⁵⁸ “Quetzal” derives from the word *quetzalli* from the language of the Mexican Nahuatl people. It means “large brilliant tail feather” (*American Heritage Dictionary*) or “tail coverts of the quetzal” (*Merriam–Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*), from the Nahuatl root *quetz* = “stand up” used to refer to an upstanding plume of feathers. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quetzal>.

⁵⁹ *Tenochtitlan* was the name of the *Mexica* city that would eventually become México City.

Pavlova's "celestial" feet went up onto the tip of her pointe shoes and down to the plant of her feet as she danced *El Jarabe Tapatío*.

Pavlova's "Interpreter": Lights stand by to slowly fade inGo!

When I saw Madam Pavlowa dancing "Fantasía Mexicana", I felt a warm sensation rushing in my body, chills going up and down my spine and my heart was pounding hard, especially during *El Jarabe Tapatío*. Even though Madam Pavlowa's performances in the bull ring at La Plaza El Toreo had been very well attended by very cheerful audiences, her first performance there was particularly memorable for me. "There was the most picturesque audience imaginable, every grade of society and variety of costume. Whole families of Indians, peons and street people watching the performance with the same delight [...] the great bull-ring was filled, except the section taken out of the circle when the stage was built" (Heinly qtd. in Wentink 1976, 54).⁶⁰

Madam Pavlowa looked beautiful as a china poblana and Mr. Pianosky stood well as a gallant charro. They performed romantic interactions in different variations in relationship to shifts in the musicality of the tune and, as they interchanged spaces, they created a sense of playful flirting with one another. Their soft and gliding motions made them look as if they were floating, almost as if their dancing bodies were not as heavy as their own bodies were in real life. But it was Madam Pavlowa's dancing on pointe our *El Jarabe Tapatío* that made us all in the audience yell in celebration and feel so grateful for she helped us realize how beautiful and elegant our popular dances could be.

As Madam Pavlowa, the coquette china poblana, and Mr. Pianosky, her pursuant charro, approached the closing of *El Jarabe Tapatío*, he chased her in circles around the brim of his

⁶⁰ This quote is from the journal written by Marian Heinly Page, mother of one of Pavlova's dancers, Ruth Page, while touring with Pavlova's company in South America, Cuba and México during 1918-1919.

sombrero (hat) already lying on the floor. With tantalizing coquetry, Madam Pavlova held up her skirt right below her knees as her china poblana braids swayed from side to side of her head and shoulders while her refined arching feet sped up on pointe as she performed intricate footwork to the music. At the climatic grand finale, Madam Pavlowa finally succumbs to the romantic advances of her charro and they both hide their faces behind the sombrero suggesting their relationship is consummated with a kiss. People erupted in euphoric approval as sombreros flew up and down “and many men hurled their own hats onto the stage, hoping that [Madam Pavlowa] would dance on them too” (Money 1982, 273). It was just too emotional to see Madam Pavlowa dancing our El Jarabe Tapatío on her “Russian and celestial” pointe ballet shoes. Her dancing was making the “heart of our “race palpitate” forcibly and our” blood precipitate in a wild uncontrollable torrent” as we all join in yelling out collectively bravos, hurrahs and increasingly louder “Viva México! Viva México! Viva México!”.

Lights stand by to slowly fade outGo!



Figure 4. Pavlova and Pianowsky dancing *El Jarabe Tapatío*, *Revista de Revistas*, March 30, 1919: 20. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México City.

Dancing on Geopolitical Terrains: Choreographing National and International Politics

Like that! That was all. It was that short. Pavlova's *El Jarabe Tapatío* was the climatic rather brief moment in the series of Mexican traditional dances composing *Fantasia Mexicana* presented as a short divertissement after pieces from Pavlova's traditional Europeanized repertoire. The fleeting physical execution of *El Jarabe Tapatío*'s steps and the spatial negotiations on the dancing floor might have seemed "ephemeral" as they vanished right before the eyes of the spectators present in the space. However, the signification in the execution of a seemingly *simple* courtship dance both in its "raw" and its "eliticized" form would prove to be extremely enduring. The dance corporeally enacted México's complex *mestizo* history as experienced by the bodies of the lower classes and who danced it in spaces of "ill repute". On the other hand, by corporeally inflecting the folk dance with her balleticized aesthetics, Pavlova articulated an embodied *mestizo* modernity that successfully choreographed the Mexican elites' post-revolutionary modern aspirations –the fusion of global modernity and eliticized *mestizo* culture.

At the turn of the 20th century, Mexican elites' materialist modernization was sustained by a discursive cultural ideology of whitened "refinement" and "civilization" as modeled by colonialist cultural expansionism that relied on exotic others as source of "raw" cultural material. The internationalized, cosmopolitan Mexican classes spearheading México's cultural modernity were already part of an imperial exoticizing machinery that led colonized subordinates to engage in the formation of autoexoticized identities. As Savigliano (1995) summarizes it in her study on how the tango circulated within a political economy of auto/exoticism through the production of passion:

The imperial powers, a step above the colonized nations in the hierarchies of morality, civilization, and wealth, could choose to represent the colonial nations through whichever

sector they wished, whether that sector was the most powerful or the most powerless among the colonized. The only accuracy that counts for the colonizer is the one that is faithful to the colonizer's own stereotyping of what colonies are like. It is for this very reason that the representative of the colony should be the most 'uncivilized,' the most 'primitive,' the most distinguishable/different from the colonizer –and hence, the one most easily manipulated into the image that the colonizer has already constructed of the colonized . . . the colonized should not pretend that the 'civilized' colonizer will replicate their 'barbarian' manners. As a matter of fact, the colonized should be grateful for both being chosen as a source of enjoyment –which implies recognition- and for being subjected to a civilized refinement –a benefit that the colonized could enjoy, thereby improving their resemblance to the civilized colonizer" (141).

In the case of Savigliano's (1995) study of the tango, the dance form was taken by Argentinean beef barons and other dancing bodies to the centers above the "hierarchies of morality, civilization, and wealth" –Paris and London. There, the tango was refined, sanitized, and whitened before it was embraced back in Argentina by the country's elites who then helped turned it into a national symbol. Like the tango, *El Jarabe Tapatio* was one of the most "uncivilized" "primitive" and distinguishably different from European and American cultural expressions among exotic Others. However, unlike the tango, *El Jarabe Tapatio* did not need to travel outside of its humble, "barbaric" birth-place to find its "civilized refinement". In México, the country's bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites were already willing to "improve their resemblance to the civilized colonizer" whose power was diffused among the powerful nations of the first world reshaping the new world order after WWI. In this context, artists like Pavlova had embodied the moral, civilizing, and economic values of the cosmopolitan centers of power in the "first world". Thus, artists like her circulated around the world as willing and/or unwilling floating agents of change, as cultural emissaries with an explicit and/or implicit civilizing mission. It was this civilizing power of Pavlova's art that "purified" *El Jarabe Tapatio*. She *graced* it with the refinement and whitened values of the internationalized, cosmopolitan elites of the "first world" and of those wanting to emulate them among the colonized.

In re-appropriating Europeanized notions of modernity and indigenizing them while constructing a modernized local identity, the Mexican cultural architects inside and outside of the government also engaged in processes of autoexoticization. This “exoticism under local control” (Savigliano, 1995: 153) also satisfied the “only accuracy that counts for the colonizer [...] the one that is faithful to the colonizer’s own stereotyping of what colonies are like”. The signification of the power of Pavlova’s balletic-inflected moves and arching pointed feet inscribed *El Jarabe Tapatío* as the “stereotyped” symbol of the nation. The *refined* folk dance simultaneously provided national affirmation for the locals and satisfied the desire for exotic others on the neo/colonialist global stage.

While Buffalmacco and Gonzalez Peña predicted how Pavlova’s *dignified El Jarabe Tapatío* would open “vast horizons that point towards the future development of a great and genuinely national art” (Gonzalez Peña 1919m, 3), others ventured to predict the dance’s *successful* importation and circulation on the international stage. Knowledgeable of the “foreign” desire for the exotic in other continents, Roberto El Diablo (1919) assured that “Pavlova has danced in a capricious stylization our classic vernacular dance: el jarabe. Before foreign audiences, such ballet would surely be liked either for its choreographic aesthetics or for the beautiful melodies of its music. For it is an exotic quality that makes anything from America that transcends to other continents to be embraced with applause” (20). Similarly, after seeing what he called the “ennobled, dignified” *Jarabe*, Luis A. Rodriguez (1919) wrote for *El Universal*:

It is a consolation that our national dances, which up to today had been cultivated only in slum theaters, will soon be, during Anna Pavlova’s artistic pilgrimage, exported and applauded by publics abroad and who will learn that México, a country of marvelous vitality, has its own art . . . [an art] of immense distance from [. . .] insipid performances that invariably feature the most abominable clownish individuals from our lowest social strata (10).

While ignoring Pavlova's transgression across class divisive lines, Rodriguez imagines Pavlova as an adoptive embodiment representative of his nation on the international dance market. It was not only the *refinement* that lifted the folk dance above the lower social strata but also its "exotic" quality that prompted these critics to imagine the *El Jarabe Tapatio*'s geographical transcendence.

Mexican cultural *legitimized* authorities and experts were not only satisfied and hopeful but also grateful, for as Savigliano (1995) has noted, "the colonized should be grateful for both being chosen as a source of enjoyment –which implies recognition- and for being subjected to a civilized refinement [...] thereby improving their resemblance to the civilized colonizer" (141). Roberto El Diablo (1919) succinctly summarized how grateful many *cultured* Mexicans were. He wrote, "our most effusive gratitude goes to the insignia Russian dancer for her friendly gesture of coating with the gold of the highest carats that is her art [*El Jarabe Tapatio*,] a gem detached from our hidden and virgin popular treasures" (Roberto El Diablo 1919, 20). On the one hand this privileged class of Mexicans was grateful to Pavlova for helping them re-discover what Roberto El Diablo called "our hidden and virgin" reservoir of "popular treasures" and Gonzalez Peña (1919m) referred to as the "inextinguishable and unexploded repository that is our old national costumes and dresses" (3).

On the other hand, Mexican elites were also grateful to Pavlova for taking them into an aesthetically-induced spiritual awakening through which they discovered their own "soul". According to Antonio G. de Linares (1919), "Isadora Duncan, Napierkowska, and Pavlova have accurately called [dance] 'the art of elevation'" (15). In the process of *elevating El Jarabe Tapatio* to culturally higher planes, Rodriguez (1919) was certain that while re-choreographing and performing the folk dance "with the miraculous gift of spiritualizing all dances that Anna

Pavlova has, she has deciphered the secret of our ancestral soul; She has comprehended our emotiveness . . .” (10). He went further to assert that for the duration of the brief dance “all the tradition of our country lives in the Russian dancers[‘s bodies]” (Rodriguez 1919,10). It was the Russian dancing body as a civilized cultural prism through which the “real” value of local traditions and emotiveness was refracted onto the eyes of the Mexican elites. The cultural sublimation of the previously despised “primitive” tradition *discovered* in the country’s popular culture reaffirmed the Mexican elites’ indigenized local –albeit exotic- national identity while providing them with a sense of belonging to a class of modern, cosmopolitan Mexicans. By uplifting *El Jarabe Tapatío* to this discursive elevated *spiritual* plane, Pavlova’s balletic moves on the tip of her pointe ballet shoes elevated the folk dance not only above the ground but also above the masses of bodies that had for so long performed it as an inscription, as an embodied reenactment of their purported socially “unrefined” existence. She elevated it above its historical past and into an exciting future. *El Jarabe Tapatío* was then worthy not only of international appreciation but also, and perhaps therefore, deserving of becoming a national symbol.

El Jarabe Tapatío: The Embodied Emblem of the Nation

After Pavlova’s departure from México City, *El Jarabe Tapatío* could not remain on the tip of a pair of pointe ballet shoes. By the time she left the city, she had already mobilized the idea for pursuing a “‘Cultured’ nationalist dance” form (Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 46). However, the country did not have yet the infrastructure and the personnel to institutionalize the physical training for achieving the technical proficiency required of the ballet. Such achievement would continue to be accessible only to a privileged few who could benefit from their ability to travel and/or study with ballet dancers who had arrived in México City to perform with foreign

companies and decided to stay there (see for example Aulestia 2003; Ramos Villalobos 2009; Tortajada Quiroz 1995). However, the power of Pavlova's dancing had already made its *revolutionizing* impact on the way the bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites re-valued the integration of folk popular dances in México's nationalist cultural imaginary and revolutionary modernizing project.

Jóse Vasconcelos, Ministry of Public Education, believed that art was "México's only salvation" (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 41). He promoted the dissemination of México's traditional dances, a work carried out more intensively, among other things, by the Cultural Missions instituted in 1923 (Tortajada Quiroz 1995). As part of these efforts, the once loathed *El Jarabe Tapatío* became institutionalized as an embodied national symbol. As Lavallo (2002) notes the seeming paradox:

the version of el jarabe [tapatío] that had been despised while danced by 'Mexican tiples' as part of tandas in theaters [considered of ill repute] became –via Anna Pavlova- the official *jarabe*, danced by the nation's children as a national emblem –as the Mexican national dance par excellence [and] accepted by the country's educational authorities as didactic material in schools. The jarabe tapatío or national [...] should have been named instead, [the] official jarabe . . . [as] we found it established and 'respectable', mingling at festivities with the best of society" (650).

Vasconcelos' educational system sought to institute a renewed sense of embodied nationalism in the nation's children via their autochthonous and *mestizo* folk dances while these efforts established *El Jarabe Tapatío* as the unifying national dance. *El Jarabe Tapatío*'s expansion beyond the classroom where children were being educated into México's nationalist project reached both their parents –members of the popular masses- as well as the "best of society" in massive festivities. In 1921 as part of the celebrations commemorating the centennial of México's independence from Spain at the Chapultepec Park, enthusiastic audiences and cheerful music framed the stomping feet on a stage set as a small island in the middle of the lake "where

over a hundred colorfully adorned *chinas poblanas* and *charros* burst into a modernized rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío*” (López 2006, 26). Special guests watched the performances while sitting on stands specially constructed for them as everyone else observed from the edges of the lake (López 2006, 26). Also, as Vasconcelos inaugurated México City’s National Stadium in 1924, 500 hundred couples danced *El Jarabe Tapatío*, “the prototypical Mexican dance that had arrived at the category of national dance” (Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 44).

El Jarabe Tapatío: Almost 100 Years Later

As I traveled back and forth to México City to conduct archival research for this dissertation, I took time to visit my relatives in my hometown of Guadalajara and also in Tijuana. In one of these brief visits to Guadalajara, I watched my mother’s sister, Elvira, danced Mexican folkloric dances as part of her senior citizens club activities. Being one of the most outstanding dancers among her peers, aunty Elvira has been selected to dance with her teacher, Guellin, the dance piece that culminates their presentations: *El Jarabe Tapatío*. My mother and aunty Elvira’s sister, Licho, is also active in a senior citizens club and her church in Tijuana. On Mexican independence day -September 16th, 2010- I went with aunty Licho to the celebrations held at her church where Eli, a girl from Austria, had finished her one-year tenure as a volunteer six months ago. She had come back this time as a visitor for she was so much in love with this community that she claimed she was now a “Mexican”. As part of the patriotic celebrations, Eli and another white female volunteer from the U.S. danced in full *china poblana* regalia *El Jarabe Tapatío* with two local boys. When I expressed to aunty Licho my wonderment about these girls’, especially Eli’s, ability to dance *El Jarabe Tapatío*, my aunty replied, “That’s nothing! There’s a member of my church, a dance teacher, who has taught her daughters to dance *El Jarabe Tapatío*

with ballet shoes...on pointe”. After sharing these anecdotes as introduction for an informal paper presentation for my peers and faculty in the department where I study, a faculty member sent me an email with some comments, suggestions and a telling personal anecdote. He wrote:

thinking about "the Mexican hat dance",⁶¹ when I was in kindergarten and the first couple of years of primary school (1950-1953, say), we danced that in West Hartford, Connecticut, which was then a distinctly upper-middle-class bedroom community for the insurance industry based in Hartford, and that did not have a single family of color in its population . . . It is interesting, though, to think about why we might have been dancing that dance at that time, which I'll bet was related to Cold War politics and ongoing US assertions of political dominance in Latin America.

The seemingly fleeting balletic movements Pavlova performed on the pointes of her ballet shoes while dancing *El Jarabe Tapatio* in 1919 indeed had an enduring and expansive signification. The implications of her dance intervention have branched out through time and across geopolitical landscapes. Pavlova’s contributions to the consolidation of *El Jarabe Tapatio* as a national emblem paradoxically transcended her own eliticized rendition of the folk dance. However, as she performed this embodied enactment of the values and interests of internationalized, cosmopolitan classes, her dancing heightened the sense of what it meant to be part of a country with high economic and cultural aspirations while also cultivating a fervent sense of national pride. She helped to forge a local distinctive national identity that could also serve as an exotic *product* to satisfy imperial desires on and off the global stage.

Concluding Steps

In this second chapter, I have built on Pavlova’s status as a “universalized”, embodied referent of high culture and how that status enabled her to redirect the ways Mexican bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites related to popular folk dances. In doing so, I have

⁶¹ This is how *El Jarabe Tapatio* is known in English in the U.S.

discussed how she participated in re-articulating discourses that defined what type of art would be worthy of representing the nascent modern nation. Following Híjar Serrano's genealogical approach to conceptualizing the genesis of *El Jarabe Tapatio*, quoted at the opening of this chapter, I have tried to dismantle glorifying notions about the institutional Mexican revolution as a completely democratizing alternative. As Híjar Serrano (2004) would warn, "it is not enough to assume a mere leftist nationalist sentimentality appropriated by the state" for pursuing revolutionary change (14). Thus, in examining different currents that coalesced to produce Pavlova's *El Jarabe Tapatio*, I exposed how revolutionary governments appropriated for themselves cultural products from the popular masses in order to legitimize their *measured* progressivism while excluding the many from the country's material modernization and a more egalitarian distribution of wealth. I then moved on to highlight how these processes of inter-cultural and inter-class appropriations and exploitations were informed by a Western colonizing desire for exotic Others that also led to auto/exoticizing cultural practices.

Pavlova's Concluding Dancing Steps

As Pavlova performed her concluding dancing steps in México City in 1919 at the closing of March, her modernizing and civilizing effects had already left an indelible mark in the aspiring cosmopolitan metropolis. Roberto El Diablo (1919) summarized the affinity he perceived between his *modern* city and the Hellenicized cosmopolitan soul that Pavlova embodied. He asserted that "just as with the sweet city of Acropolis during its celebrations of the Panathenaea,⁶² our city has felt over its multiform heart of modern metropolis the kiss of a divine

⁶² From 566 BC to the third century AD, Athens in Ancient Greece celebrated The Panathenaic Games every four years and were part of a festival known as the "Great panathenaia". The games took place

breath . . . offered to us by the immortal Russian ballerina's incomparable art . . . [She] has made us . . . experience in the deepest corners of our spirituality . . . a supreme and unique vibration that has movingly touched our soul" (6). An editorial published in *El Pueblo* on March 30, 1919, situated Pavlova's "civilizing" power within the context of the *progressiveness* of the Mexican revolution. The note lauded the editorial house "Modern México" for its "civilizing work" as not only "patriotic and deeply humane" but also as "redeeming and holy" (*El Pueblo* 1919, 3). The editorial characterized such achievement by merrily noting, "there they are, the fruits of the revolution!" (*El Pueblo* 1919, 3). Amongst this revolutionary cultural harvesting *El Pueblo's* editorial assured that as Pavlova was about to leave the country, her positive impressions about México were nothing but "sincere" and "undisputable". Pavlova's success in México City, along with that of others visiting artists, was taken by *El Pueblo* as proof of the country's readiness for its modernization through the development of its cultural civilization. The editorial concluded that:

These are unequivocal proofs that the conditions in México are totally different than represented by the country's enemies abroad; that the economic circumstances are not as precarious as some exaggerate; and, principally, that the government as well as society in general know how to applaud and patronize cultured spectacles with civilizing potential (*El Pueblo* 1919, 3).

Finally, in 1919 Jiménez Rueda described Pavlova's modernizing and civilizing impulse embodied in her eliticized *El Jarabe Tapatio* as a powerful eye opener. He admitted, "with our eyes placed on the exterior world, we had not realized the aesthetic import of el jarabe [tapatio].

Drama that realizes in its apparent simplicity a mischievous and passional conflict, just like the

within a stadium and included events such as athletic competitions, religious festivals, prize-giving ceremonies and other cultural activities. These games were part of the Panathenaea, a much larger, yearly religious festival. Although the Panathenaic Games were not as important as other Panhellenic Games, including the Olympic Games, they carried the most prestige for the Athenian citizenry (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panathenaic_Games).

soul of our country is” (Jiménez Rueda qtd. in Lavallo 2002, 649-650). As Pavlova *refocused* the eyes of the Mexican bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites inwards, towards their own world, towards their very own *soul*, her *El Jarabe Tapatío* led them towards an embodied experience of the nation and appreciation of its *mestizo* popular and vernacular culture. Indeed in its “raw” and its “eliticized” form, the folk dance was a heterosexual courtship dance in which a playful process of coquetry and seduction found its climatic consummation as the dancing couple prudishly hid their faces behind the man’s *charro sombrero* for the audience to imagine the couple’s lips locking in an ardent kiss. However, it was precisely Pavlova’s eliticized choreography of *El Jarabe Tapatío* that probed deep beyond the apparent simplicity of the folk dance as a mere mischievous and passional conflict thereby revealing its profound political implications. Her *El Jarabe Tapatío* implicitly choreographed the inter-cultural and inter-class coquetry and courtship, the resistance, momentary rejections and adulations, the negotiations of time and space between the dancing and the collaborating bodies, their intimately passionate and auto/exotifying steps, their timidly prudent colonialists encounters.

As the emblematic dance of México’s national identity formation, *El Jarabe Tapatío* required a stage broader than the one represented by the classroom where the children from the popular masses were instructed or the one afforded by the dancing floors in the festivities for the “best of society”.⁶³ The newly invigorated *El Jarabe Tapatío* also needed a stage on which

⁶³ The *Jarabe Tapatío* became also an integral part of many massive events that intended to unify the nation by cultivating collective nationalist sentiments among the country’s socially stratified population. For example, in 1921 as part of the celebrations commemorating the centennial of México’s independence from Spain at the Chapultepec Park “clapping hands, bold strings, and stomping feet drew attention [...] to the stage . . . [set] as a brightly lit island [...] in the middle of the lake . . . where over a hundred colorfully adorned chinias poblanas and charros burst into a modernized rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* . . .as special guests were led to viewing stands constructed on the Avenida de Lago bridge, and everyone else pressed around the edges of the lake . . .” (López 2006, 26). Also, as Vasconcelos

imperial desires for an always subordinate exotic Other and the desire of the colonized to emulate its defining other as civilized and modern -while remaining distinctively indigenized- could constantly flirt with and seduce one another, to the point of fusing in an ardent kiss.

For different constituencies, Pavlova's *El Jarabe Tapatío* set in motion new ways of imagining and embodying what it meant to be Mexican and modern in the first half of the 20th century. Aesthetic and ideological discussions around Pavlova's eliticization of the popular Mexican folk dance anticipated debates that informed the development of Mexican modern dance in 1940 when two choreographers from the U.S., Anna Sokolow and Waldeen Falkeinstein founded the first two modern dance companies in the country. These two artists' distinctive work continued to address the question of how "folkloric", or not, *real* Mexican dance and other arts should be in order to have universal appeal. This is a question that still lingers today at the tip of dancers' arching, pointing feet in most "third-world" countries like México as they "dance their hearts out" in trying to catch up with "modern", "post-modern", and/or "contemporary" trends. As the echoes of the arching feet of Pavlova's *china poblana* could be imagined at this very moment tapping the dancing floor while dancing *El Jarabe Tapatío* on pointe, Mexican dancers in the national and international stage circuit continue often to be expected to mark their cultural difference, their Mexicaness. They are expected to perform it with a "refined" dancing body and pointed feet as an embodied expression of their civilized artistic worthiness, as an embodied expression of their desired or achieved belongingness within and as part of the modern world.

inaugurated the National Stadium in 1924, 500 hundred couples danced "the prototypical Mexican dance that had arrived at the category of national dance" *El Jarabe Tapatío* (Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 44).

CHAPTER THREE

Dancing Bodies Producing Distinctive Modern Mexican Subjects

During her visit to México City in 1919, Anna Pavlova's stylized rendition of *El Jarabe Tapatio* helped to forge the folk dance as an embodied emblem of the nation. After her departure, *El Jarabe Tapatio* was performed by hundreds of *charros* and *chinas poblanas* en masse as the symbolic dance was included in grand scale events for both the popular masses and Mexican socialites. Pavlova successfully provided the model for combining Mexican folk dances and high art as the formula for an indigenous yet *cultured* identity that resonated with México's post-revolutionary modernizing efforts and which also satisfied an ever present imperial desire for exotic others. However, lacking the infrastructure for the professionalization of ballet dancers, very few privileged individuals could afford to carry on what Pavlova had started with her balletic body suspended on the pointe of her ballet shoes.

In this chapter, I will trace some of the steps taken towards the institutional professionalization of dancers in México City. I will examine how different aesthetic approaches embodied in various dance practices and training programs produced specific subjects that were measured against exclusive and inclusive aesthetic metrics designed by the owners of the means of cultural production and administration. In discussing these various forms of embodied ideological aesthetics, I will start by describing the discursive "frivolity" that characterized México City in 1925 when Pavlova visited the country for the second time. I will then discuss how Lettie Carroll, a dance teacher, appropriated some of these "frivolous" genres by refining them with the *grace* and prestige of ballet. I will emphasize how, while serving the families of capitalist elites among Mexicans and the foreign colonies living in the country, she circumvented the "populists" demands of México's revolutionary government during the 1920s. I will then

conclude by discussing the first institutional efforts during the 1930s to professionalize Mexican dancers in order to develop a *genuinely* Mexican dance form, an interest that Palvova had put in motion back in 1919 when she collaborated with *tiples*⁶⁴ like Eva Pérez Caro, from who she learned *El Jarabe Tapatio* steps, and with Mexican artists like Best Maugard, who were invested in México's nationalist modernizing project.

“The goddess of Folkloric Dance on Pointe”

She was called not just the dancer of the “silk feet” but also the “indisputably best dancer that México has ever had”: Eva Beltri (*Hoy* 1940, 79). After having her as a student for six months, Adela Acosta, a well-known ballet teacher, predicted that Beltri would not have a future in the ballet (Fernández S. 2010). She was both right and wrong. Beltri eventually danced and took classes in the U.S. and Europe. She was also a fervent admirer of Pavlova who inspired her to practice arduously every day.⁶⁵ She was also inspired to continue dancing Mexican folkloric dances on pointe for which she became popular, acquiring the title, “the goddess of folkloric dance on pointe” from one of her former students (Raymunda Arechavala qtd. in Fernández S. 2010). As such, Beltri reported that while in Europe, she had great success in Madrid where she danced folkloric Mexican dances on pointe for the King and Queen (Fernández S. 2010).

It may seem that Acosta, Beltri's ballet teacher, was entirely wrong when she predicted that Beltri did not have a future in the ballet, even if it was mostly dancing traditional Mexican

⁶⁴ *Tiples* were performers who danced, acted and sang in revues and *tandas*, which were part of a “populist” performance genre characterized by dances, music and sketches associated with rural, uneducated, and/or unrefined performers and audiences and which took place in settings considered by some as of very low if any social prestige.

⁶⁵ Some people think that Beltri was the one who taught Pavlova the *El Jarabe Tapatio* steps but there's no conclusive evidence to support that claim; see chapter 2 and Lavallo (2002).

dances on pointe. However, Acosta's prediction was accurate, to some extent, for it seemed that she referred to ballet as a high art form, defined in this case not only by dance technique and/or the content of a dance. The ballet that Acosta saw beyond Beltri's aspirations and physical ability was contextualized if not defined by the type of venues in which it was performed and for what audiences. If in Madrid, Beltri made it to the royal court to dance for the King and Queen, perhaps as an exotic dancer from one of Spain's ex-colonies,⁶⁶ in México she performed as a *tiple* for audiences who attended venues considered by some as of very low if any social prestige. In the first half of the 20th century, revues were considered part of a "frivolous" performance genre. Beltri started her career in the early 1920s at the Teatro Fabregas in revue shows by Maria Conesa, one of the most popular *tiples* at the time (Fernández S. 2010). Towards the end of her dancing career in the early 1940s, Beltri was still featured as a talented dancer of Mexican folk dances on pointe and as a center piece of shows by the magician Fu-Man-Chu. Throughout her career, Beltri's popularity as a revue dancer with a special talent for dancing traditional dances in pointe shoes remained within the confines of the "frivolous" performance genre.

Eva Beltri was well aware of the ideological underpinnings of artistic discourse and production prevalent in México City during Pavlova's visit in 1919 and which carried on in a different sociopolitical context during the 1920s. A complex network of *legitimized* authorities and experts helped construct and naturalize the parameters of what was civilized and what was savage, what was aesthetically tasteful and what was repugnant, what was meaningful art and what was not, and how subjects and bodies should self-monitor according to these established

⁶⁶ See chp2 for a discussion on how some Mexican critics foresaw the successful exportation of *El Jarabe Tapatío* and other Mexican dances for their "exotic" qualities.

criteria.⁶⁷ In this naturalized cultural “reality” mediated by Mexican bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites, Beltri was the very embodiment of the *painful* tension between high and lowbrow art. Like Pavlova, Beltri successfully combined Mexican folk dances and ballet technique. Unlike Pavlova, however, she did not enjoy the internationalized genius status with which Pavlova was mythologized as an otherworldly, anthropomorphic dancing creature.

Beltri was perhaps a talented and *successful* dancer, but she was *just* a Mexican *triple* negotiating her high artistic aspirations, the preferences of her revue theater audiences, and perhaps the rejection of the Mexican guardians of good taste. A writer identified as Alex articulated the tension between opposite ideological pulls in which Beltri’s dancing circulated. He wrote, “there is something of bewitchment, of sorcery in Eva Beltri’s art . . . there is a wisdom as her feet move within the vicious cycle of the frivolous, she has the virtue of liberating herself from it, just like a saint liberates himself from a Mephistophelial cycle” (Alex 1931, 13). While Alex exalts that “something” that Beltri’s dancing had to transcend, Beltri herself, saw it as a failure to dance as part of revue theater performances (Fernández S. 2010). Of her art she said, “the beauty of my art? I owed the beauty of my art to the failure of my art”. In clarifying the seeming paradox, Berti elaborated:

I had a vocation for dance. What I really liked was classical ballet, the dance that incorporates operatic pantomime. But you know, the exigencies of our times are excessively frivolous. All my vocation, all my sensibility, all my temperament, as if they were a crystal ball, shattered when they clashed against the frivolous. And now, my art, instead of having the splendor of a crystal ball, it has the flicker of thousand little crystal pieces . . . nothing else (qtd. in Alex 1931, 13).

⁶⁷ See footnote # 20 in chapter two for some reflections on constructing “reality”.

For Beltri the beauty and success of her current artistic practice within a frivolous context was due to the failure of her shattered aspirations for the art of classical ballet, just as Acosta had predicted. Like Pavlova who according to Hyden (1931) constantly succumbed to the conservative demands of her audiences who had become accustomed to her classical rather than modern ballets, Beltri adjusted herself to what she perceived to be the frivolous exigencies of her time. In this ideological juncture between high and lowbrow art, it became evident that a Mexican body dancing the country's emblematic dances on pointe ballet shoes was not prestigious enough either for the Mexican elites or for performers like Beltri who had *learned* to aspire to reach *higher* artistic plains. Furthermore, as the sociopolitical and cultural climate changed in México City, it seems that not even Pavlova would cause the same stir she had with her balleticized rendition of *El Jarabe Tapatío* in 1919.

The Return of the Winged Dancing Genius: Pavlova and a Different México City (1925)

In 1925, the “frivolity” of artistic production in venues considered by some as of ill repute seemed to have permeated the socio-cultural environment of México City. Madam Rasimi and her French Bataclan Theater Company were well received in the city where their shows were known as *ba-ta-clan*. Initially, Carlos Gonzalez Peña appreciated how Madam Rasimi's company successfully combined different performance genres, from theater to circus, from drama to comedy. The shows were so popular that the critic coined the verb “bataclanizar” (“bataclanize”) to denote the influence he perceived these satirical musical operettas had in all sectors of the Mexican public. Gonzalez Peña noted that in the midst of Madam Rasimi's *ba-ta-clan* frenzy, even government officials as well as police officers “bataclanized”. He then assessed the cultural state of affairs in the city a month after the arrival of these shows in México

City as an “epidemic”; he sentenced, “we are fully immersed in the midst of a ‘bataclanization’” (Gonzalez Peña 1925a, 3).

Gonzalez Peña was referring to the fact that many local theater companies were soon producing their own versions of the *ba-ta-clan* and that a devotion for the new genre among the general public was on the rise. Although he had praised some aspects of Madam Rasimi’s French *ba-ta-clan*, he also, somewhat distrustfully, noted the “daring” and “somewhat sinful” nature of those shows (Gonzalez Peña 1925a, 3). Gonzalez Peña then decried how those obscure aspects of the *ba-ta-clan* progressed into obscenity. He commented on a local ‘ba-ta-clan’ show that dared to represent a passage from México’s military history -not in “the Parisian manner, with measured grace and ingenious ‘a propos’” but rather “in an abject and vulgar way” (Gonzalez Peña 1925a, 10). Gonzalez Peña (1925a) objected to the fact that “from the Aztecs to the cadets from the Military College, personified by the *tiples*, showed everything there was to be shown as they marched to the rhythm of an infamous band of street musicians” (10). One can just imagine the critic’s abhorrence while witnessing such affront: a group of female performers from among the frivolous genres feminizing two of the most representative bastions of national masculinity - the Aztecs as a symbol of México’s distant but glorious civilization and the country’s military forces as defendants of the nation. The bad taste of this almost sacrilegious act was further exacerbated by what Gonzalez Peña perceived as the gratuitous nudity that this group of women employed in their theatrical representations.

As an active participant in the production and safeguarding of an epistemology of refined taste, Gonzalez Peña assured his readers that a properly contextualized nude on stage -that is, a nude represented with “grace” in an ingenious and original play with good music and colors- would not be objectionable even by the most judicious males. But stripping for the mere pleasure

of doing it, with no legitimate aesthetic reason made full and/or partial nudity on stage, according to him, “immoral and anti-aesthetic for the plain reason that it is stupid” (Gonzalez Peña 1925a, 3). As this unjustifiable nudity became a widespread practice as a result of the City’s prevalent *ba-ta-clanism*, Gonzalez Peña lamented the current decline in the public’s interests for spiritually edifying art, read as high art. Contrasting the “purely moralists and professors of aestheticism” who declared that Mexican theater was in decadence, he declared that “theater” had in fact already vanished (Gonzalez Peña 1925a, 10). He assured that Mexican theater, “as a spiritual conduit, as one of the most beautiful and noble manifestations of intelligence has simply disappeared. And the buildings that used to house it have ended up being mere brothel” (Gonzalez Peña 1925a, 10).

Despite of the seeming cultural cataclysm produced by the *ba-ta-clanism* in the city, Gonzalez Peña declared himself an optimist. José Joaquin Gamboa (1925a) also expressed optimism as he commented on two spectacles “worthy of this metropolis [México City]”: the theater company “Ladron de Guevara” and the first presentations by Pavlova’s company on her second visit to the city (5). He asked his readers to rejoice for “the end of a long period of vernacular artists and groups full of pretensions and ingratitude” had finally arrived (Gamboa 1925a, 5). Of Pavlova, he again rehearsed the language once used to describe the Russian dancer’s gravity defying qualities that had mythologized her as a flying swan. The critic exalted the dominance that the winged woman had of the space and noted the relationship the weightless dancer had with the ground, the mundane ground to which the rest of the mortals were inevitably attached. Gamboa suggested that by seeing Pavlova dancing on stage, one could think that she was born in the air; he assured that Pavlova’s shows were with no doubt a magnificent visual and spiritual feast (Gamboa 1925a). Within the *bleak* cultural context characterized by the *ba-ta-*

clan, Pavlova embodied for critics like Gonzalez Peña and Gamboa, as well as for their *cultured* readership, high hopes for the cultural revitalization of their metropolis.

In this mix of cultural “frivolity” and critical “optimism”, Pavlova returned to México City in early April, 1925 for a short season. A note in the English section of *El Universal* (1925b) acknowledged how lucky México was to see Pavlova one more time before her planned retirement after her current tour, only because her scheduled shows in Australia were cancelled “at the last minute” (2). The enthusiasm for Pavlova’s return to the city seemed to have caused quite a stir. A note in *El Universal* (1925a) reported that there was such high demand for Pavlova’s tickets that one day was not enough to serve all interested patrons and therefore the ticket office would continue to be open an extra day (9). Gamboa (1925b) also reported that the public attended in masse to “enjoy the marvelous art of the lofty dancer” (5). As if a dream had become fulfilled, Gonzalez Peña (1925b) remembered, on behalf of a collective “we”, how in México’s recent memory “we often evoked a winged figure . . . we often remembered her as she flutter momentarily, stopping, moving away, nearing back again . . . her memory was like a mystery of something ever present yet absent but always a retrospective ecstasy of beauty that we all dearly wished it materialized once again” (3). Gonzalez Peña (1925b) creates the metaphor of an elusive winged figure that flies back and forth within México City’s memory between 1919 and 1925 when the critic was finally able to declare in celebration, “Well, she is here! She has arrived! We can see her again on the same stage . . . the six years gone by, did not seem to have impacted her in any negative way at all; she is the same” (3).

Whether or not Pavlova remained the same after six years, she continued to garner critical acclaim, however, not always based on the same aesthetic values she was measured against in 1919. For his part, Gamboa was often short on words to describe Pavlova’s dances. For him, no

matter what the Russian ballerina chose to do, she would deserve his seemingly uncompromised praise. He asserted that “whether Pavlova does this or that, it is entirely the same; one goes to see her, she is just magnificent in everything she does” (Gamboa 1925c, 5). For Gamboa, Pavlova was nothing other than the artistic embodied referent of high culture, of social prestige, of civilization. She was the one capable of creating a homotopic space in which *one* as an audience member with certain mediated dispositions could intimately identify with a “genius”. Gonzalez Peña was more specific in describing what Pavlova’s dancing was tapping into in this new México City. In “preparation” for Pavlova’s arrival in a few days, Gonzalez Peña published an article in which he set the aesthetic basis that contextualized Pavlova’s expected *modern* ballet. He historicized, in three phases, what he thought was the most modern manifestation of “artistic dance”. He believed that the first phase had its foundation on the dramatic work of the Greeks and Romans whose performances were characterized by a choir that would recite a poetic text while a group of dancers “exteriorized with movement and gesture the content of the verses” (Gonzalez Peña 1925c, 3). Gonzalez Peña lamented that the excellent reliance on pantomime and musical accompaniment was somewhat lost in what he identified as the second historical phase of “artistic dance”, characterized by “grand ballet”, also known as “classical ballet”. According to the critic-historian, the textual argument and music in this period of the dance form were trampled in favor of a dance converted into “mere gymnastic exercises, a play on physical ability and dexterity without any psychological significance” (Gonzalez Peña 1925c, 3).

It seems that for Gonzalez Peña the imitative –the mimetic- quality of pantomime was the proper vehicle to express the dancer-actor’s inner “psychology” thus infusing the dance with *real* artistic significance. This achievement was accomplished at its fullest, along with a renewed

primacy of the music as a choreographic organizing principle, in the most *modern* development of the dance represented, as Gonzalez Peña indicated, by the Ballet Russes in 1908. This highly evolved form of dance, which found its roots in Wagner and Isadora Duncan (Gonzalez Peña 1925c, 3), found its “emancipation” from any verbal influences and became directly generated by the music “to produce spontaneous and free movements . . . which transformed into palpable representations of emotional states” (Gonzalez Peña 1925c, 3). As in the first of Pavlova’s visits to México in 1919, Gonzalez Peña highlighted the power of modern ballet to synthesized music, scenography and dance as the Russian ballet had accomplished it. However, in 1925, he specifically defined modern “artistic dance”, read as high art dance, as that which expressed the dancer-actor’s inner “psychological” and “emotional” states. With this emphasis, Gonzalez Peña (1925c) concluded that this newest synthesizing art ceased to be merely dance and instead it became something else, a loftier form of cultural production: dance became a “mimetic musical drama” (3).

In 1919, valuing the fusion of three arts – dance, music, and scenography - into one superior art form produced an embodied affirmation of global and local unification at different levels. The world as defined by the allies and the League of Nations after WWI became united to articulate a new world order of which all civilized peoples, including Mexicans, wanted to be part. At the national level, the institutionalized revolutionary elites sought to create a sense of national unity as the country underwent the armed phase of its revolution and eventually as the country engaged in the formation of its post-revolutionary nationalist identity. The Mexican bourgeoisie saw in Pavlova’s integrative ballets the opportunity to consolidate discursive and actual homotopic spaces that would set them apart as a unified class of privileged similars. What then prompted legitimized expert-authorities in elite cultural production like Gonzalez Peña six

years later to hold the same aesthetic standards but now with an emphasis on dance as a “mimetic musical drama”? There are some possible explanations. For one, there was a renewed emphasis on expressivity in Europe in general, a tendency that among other things contributed to Duncan’s success in that continent (Daly 1995). Expressive modern dance was also gaining momentum in Germany and the U.S. It seems that a tendency for expressing, through different modalities, humanity’s inner “psychological” and “emotional” states was catching up with the world.

In 1925, there was certainly a renewed commitment to the expressive “inner” Mexican self as a central factor in a more determined, emerging modern nation. The burning desire that the bourgeois and institutionalized revolutionary elites had in 1919 to be included in the recently formed League of Nations had dissipated by 1925. An Editorial in *El Universal* criticized the international institution as representative of mere “Wilsonian idealism” in reference to U.S. president Woodrow Wilson. According to the editorial, Wilson had qualified the League of Nations “as the beginning of a new era of international cooperation and the first mayor step towards the ideal concert of all nations” (*El Universal* 1925c, 3). The editorial then questioned how the League of Nations could represent a tribunal championing and protecting universal rights and justice if there was no universal representation. The note expressed resentment that México, as all other countries in Latin America –except Brazil-, were excluded from the “international concert” when this was initially orchestrated. A series of similar editorials and articles were published as México was invited to attend an international conference organized by the League of Nations in order to discuss Russian importations and exportation of armaments, specially those exported to India and Afghanistan (*El Universal* 1925d). At this point, however, México joined Russia in refusing to participate in such a conference albeit for different motives.

México would not attend, according to an editorial, “out of resentment” for the country’s initial exclusion from the League of Nations (*El Universal* 1925d, 1). An editorial summarily characterized México’s standing in relationship to the League of Nations as representative of an international body: “as far as we are concerned, México is too busy with its internal affairs to be giving any attention to foreign matters, especially when the country does not care, as is currently the case. The trafficking of arms [of which Russia is accused] and the League [of Nations] do not concern us at all” (*El Universal* 1925c, 3).

This apparently defiant sense of self-sufficiency also found expression as the country was asked to look inwards and reflect on its historical heritage and *responsibility*. Eduardo Zamacois, a distinguished novelist from Spain, offered his first in a series of talks at the National University, and was published in *El Universal* on May 6, 1925. The title of the published version read as follows: “México is the Nation that Will Continue Spain’s Civilizing Project” (Zamacois 1925, 6). In discussing the historical precedents that made México the one nation suitable, if not deserving, to continue Spain’s civilizing project, the revered novelist argued that in the perpetual cyclical development of Civilization “México became at once Spaniard and Arab” (Zamacois 1925, 6). In alluding to Spain’s intimate historical relationship to the Arabs as México’s cultural inheritance, Zamacois asserted that “History was a drama!”, a drama that undoubtedly included Spain’s bloody conquest-invasion of México. The Spaniard writer reminded México of its responsibility with the following words:

México, remember that you carry over your shoulders an enormous inheritance, an inheritance amassed throughout many centuries by various countries. The Orient passed it on to Spain, which in compliance with mysterious historical laws, passed it on to you. Meditate on this for such a lofty enterprise is intimately tied up to your ‘tomorrow’ (Zamacois 1925, 6).

One hundred fifteen years after México's independence from Spain and only 15 years after the start of its armed revolution, México seem to be, theoretically and/or symbolically, ready to carry on the civilizing mission, as Zamacois (1925) called it, of its "motherly progenitor", Spain (6).

This perception of México's ability to transform from a colonized country to perhaps a regional colonizer, from a presumably civilized national subjecthood to a civilizing agent found echoes in José Vasconcelos' essay published in 1925, *La Raza Cósmica (The Cosmic Race)*. However, the influential first Minister of Education and México's presidential candidate in 1929, was not looking inwards only at México's inner physical and psychological self. Vasconcelos (1925) cites Russia as an example of a country that had reinforced its own nationalism as an attempt to fend against a national disintegration that could only benefit the interest of "imperialists states" (8).⁶⁸ He thus admitted that the current state of the world still imposed the need to develop a strong sense of nationalism as a means to defend one's own moral and material interests. However, Vasconcelos thought it imperative to develop a nationalism that could pursue vast and transcendental goals; its mission, according to him, must be directed towards its "historical and universal destiny" (Vasconcelos 1925, 8). In the pursuit of this universality, a localized nationalism would not suffice to advance civilization. As an attempt to refute Darwinism as the basis for justifying racial superiority often associated with white "imperialists states", Vasconcelos adopted a Pan-Americanism approach to theorize about an emerging race composed of diverse peoples ("black, red, yellow and white"). The emergence of this "new synthetic race, the future fifth race" (Vasconcelos 1925, 21), he hoped, would enrich the planet

⁶⁸ For this same anti-imperialist reasons, Vasconcelos assured, Russia supported oppressed countries such as India and Egypt; this might be the reason why the League of Nations, perhaps as representative of some of the "imperialist states" to which Vasconcelos refers, held a conference to *discuss* Russia's aid to some of these "oppressed" countries, specifically, the exportation of armament to Afghanistan.

with the “triumphs of the first culture truly universal, truly cosmic” (Vasconcelos 1925, 39). While Vasconcelos (1925) was convinced that no single race could claim ability to produce *real* civilization, he believed that the ibero part of the continent contained the racial, spiritual, and territorial variety necessary to propel the enterprise of initiating “Humanity’s universal era” (39). Appropriately, he subtitled his essay: “The Mission of the Ibero-American Race”. In 1925, through Vasconcelos’ propositions, México could play a significant part in the articulation of the loftiest phase in the development of human civilization.

The year 1925 was indeed a time in which a Mexican epistemology of inner psychological and emotional awareness found expression in a determined defiance and disregard for the League of Nations, in the country’s inherited responsibility for carrying out its conqueror’s civilizing mission, and through the potential for contributing in the formation of a new race that would fulfill the promise of universal concord. This introspective psychological and emotional knowledge was the one articulated by Gonzalez Peña (1925c) as constitutive of modern ballet in the form of “mimetic musical drama” (3). This was the basis that set the aesthetic standards that Eava Beltri had aspired to but never accomplished for her involvement in the “frivolous” genre that *consumed* her artistically. These were the artistic standards that Pavlova was expected to meet in her upcoming visit to the country.

As it was expected, Pavlova delivered, but only partially. Gonzalez Peña continued regarding Pavlova as a modernizing agent of a special kind for her “modern mimetic musical drama” combined elements of the old dance. The critic assured that Pavlova’s art was of two faces, “one looking to the past and the other smiling to the future” (Gonzalez Peña 1925b, 3). He admired her ability to innovate without breaking the classical molds. Gonzalez Peña found what he expected, the synthesis of the aristocratic prestige associated with classical ballet and the

newly reconstituted embodied modernity offered through Pavlova's mimetic dramatic abilities. The critic reported that through an uninterrupted chain of attitudes and rhythms, Pavlova created a dramatic atmosphere in which she realized, "with profound psychological acuteness", musical interpretations by the great maestros as well as a display of dominance over the scenographic space (Gonzalez Peña 1925b, 6).

A writer identified with the pseudonym of *Observator*, concurred with Gonzalez Peña in associating Russian ballet as the highest form of contemporary dance. However, *Observator* (1925) described in more detail the role of Pavlova's dancing body in producing the inner expressivity of the dancer. *Observator* (1925) wrote:

there are moments in which one may believe that this artist [Pavlova] does not belong to this world bonded to volume and weight. This is evident when she becomes committedly expressive not only with facial gestures, like the actor and the majority of human beings. She does it with her entire muscles, her articulations and her nerves . . . her spins represent an escape to a space of no gravity, to that which is superior, a liberation from the material realm (18).

In other words, as a physical dynamo, the dancing body exteriorizes the dancer's inner psychological and emotional states, thus rendering the artist a conduit for higher planes of experience beyond any natural laws. According to *Observator* (1925), this "instinctive vigor" with which Pavlova infuses her "precise technique" epitomizes the "art of elevation" for which Russian ballet has come to be known around the world. The elevation to which *Observator* (1925) alludes is the one that as a spiritualizing agent Pavlova's dancing is capable of producing. It was precisely the "spiritualization . . . of the body", the writer asserts, that enabled Pavlova to "shake up the laws of gravity and to transform into agility and subtlety" (*Observator* 1925, 18).

As much aesthetically-induced spirituality that Pavlova could have delivered through her "modern mimetic musical drama" in 1925 in México City, however, her reach was far from what it had been in 1919 specially among the popular classes. It is true that her initial shows in this

second visit to the country were well attended mostly by the city's socialites. Also, as in the past, she was equally honored by local and foreign elites in private events. A note published in the English section of *El Universal* described the agreeable ambience and fashionable clothing that characterized the upper class attendees during a tribute to Pavlova offered by the American Consul General, Alexander W. Weddell. The enthusiasm of the unidentified writer of the note suggested that it was such the sense of belonging in a space of privileged similars that he/she wrote, "...the first rumblings of the Revolution might be heard outside, but into this enchanted domain [the theater] comes naught to frighten" (*El Universal* 1925d, 2). The Power of the spiritualizing genius of the ballet was such as to create this homotopic space in which Mexican and foreign elites, according to the journalist, could feel no fear for the social and armed revolution taking place on the other side of the enchanted theater's door. A week later, a group of politicians, artists and intellectuals from France, Belgium, and México among other countries also gathered to honor Pavlova in a tribute led by Edourd Bersin, president of the prestigious Fencing club, Sala de Armas Bersin (*El Universal* 1925e, 4; *El Universal* 1925f, 2). Towards the end of her almost-4-weeks season, a newspaper note announced the "endearing farewell" that Pavlova wanted to share with the Mexican public for which she felt genuine affection (*El Universal* 1925g, 4). The note affirmed that this show would include the "Mexican dances stylized by Pavlova . . . and would be dedicated to members of the high society, of the foreign colonies, and of the press" (*El Universal* 1925g, 4).⁶⁹

In addition to cultivating these elitist allegiances, a note reported that Pavlova wished to please all of México City's public by opening a popular season and for which prices would be

⁶⁹ Pavlova was also honored by wealthy and influential Mexicans, such as José de Viadero y Rondero, at private homes to which other socialites and diplomats from different countries were invited (*El Universal* 1925h, 2).

“incredibly insignificant in relationship to the *real* value of [Pavlova’s] shows” (*El Universal* 1925i, 4). Despite the incredibly reduced prices and the inclusion of Pavlova’s stylized Mexican dances in these popular shows, however, the public was not responding. It seems that Keith Money’s (1982) characterization of Pavlova’s visits to México as “chastening” might have been based on the Russian dancer’s experience in México City during 1925.⁷⁰ Gamboa lamented, “we cannot understand what is happening with the public. There has become a systematic distancing from productions of high beauty (read high art) (Gamboa 1925d, 5). In a different newspaper note and on behalf of those who still believed in “Art and its gifts”, Gamboa (1925e), deeply disappointed, claimed that México was indebted to Pavlova, an artist known all over the world as the “IMCOMPARABLE” (5). The critic summarily pronounced that if people do not attend Pavlova’s shows “it would be necessary to confess, ashamed, that México does not deserve spectacles other than the ba-ta-clan and its dreadful byproducts” (Gamboa 1925e, 5).

Perhaps, Gamboa’s warning reflected the current inner psychology and emotional state of México City in particular and of the country in general. Perhaps the psychological and emotional state of the City and/or the country was also a frivolous one during 1925. Out of mere resentment, México refused to attend the League of Nations’ conference on arms trafficking, just as the general public in México City seemingly refused to attend Pavlova’s shows in favor of something else. The prevalent consumption of “frivolous” cultural production represented a threat not only to the very homotopic space into what the bourgeois and institutional revolutionary elites had imagined their metropolis to have evolved but also a threat to the development of México as a culturally civilized and modern nation. If México’s inner psychology and emotional state concurrently embraced the possibility to contribute to the

⁷⁰ See chapter two for a discussion of Money’s assessment of Pavlova’s visit to México City in 1919.

development of human civilization –either through assuming its inherited responsibility from Spain or through the formation of a new “fifth race”- Pavlova’s seeming *defeat* by the *ba-ta-clan* could shatter all lofty hopes. If Pavlova, one of the highest exponents of internationalized high culture could not *elevate* with her the people of México City, if she could not spiritualize this emerging metropolis, who could? It seems that the opportunity that she had helped create in 1919 was vanishing in thin air as *tiples* danced with bare legs and critics typed away their own hopes for the cultural *elevation* of the city and the country they, and those they represented, had envisioned. To some extent, the so-called “frivolity” of the *ba-ta-clan* and shows of the like as well as the seeming general preference for them fractured México City as a monolithic cultural space. The cultural milieu of the city was no longer dominated solely by the elites and determined by an epistemology of refined taste of their own creation. As if this imagined cultural homotopic space was a crystal ball, it was at least fractured, if not shattered, as it clashed against the “frivolous”. As a fractured homotopia, however, México City still offered spaces where embodied elitist cultural production continued to be produced.

Passing on the Torch: Ballet as Embodied Exclusivity and Moral Edification

As much of a spiritualizing agent as she was perceived to be in relation to an “elevated” realm of experience, Pavlova was curious about different aspects of México’s *mundane* life. Perhaps thinking of her natal Russia’s commitment to artistic production, Pavlova asked Gamboa in an interview if the Mexican government protected and supported the arts. In the context of México’s institutional revolutionary efforts, now under president Plutarco Elías Calles, Gamboa referenced as an example the murals by Diego Rivera at the Department of Public Education. In responding to a different question, Gamboa informed Pavlova that indeed México had its own

Fine Arts School (Escuela de Bellas Artes) and promised to ask its director, Ramos Martínez' to host her at the educational institution (Gamboa 1925f, 1).

Another exchange between Pavlova and her interviewer evinced the presumably inherent edifying power that ballet had in a *floating* internationalized elitist imaginary. Very “seriously”, Pavlova asked Gamboa if Mexican female youth had any interest in “artistic dance” (Gamboa 1925f, 1). In his answer, Gamboa assumed an exclusivist Mexican female youth. He replied, “from our aristocracy, I know of very few ladies who had pursued it [“artistic dance”] when the Department of Aesthetic Culture existed” (Gamboa 1925f, 1). In response, Pavlova exalted the benefits of “artistic” dances, which she assured had been totally adopted in North America. The critic reported that Pavlova qualified such dances as a type “of gymnastics that did not disfigure the female body” but instead, “they give women confidence, grace, harmony” (Gamboa 1925f, 1). Gamboa (1925f) summarized the words of the genius of the ballet by affirming that indeed “artistic” dances were “hygienic”; Pavlova added, “exactly, they’re hygienic and highly moral” (1). In México City’s culturally *bleak* context, characterized by “frivolous” performance genres that included the *ba-ta-clan* in 1925, Pavlova’s edifying “artistic” dances represented, as Gamboa (1925f) put it, the hopes for “modifying our old, provincial way of thinking and instead open our spirits to freedom, to life, to health!” (1). As I discussed earlier, these lofty hopes for physical and moral redemption were shattered. If in 1925 Pavlova could not lead this cultural and moral *hygienic* project in grand scale, somebody else could try it, if at least only for exclusive groups of aristocratic young ladies.

In April 16, Patton (1925a) reported in the English section of *El Universal*, “Anglo American Notes”, that:

Miss Lettie H. Carroll is taking sixty of her pupils to the matinee this afternoon of Pavlova at the Esperanza Iris. After the performance Madame Pavlova will receive the

entire party back stage, and each of Miss Carroll's pupils will have the opportunity of meeting the world's most famous dancer (2).

In what follows, I will discuss how inspired by Pavlova, Lettie Carroll took up the challenge of continuing to embrace ballet as a means for moral edification and for the consolidation of social prestige among the daughters of Mexican elites and of members of the foreign colonies residing in the country. I will contextualize this disciplining function of Carroll's ballet school and company as an example of efforts to professionalize dancers in the search for a Mexican ballet.

In her book, *Las 'Chicas Bien' de Miss Carroll: Estudio y Ballet Carroll (1923-1964)* (*Miss Carroll's 'Well-Off Girls': Studio and Ballet Carroll [1923-1964]*),⁷¹ Aulestia (2003) demonstrates that Carroll's contributions to the development of "serious" dance in México were more significant than she has been credited by many. She cites Miguel Covarrubias, a visual artist and influential government official who championed Mexican modern dance in its "golden age" in the early 1950s. Aulestia (2003) noted that in reviewing the developments of theatrical dance in the first decades of the 20th century in México, Covarrubias included Carroll in the "handful of teachers" who cultivated the genre of "serious dance", also known as "artistic dance" (31). Aulestia takes this government representative's acknowledgement as evidence that the official institutions appreciated Carroll's work. She lamented, however, that maybe because Carroll was "gringa"⁷² and "entrepreneurial" –with a bend for "commercial" dance genres–,

⁷¹ The expression "Chicas Bien", which I am translating as "Well-Off Girl", implies the girls' membership in the uppermost positions in the social hierarchy; it implies wealth, good reputation, social prestige, developed moral character, "respectable" lineage, etc.

⁷² "Gringo/a" is a slang term used in Latin America, and by many Spanish-speaking residents in the U.S., to refer to nationals from the U.S., usually, but not always, perceived as white –racially and/or in stereotyped ways of "thinking", "speaking", "dressing", "behaving", etc.)

neither her pedagogy nor her productions were included “as part of institutional programs intended to encourage the development of dance” in the country (Aulestia 2003, 32).

I will suggest an alternative situation. Carroll was actually hired by the Mexican government to train physical education teachers who also taught dance in México City’s public elementary schools, even when she had just returned from a period of time in the U.S. (Aulestia 2003). As Carroll’s course of actions demonstrate, it seems that she was the one who created the widest possible distance between the “populist” revolutionary ideology so prevalent at the time and her own ideological preferences that sustained her exclusivist dance practice. Throughout her career, it was clear that Carroll did not want to have anything to do with the Mexican popular classes that revolutionary governments in different ways tried to incorporate into the country’s nationalist modernizing project. Perhaps some of the encounters she had with member of the popular classes through her own artistic volition were represented by invitations to bring her company as part of charity shows, opportunities that rendered charity as a performance of privilege.⁷³ Newspaper reports about her classes, shows and personal life were mostly published in the English section of *El Universal*, although some Mexican critics published articles about her in Spanish in various publications.

Carroll arrived in México City from the United States in 1910 planning to stay only four weeks to enjoy the centennial celebrations of the Mexican independence (Aulestia 1985).

Despite the onset of the armed insurrection the same year, she stayed in the country for four

⁷³ One can think here of Paulo Freire’s discussion of “false charity” versus “true charity” in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970; 2000) where he wrote, “True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity” (45). In other words, charity intended to merely alleviate the condition of the recipient rather than to change the institutionalized systems of domination that keeps that recipient in perpetual need of his/her benefactor’s charity is “false charity”. “False charity” then implies the benefactor’s performance of the privilege and power “to help” without threatening the systems that keep him/her in permanent unequal power relation with the beneficiary of his/her charity.)

years working as a secretary for a company from the U.S. The political unrest did not deter her from becoming an active socialite among the foreign colonies residing in the country and also from falling in love with México's culture, its dances, its exoticism. In an interview with Mary Cater for the *San Antonio Evening News* in 1924, Carroll described her fascination with the dances she witnessed at the Basilica de Guadalupe.⁷⁴ She had a keen eye in describing movement and choreographic configurations although she did not venture to make any interpretations. I find interesting, however, that Carroll noted the racial features of the dancers, especially because race seems to have mattered in informing her own dance practices which I will discuss later. She said of the dancers at the basilica, "imagine a group of indigenous Mexicans of dark complexion, wide face, and flat facial features balancing to the rhythm of the most strange primitive melodies" (qtd. in Carter 1924b). Having been born white and raised in the South of the U.S. –Corpus Christi, Texas- in the late part of the 19th century, the scenery of a large group of mostly dark males with somewhat grotesque faces moving to strange, primitive sounds might have provoked a powerful and perhaps a potentially threatening scene for her.

⁷⁴ The shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe represents perhaps the most revered Catholic religious place in México. Its powerful religious significance is intimately intertwined with México's colonial history. It is believed that the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to the Indian Juan Diego in 1531 and instructed him to collect some rare roses in the tilma that he was wearing. The roses would serve as proof of his direct contacts with the virgin who had asked him to serve as intermediary between her, his people and the incredulous Catholic bishops. As Juan Diego unfolded his tilma to deliver the roses in front of the bishops, the Virgin's image was miraculously impressed and revealed on the tilma. The Virgin asked that a shrine be built in her honor at *El Tepeyac* where the apparitions are said to have taken place and were the *original* tilma with the Virgin of Guadalupe's image is kept and devoutly revered in mass by Catholics from all over México. The devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe has spread to Latin America; it has informed part of the cultural history of Chicanos in the U.S. and of Mexican and Latin American people living in other countries around the world. Her image has also been used in banners as a symbol of inspiration and protection by communities and activists involved in public demonstrations related to social justice movements in México and the U.S. (e.g. from the Mexican movement for independence in 1810, to the struggles of migrant workers initially in California during the 1960s when César Chávez and Dolores Huerta led the first efforts to unionize these workers, to marches across the U.S. in favor of immigrant rights in the last several years.

However, the exotic power of these dances in particular and Mexican culture in general would overpower any perceived threat based on racial and/or class differences as long as these identity markers remained contextualized as part of exotic cultural products for consumption, *discovery*, and refinement. In assessing *El Jarabe Tapatío* as the country's number one dance as well as highlighting the importance of other nationalist dances, Carroll assured that "the beautiful, colorful and romantic México, with its legends, its folklore, and its dances without rival in the entire world, offers to its *yankee* brother, better said –its business partner-, a whole world to dream in" (qtd. in Carter, 1924a). Carroll adopted México as a home and stayed there *dreaming* and helping many others *to dream* until her passing in 1964.

That Carroll was able to take 60 of her students backstage to meet personally with Pavlova in 1925 was not accidental for Carroll was one of the "most enthusiastic promoters" of the Russian ballerina's performance seasons in México (Aulestia 2003, 24). Aulestia (2003) asseverates that Pavlova was not just an inspiration to Carroll but that the internationally acclaimed dancer "radically influenced the development of Carroll's career" (24). One can just imagine how Pavlova was a role model on stage as well as in the ballet class where she was probably referenced often and where aspiring young students tried to personify her. According to a note commenting on Carroll's show in May 30, 1925, one of Carroll's "most promising pupils" (*El Universal* 1925j, 2) –a five- year-old- girl seemed to have been successful in her attempts. The note read, "little Miss 'Bee-Wee Pavlowa Hill' was given an ovation which might have been envied by her prototype, Madame Pavlowa herself and cries of Bravo! Hurrah! etc. were heard amidst the storm of applause which greeted her every time she appeared . . . she was the embodiment of grace and rhythm . . . she impersonated [Pavlova] to perfection" (Patton 1925b, 2).

As Pavlova presented her shows in the City, Carroll's was choreographing for events organized by members of the foreign colonies living in México.⁷⁵ She was also rehearsing her company for a show titled "The Carroll-Can" and which included "girls very well known in society and in the foreign colonies" (*El Universal* 1925[l], 4). A review of the show asserted that Carroll "demonstrated that she is a genius" and that "many of the numbers would have put professionals to shame" (Patton 1925b, 2). As Pavlova left México City, the English section of *El Universal* juxtaposed two articles side by side, both of *equal size* as if symbolically suggesting some resemblance in artistic stature between Pavlova and Carroll. One commented on Pavlova's departure from México City to Hollywood, California where she would work in a series of films (*El Universal* 1925m, 2). The article lamented that México would never see her dancing live again for Pavlova planned to retire after one more season in the U.S. The article next to this one, announced that Carroll's annual society revue -"The Carroll-Can"- was currently being rehearsed and that "amusement lovers of the capital are very much looking forward to it" (*El Universal* 1925n, 2). As Pavlova left México forever, her admirer, promoter and friend, Lettie Carroll, took up the torch of ballet and its edifying power.

According to Aulestia's (2003) conclusions, Carrroll began dancing at age 27 when she went back to learn folkloric dance at the University of California from which she eventually was sent as a researcher to México. As if to validate Carroll's credentials as a "serious" dance teacher, Aulestia (2003) cites Carroll's claim that she studied with Martha Graham when she was teaching at the Denishawn school led by Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis. Another piece of evidence that Aulestia (2003) offers in support of Carroll's professional *legitimacy* was her

⁷⁵ Carroll choreographed and supervised "The Chinese Lantern" for the Student Dramatic Club of México on April 3^{er} (*El Universal* 1925k, 2) and also a show for the May Festival of the Industrial School (Patton 1925c, 2).

participation in courses organized by The Dancing Masters of America, an organization formed by the fusion of two “prestigious dance associations” in the U.S., The American National Association (1884) and the International Association (1894) (14). In 1928, that institution certified Carroll as a “Teacher of Dancing” and registered her as representative of México (Aulestia 1985, 8; 2003).

With these credentials, Carroll garnered the interest not only of the government, which hired her as instructor for elementary school physical education teachers, but most importantly to her, the benefaction of the Mexican bourgeoisie –nationals and foreigners. She had at least two luxurious private dance studios; the first one located at the Teatro Olympia and initially funded under the auspices of the owner of that theater, Randy Jennings whose daughter was part of the Carroll’s *Chicas Bien* (Well-off girls). On occasion, her pupils included the wives of presidents Plutarco Elías Calles and Avelardo L. Rodríguez, the daughters of presidents Pascual Ortiz Rubio and Lázaro Cárdenas, the daughter of the famous muralist David Alfaró Siqueiros, and also the popular actress María Félix. But the core of Carroll’s discipleship was composed by little girls, adolescents and young adults –the daughters of the affluent families from the British, German, Dutch and U.S. colonies residing in the country. Starting in 1924, Carroll offered an annual recital with all her young students in the most prestigious venues in the city.

Carroll’s goal was to professionalize these girls by embodying a complex and seemingly paradoxical combination of high art and what many considered as “frivolous” performance genres as she also continued Pavlova’s tradition of *eliticizing* Mexican dances. Victoria (Vicky) Ellis, the daughter of an affluent banker and immigrant from the U.S., remembers when her teacher asked her to try to dance *El Jarabe Tapatio* the way Pavlova had done it. After a month of intense work and “six pairs of ballet pointe shoes”, Ellis’ balleticized version of *El Jarabe*

Tapatio on pointe became, according to her own account, one of her “best numbers” (Ellis qtd. in Aulestia 1987, 4). On the other hand, presenting refined Mexican dances was not Carroll’s primary concern. She taught and included in her shows tap and jazz among other dance genres that the Mexican public was beginning to favor in an atmosphere where shows like the *ba-ta-clan* were flourishing. According to Aulestia (2003), writers who reflected what she seems to consider a negative influence by Vasconcelos, criticized Carroll for adopting the frivolous jazz. Aulestia cites Ben Ali as somebody who reflected Vasconcelos’ ideals. Ali wrote of Carroll:

In her eagerness to please her audiences, [Carroll] does not doubt to rely in some occasions on certain resources that are vastly inferior to her technique. Why to mix, in a dance feast, jazz numbers that are so vulgar as any other number executed every day in the ordinary world[?]. . . [why to rely on] some ‘acrobatics’ so distant from the exquisite group of her dances? (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 75).

In tracing the influences that led Carroll to embrace what Ali considered the despicable mundaneness of jazz and “acrobatics”, Aulestia links Carroll’s “Chicas Bien” (Well-Off Girls) with the performance genre known as “chorus girls”. In contraposition to Ali, Antonio G. Linares asserted in relation to the chorus girls and jazz that “jazz and the girls’ legs liberated the music hall from the tyranny of the verb, and they gave it a universal character” (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 13).

It was this more laudable function of jazz, and girls’ legs, that Carroll pursued in her practice. Jazz and all the other genres she taught and featured in her shows were, according to Aulestia (2003) “always based on the rigor of academic ballet” (17). In other words, ballet *purified* while elevated the frivolous. The balletic refinement with which Carroll’s type of chorus girls infused the “frivolous” genres they employed would ensure conformity with the disciplining function that a refined chorus girls group must embrace. According to *The Two Steps* magazine published in 1920:

A girl from the chorus knows how to walk . . . she uses her hands intelligently and gesticulates exquisitely when she speaks . . . Society has realized this and has decided to correct its style and manners . . . During the organization of charity events, the participation of people from show business has been requested . . . the actresses will demonstrate to society how to maintain the right postures and how to act with grace . . . a dancer will indicate the correct position of the legs and feet, another star will teach . . . how to walk and use one's arms. The chorus girls will demonstrate the correct way of joining a social gathering and how to depart from it appropriately (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 13).⁷⁶

Although Aulestia (2003) admits that these characteristics of a chorus girls group reflected “Miss Carroll’s artistic mentality”, she suggests that Carroll emphasized her charity efforts instead of trying to “perfect the Mexican social world”(13). It was obvious that Carroll did not want to have anything to do with the *entire* social world in México for she was very selective in what social “world” she endeavored. Within this social sphere, she not only enabled members of her internationalized class to perform their privilege through charity work but also to rehearse their conditioned corporeality as an affirmation of their social superiority. This synthesis of high art and the “frivolous” created a new chorus girls group formed by the best of México’s aristocracy; it created a homotopic space for a class of nationally different but socially and racially similars. While Pavlova’s homotopic dances created a social space for the Mexican elites to re-affirm their identity as civilized moderns with a high affinity with her Europeanized ballets, Carroll’s homotopic space provided members of the foreign colonies with a sense of belongingness to an internationalized class of white people from powerful capitalist nations then living in México City. In this homotopic space, these foreigners’ racial and class affinity seemed to have transcended their national differences as they contributed in the construction of their host country as a modern nation.

⁷⁶ The original source as referenced in Aulestia is “Chorus Girls”. *The Two Step*, Vol. 30, num. 1, enero de 1920, pag. 21.

Carroll's "Chicas Bien" as a Racialized Homotopic Space

After 1919 when Pavlova choreographed her refined version of *El Jarabe Tapatío*, Mexican dances by Mexican dancers and foreigners continued circulating not only on the national but also on the international stage, perhaps as exotic commodities. Pavlova presented her *Fantasia Mexicana* in New York and Philadelphia; Stanislave Potapovich danced *Danza Mexicana* in Southampton in 1919 and Ted Shawn toured with his *Xóchitl* in 1920 (Aulestia 2003). Rosa Rolanda protagonized the revue *Rancho Mexicano* on Broadway in 1925, the same year in which Andreas Pavley choreographed and presented *Tláloc* in Chicago (Aulestia 2003). Aulestia (2003) takes these instances along with efforts in México to create “artistic” dances with national themes not only as evidence that Mexican dance was gaining momentum internationally but also that the public in the country awaited enthusiastically the emergence of a Mexican ballet. Aulestia (2003) employs this context as a backdrop for the emergence of Carroll’s ballet company whose presence in the country in the first decades of the 20th century enabled “Mexican ballet to start a new heroic achievement” (23).

Carroll’s company officially debuted as the “Carroll Ballet Classique” on July 13th, 1927. Both the Carroll company’s official debut and a few previous performances generated a series of reactions that seem to have been responding directly to Pavlova’s assertion in 1925, when she told Gamboa that “artistic dances” gave women “confidence, grace, [and] harmony” for these dances were not only “hygienic” but also “highly moral” (Gamboa 1925f, 1). A newspaper note marketing the official debut of the “Carroll Ballet Classique” announced that some of México City’s “own daughters [would] make their formal bow as professional dancers at the Regis Theater” (Patton 1927, 2). This particular group of México’s “own daughters” were mostly white young girls. They were also the daughters of affluent business families from different countries

and who owned or co-owned, along with some Mexican impresarios, the country's means of production and distribution of goods outside of government control. The characterization of these girls, some of who were born in México and others who had immigrated at a young age, as México's "own daughters" effectively destabilized notions of an essential "nature" constitutive of Mexican identity. This group of talented and privileged girls, their parents and their dance teacher certainly contributed, as Mexicans, in the construction of a modern México where institutionalized revolutionary ideology and capitalist entrepreneurship thrived along side one another during the 1920s.

As if echoing Pavlova's conceptualization of ballet's edifying power, the same marketing note pointed out that "much interest has been aroused by the presentation of a formal ballet season in México [by the "Carroll Ballet Classique"], both from a social and an educational standpoint" (Patton 1927, 2). This social and educational function of ballet took greater descriptive proportions in a review published by the magazine *Ovaciones*. The report stated that under the "formidable directorship of a prestigious teacher of aesthetic dance [Carroll] . . . the cultural project that this company, composed mostly by beautiful and graceful little girls from high society, has set up to develop in México is an educational and civilizing symptom of our public" (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 74). In other words, ballet was for members of "high society" –dancers and audiences- not only a means for reflecting but also for affirming their morally educated and civilized "nature". A month before the "Carroll's Ballet Classique" debut, an article titled "Ballet as a New Educational Sense" featured photos of dancers from Carroll's company. The article asserted that as result of the "effective emancipation of women" in many places, they have developed a "virtue . . . the passion for physical exercise as they toil to achieve a type of beauty generative of strength, health and vigor" (*El Universal Ilustrado* 1927, 32). In their attempts, the

article recounted, female youth around the world had “developed a passion for classical ballet” (*El Universal Ilustrado* 1927, 32-33). As if responding to Pavlova when she asked Gamboa two years earlier in 1925 if Mexican female youth were interested in “artistic dances”, the article asseverated that “the ‘ballet’ . . . as a truly aesthetic manifestation that transcends the human passions and appetites . . . is slowly but surely gaining the attention of Mexican women” (*El Universal Ilustrado* 1927, 33).

The newspaper implied, of course, Mexican aristocratic women –Carroll’s selectively chosen young girls. In remembering her days as a Carroll student, Elena Guerrero remarks, “Miss Carroll had very carefully selected girls [in her company and studio]. They were the daughters of generals, presidents, politicians and cultured people: poets, writers . . .” (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 49). But it seems that it was no guarantee that the little daughter of a general, president, politician or a cultured luminary would be accepted into Carroll’s homotopic space. Girls needed to meet certain criteria. Flavia Moheno, Carroll’s student who eventually became a personal friend and teacher in the school, recounts that “Miss Carroll used to say that the art of ballet was born in the courts. The girls must be good looking, of certain class . . . we were selected very carefully. One day, the daughter of a politician arrived in the school but Miss Carroll told her that there was no more space for her. She later told us: ‘Oh my God, what have I done[?]; they’re going to apply the rule of the 33 to me!’⁷⁷ But . . . the little girl was . . . *muy corrientita* (very plain looking).’ That was why she did not accept her” (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 51).

⁷⁷ “33” is here meant to evoke a rifle used in summary executions by firing squads in both the federal army and the revolutionaries camps.

Based on what Aulestia (2003) quotes from Moheno above, it would certainly be difficult to accurately assess what constituted *muy corrientita* (very plain looking) for Carroll. However, Aulestia (2003) herself and Francisco del Rey seem to provide clues as to what the criteria were for inclusion in Carroll's circle. Aulestia assures that "specially during the year of her company's debut [in 1927], Miss Carroll had achieved with her 'niñas bien' ['well-off girls'] the prototype . . . of the 'ballerinas', with their juvenile, slim and white bodies" (79). Francisco del Rey wrote of Carroll's dancers, "while the rest of beings in existence expressed themselves speaking, these beautiful blond girls, with hairdos a la bob, expressed themselves dancing" (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 79). It seems that Carroll's sense of class was also defined by whiteness –racial and/or ideological. Apparently for her, race mediated who was deemed *muy corrientita* or as good looking as a ballerina of "certain class" from the courts where ballet had been born.

Carroll's exclusivist criteria for belonging to her racially homotopic space were most likely enabled by the patronage of her affluent supporters, the core of which were whites from different countries, including México. As Carroll became the director of a "successful ballet company" she also assumed "the organization of a truly commercial enterprise" (Aulestia 2003, 27). She was characterized by Granville A. Patton in the English section of *El Universal* as "the first female impresario" (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 72). Carroll was indeed an astute entrepreneur. Her shows and school were funded by all the work she did for events organized by the upper classes in México –national and foreign, from private clubs and associations to *quinceañeras* for prestigious families.⁷⁸ During the 1920s, Carroll's work was also funded by diplomats and

⁷⁸ *Quinceañera* is a rite of passage. When a girl turns 15 years old she *passes* from being considered a child to be an adolescent –a young *señorita*. Some families attend a Catholic Church service as a symbol of gratitude for having reached such a milestone and also to receive blessings for the future of the maturing girl. Although there have been dramatic changes, *Quinceañera* celebrations have invariably

consulate representatives from various countries. Very avidly, Carroll also included advertisements as part of her shows in order to consolidate the sponsorship of supportive businesses. Carroll's financially self-sustaining enterprise effectively enabled her to distance herself from the "populist" ideological demands of the government. Through various means, she was able to garner the patronage of a group of Mexicans -by birth, by allegiance, and by interest- who by virtue of their social and racial *nature* could create a space in which to established ballet as the embodiment of their own and their family's social prestige and moral edification.

Let Us Instead Dance the Revolution: The 1930's Dancing Steps

In *El Universal Ilustrado*, Ben Ali (1927) questioned the possibility of ever developing a serious ballet tradition in México and assured readers that for a country with such an unsophisticated "indian mentality", ballet could only come from abroad, brought by foreign companies (30). Ali (1927) thought that the impossibility of a Mexican ballet was due to the "incompetency" of dance teachers in México; the critic claimed that having a dance school would only produce "one or two modest artists who would pirouette in slum theaters thereby transforming ballet into a modest *bataclan*" (30). In a section titled "Our Ballet" in one of his articles, Ali reconsidered his initial skepticism regarding Carroll's work for including jazz and other *mundane* dance genres into her compilation of "exquisite" dances (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 75). He declared that "finally" a dance teacher, Carroll, had set in motion "the beginning of a true 'ballet' school" that implemented the "rigor traditionally embraced by the Grand Paris Opera" (Ali 1927, 31). In assessing a recital given by Carroll's students, Ali (1927) was

included as center piece having the 15-year old girl dancing a variation of a European waltz with a young boy.

convinced that Carroll had transcended the presentation of a show that merely seeks to please her pupil's parents. Instead, the critic celebrated, "the teacher offered a true work of art" (31).

Carroll indeed contributed to the development of concert dance in México.⁷⁹ It seems that during the 1920s, however, she was not able to form a "professional" Mexican ballet *proper*. Although Ali lauded Carroll's efforts in 1927, the critic emphatically noted that while Carroll's ballet company offered "professional" quality in her "works of art", the group was composed by "amateurs" (1927, 31). Two years later in 1929, Carlos Gonzalez Peña (1929) celebrated encouragingly Carroll's efforts also with some reservations in regards to a fully mature professionalization of something that could be called a Mexican ballet. He wrote of Carroll's girls, "we shall consider them professionals . . . What do they still miss? The absolute mastery of the trade; the totality of collective agility, vertiginous agility..." (3). Like Ali, Gonzalez Peña appreciated some level of "professionalism" but not quite sufficient to qualify Carroll's company as one that could bring to the country *real* professional ballet. Nevertheless, Carroll enabled many of her students to pursue professional careers as dancers in México, the U.S. and Europe.⁸⁰ Among some of her students who would become highly influential in the development of "serious" dance in the country, including the professionalization of Mexican dancers, were the Campbell sisters.

In March 4, 1927, *El Universal* featured a short note titled "A Rising Star" with a photo of the 25-year old, "miss Nellie Campbell, one of the stars of the 'Carroll Girls' . . . a group of charming girls belonging to the best of the metropolitan society and foreign colonies [living in

⁷⁹ She devoted her life as a dance teacher and choreographer in México from the early 1920s to the early 1960s.

⁸⁰ See Aulestia (2003) for examples of some of Carroll's dancers who eventually succeeded in leading professional careers as dancers.

the city]” (4). Although Nellie Campbell could have been considered a “rising star”, her sister Gloria Campbell achieved greater technical proficiency. They both took additional private lessons with Carroll. While peeking into their classes, Elena Guerrero remembered the impressive number of “*pirouettes and fouettés* that Gloriecita could accomplish”. While watching Gloria dance in class, Guerrero thought to herself full of admiration, “I want to be able to dance like that” (qtd. in Aulestia 2003, 46). In 1925, Gloria was inspired by seeing Pavlova dance on the Mexican concert stage and eventually became México’s first prima ballerina (Segura 1991).



Figure 5. Gloria Campobello. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City.

Apparently Nellie and Gloria Campbell were not only talented dancers but they also fit the prototype of the classy yet racial ballerina –physically and ideologically- that Carroll seemed to prefer. Years later when the Campbell sisters started their own dance careers, Gloria was often described by critics as “the golden girl” (Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 714), “the blond” of “agile white body” while others were regarded as “brown shadows of Pavlova, swarthy, and dark ones . . .”⁸¹ Nellie was neither as blond nor white as Gloria; however, she was sometimes accused of

⁸¹ The quote implies a gradient scale of skin color from lighter to darker. The Spanish words used in the original quote are “*morenas*” which I am translating as brown; “*trigueñas*” which refers to something like “as the color of wheat” and which I am translating as “swarthy”; and “*renegrada*” which refers to someone of considerably dark skin color without being considered a “black person” and which I am translating as “dark ones” -the darkest in the scale implied in the quote.

“racism” by some of her students and their parents (Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 99). She was prejudiced against “morenas” (brown girls) and sometimes set them apart from the rest. She also often referred to her students “with much contempt as ‘indios’” (Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 126). Nellie recounts that when her sister and brothers immigrated from Northern México to the country’s capital, they socialized with millionaires’ little daughters, and that although her own



Figure 6. Nellie Campobello. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza "José Limón", México City.

family had money, they were not millionaires themselves. Their family, she remembers, integrated itself as part of the “American and British colonies” residing in México City when they arrived there in 1923 (qtd. in Segura 1991, 10) and she and her sister Gloria began to study at the “Colegio Ingles” (British College) (Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 696).

It was Gloria’s father who had made the connections for them. Nellie was Gloria’s half sister and had adopted the last name of Mr. Ernest Stephen Campbell Reed, “a British or U.S. doctor”

(Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 696). Although it is not significant for my discussion to identify the

nationality of Gloria’s father, the uncertainty exemplifies the fact that many of the Campbell sisters’ biographical information have been elusive as Nellie, primarily, mythologized much of their personal history. As Leblanc y Franciso Doria stated in 1926 in an article predicting the future of theater artists in 1927, “the future of our artists depends on multiple circumstances . . . it is contingent to the trajectory of politics more than the geometrical complications of an astral

fate . . .” (1926, 20). Although I will not discuss their more “sensationalist” history, in the case of Gloria and Nellie, it was not the metaphysics of an “astral fate” but rather of a “mythological” origin and other aspects of themselves that certainly colored their professional career as many historians concur.⁸² I will emphasize, instead, as Leblanc y Francisco Doria suggested, the politics that played a mayor role in the development of these two artists’ future and the choreographic work they produced.

In the early 1930s, México’s revolutionary project was leading the country towards a more socialist political environment. The Stock Market Crash in the U.S. in 1929 had ripple effects around the world. There was an increased critique of capitalism worldwide, and México engaged in a debate on the virtues and perversions of that economic system (see for example Olariaga 1932). An editorial in *El Universal* (1932) warned against an increased nationalism that could potentially “drag along the rabble to commit acts of violence” specifically against members of the capitalist foreign colonies residing in the country (3). The editorial denounced that:

on posters attached to walls or circulated as flyers as well as in articles published in newspapers and magazines, virulent attacks have multiplied in all kinds of tones. These attacks are directed collectively towards this or that foreign colony in particular or in general without distinguishing nationality. All foreigners are being qualified as ‘undesirables’ and are accused –justly or unjustly- of exploiting workers, of being propagandists with dissolvent ideas, and more frequently, of being disloyal competitors to national industrialists and business impresarios (*El Universal* 1932, 3).

While the editorial championed a “well-understood” nationalism as that which seeks to further the national economy, it condemned any nationalist intentions that could “excite the dormant

⁸² In the case of Gloria, for example, she “disappeared” for a period of time, a time she was believed to have gone to New York City to spend sometime with the famed muralist, José Clemente Orozco. As for Nellie, towards the end of her life, she “mysteriously” “disappeared” in the late 1980s and was never seen again in México City.

hate of the primitive against the foreigner” (*El Universal* 1932, 3). The editorial advocated for a more “civilized” nationalism, one that irrespective of the justice or injustices perpetrated by foreign capitalists, the economic health of the “country”, as a non-all-inclusive, abstract national body, must take primacy. As implied in its title, “Nacionalismo, no Antiextranjerismo” (“Nationalism, not Anti-foreignism”), the editorial called for a “well-understood”, that is, a rational “nationalism” rather than a generalized barbaric “anti-foreigner” attitude.

In this context Mexican President, Pascual Ortiz Rubio (feb 1930-sep 1932) proclaimed that ‘we –(the veterans of the Revolution)- must take a step back and allow this vigorous youth to take a frank step forward as we yield to them the reins not only of the country but also of the Revolution. They shall then with their efforts, with their patriotism and with their intelligence teach the Mexican people the path they must take among civilized nations” (qtd. in Sanchez Azcona 1932, 3). As the presidential rhetoric sought to entrust the Mexican youth with the revolutionary evolution of the country toward its integration with the *civilized* world, some among the revolutionary *old guard* advised that “we shall procure that our social and political development unfolds rhythmically, harmonically, safely, and in a disciplined manner (Sanchez Azcona 1932, 3).⁸³

The Campbell sisters, emerging during this critical social transformation, embodied the principal values of their own historical time and their specific position within it. As they left Carroll’s “Chicas Bien” (Well-Off Girls) late in 1929, they fully realized the country’s revolutionary project in their dances –“rhythmically, harmonically . . . and in a disciplined

⁸³ Sanchez Azcona’s approach attempts here to be more “realistic” or less demagogical than president Pascual Ortiz Rubio’s. Sanchez Azcona asked to keep the experience of the *old guard* –“a capable vanguard [and] faithful rear battalion”- in the country’s revolutionary development in order to keep its “flanks well-guarded”. It seems that Sanchez Azcona was less ready to let the “reins” of the country and the revolution solely in the hands of the Mexican revolutionary youth (1932: 3).

manner”, just as Sanchez Azcona had claimed the ideals of the revolution should be carried out. As president Pascual Ortiz Rubio alluded, Nellie and Gloria took “frank step(s) forward”, backwards, to the sides, to the left, to the left, to the left. The Campbell sisters took up in their dances the “reins not only of the country but also of the revolution; they danced both México and the revolution.”⁸⁴ As if president Ortiz Rubio’s words had been a mandate directed toward Nellie and Gloria Campbell, “with their efforts, with their patriotism and with their intelligence”, they not only took it upon themselves to “teach the Mexican people” but they also learned from them.



Figure 7. Nellie and Gloria Campobello dancing *El Jarabe Tapatío*. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City.

Nellie and Gloria were active participants in the government-sponsored “Misiones Culturales” (Cultural Missions) through which the sisters traveled around the country studying and *collecting* regional and autochthonous dances. Nellie’s self-imposed “mission” was characterized by a pedagogical pragmatism. She wrote, “to love the people is to teach them the alphabet, to orient them towards things of beauty . . . it is to teach them what are their rights and how to make those rights be granted and respected” (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 702).

In fulfilling her mission, it seems that Nellie Campbell had assimilated some of the anti-foreigner

attitude that the editorial quoted above had warned against. In 1959, she remembered that when

⁸⁴ Tortajada Quiroz (2002) claims that Nellie and Gloria as well as Waldeen Falkeinstein and Anna Sokolow [the latter two participated in the development of modern dance in México in the 1940s] danced both México and Women in their dances.

she and Gloria were part of the Carroll's "Chicas Bien", the "North-Americans always humiliate[d] the Mexicans [...] so I told Gloria: 'let's dance how they dance; let's show these *gringas* and we debuted [with the company] . . . I just said that to demonstrate to the Mexicans that we could [expletive(?)] the *gringas*. We used to dance better [...]" (qtd. in Segura 1991, 10). Nellie had been born María Francisca Moya Luna before adopting Campbell as her last name. After embracing their patriotic revolutionary mission and perhaps as a symbolic "anti-foreigner" gesture, both Nellie and Gloria relinquished their last name, Campbell, and became the Campobello sisters.

It was during this period of renewed nationalist impetus that Nellie's embodied memories of her upbringing during the bloodiest armed phased of the revolution in Northern México began to reactivate her body. She witnessed firsthand and recorded in *Cartucho* (*Cartridge*), her first book, how she saw and experienced the ways of walking or running, of falling and dying; the postures of a corpse and of the executed, the odors, the sounds (Bidault de la Calle 2003, 16).⁸⁵ Nellie portrayed the chaotic world of bodies falling as she recreated an intimately sensorial experience that could be perceived in her writing. As Sophie Bidault de la Calle (2003) suggests, Nellie's subjectivity was largely produced through her corporeal experience during her formative years. It seems that this embodied experience provided Nellie with a visceral sense of immediacy in relation to the ideals, the goals, and consequences of the armed revolution. *Cartucho* was published in 1931, the same year that Nellie and Gloria Campobello, in collaboration with Angel

⁸⁵ Nellie Campobello also published *Yo (I)* (1929); *Las Manos de Mamá (My Mom's Hands)*, illustrated by José Clemente Orozco (1937); *Apuntes Sobre la Vida Militar de Francisco Villa (Notes about the Military Life of Francisco Villa)* (1940); *Tres Poemas (Three Poems)* (1957); and *Mis Libros (My Books)* (1960). She also co-authored with her sister Gloria *Ritmos Indigenas de México* (1940).

Salas, Francisco Dominguez and Carlos E. Gonzalez,⁸⁶ choreographed and presented *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* (*Symbolic Ballet 30-30*).⁸⁷

If *Cartucho* portrayed with words the falling of bodies as consequence of the armed struggle, *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* produced with movement a mass dance that embodied the ideals and hopes of the revolutionary movement while playing a pedagogical function. Fully sponsored by the government through the Secretariat of Public Education, *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* successfully accomplished the “revolutionary conquest that represents putting art to the service of the people” (*El Universal* 1932b, 1). In mid 1932, the government of México City mandated that reduced prices must be implemented so as to enable the working classes to attend cultural spectacles. A newspaper note reported that such events “are powerful auxiliaries in efforts to improve the conditions of our people for they carry an educational component . . . specially those works with a clear vision towards social evolution” (*El Universal* 1932b, 1). As the *ba-ta-clan* had left its “frivolous” legacy in México City after its prime time in the late 1920s, governments by presidents Pacual Oritz Rubio, Abelardo L. Rodríguez, and Lázaro Cárdenas during the 1930s opened new spaces for the production and consumption of nationalist cultural production. In this renewed revolutionary nationalist context, people attended en masse to see *Ballet Simbolico 30-30*, which a critic called “the most important and original choreographic work of our epoch” (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 700).

This mass dance was performed at various occasions to celebrate official festivities sponsored by the government. In celebration of the Day of the Soldier in 1935, it was danced at the National Stadium in front of President Lázaro Cárdenas. Close to 3,000 people participated

⁸⁶ Not to be confused with the music and dance critic Carlos Gonzalez Peña.

⁸⁷ “30-30” refers to a popular rifle used by Mexican revolutionaries fighting on the popular front.

as performers including women dressed in red, female sowers, laborers, peasants, soldiers, police officers, choruses, music bands, and students from various schools (Tortajada Quiroz 2002). As an inclusive, democratic gesture, the mass dance intended to integrate all sectors among the working classes in producing an embodied enactment of a revolutionary moment—a nevertheless carefully choreographed revolution. Workers in motion were for a moment no longer passive spectators but active participants in the construction of their own revolutionary redemption so important for their country’s cultural and social *evolution*.

In its various iterations, *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* retained its three main sections:

Revolución (Revolution), *Siembra (Sow)*, *Liberacion (Liberation)*. According to Armando de



Figure 8. Nellie Campobello dancing in *Ballet Simbólico 30-30*. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City.

Maria y Campos, the choreography for *Revolution*

“was not far from classical precepts” and its rhythmic movement was extraordinary (qtd. in Segura 1991,

23). This piece was profoundly expressive but simple

in its design in order for the masses to apprehend the

“symbolic uprising that burns and sweeps up

everything as soon as it is touched by the human torch

of the Revolution –Nellie Campobello” (de Maria y

Campos qtd. in Segura 1991, 23). In this first section

of the dance, Nellie represented a “Red Virgin” that

led the choreographed revolutionary uprising. With

her raised arm, she held a burning torch as she incited

the oppressed women to rise up, to distribute arms

among the people and to fight along with them (Tortajada Quiroz 2002). Evelia Beristain remembers her participation in the dance when she was a student: “I will never forget the image of Nellie Campobello dressed in red, holding that torch while running across the whole stadium as she encouraged us to join her . . . and as we took our rifles, an authentic 30-30, to join the fight” (qtd. in Segura 1991, 23).



Figure 9. Nellie Campobello encouraging women to join the revolution in *Ballet Simbólico 30-30*. Courtesy of the Fototeca del Cenidi-Danza “José Limón”, México City.

In *Sow*, the second section of *Ballet Simbólico 30-30*, women worked alongside men in sowing *their* land; the piece included stylized traditional dances and costumes which led de Maria y Campos to characterize *Sow* as the most “traditional and Mexican” (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 701). The last section of the dance, *Liberation*, represented one of the dearest ideals of the revolution: the unification of workers, peasants, and soldiers. The piece ended with performers and people in the audience chanting *The Internationale* as groups of women holding

small red flags formed circles resembling wheels of a machine, and as they moved circularly in ways that simulated the rotation of pulleys. The collectivity of female human bodies here functioned as metonym for modernity's industrialization—its vices and its unifying potential. In their role as disciplined productive automata in service of capitalist profiteers, these women are objects as part of a machine/ry that exploits them. Yet, they are simultaneously subjects united in the machine's de/construction within a peasant and working class revolutionary context. While this human machine *operated* through the motions of the dancing bodies that composed it, a contingent of female sowers formed a large square configuration. At the center of this human frame, peasants used their bodies to form a sickle while laborers arranged themselves to form a hammer. Not surprisingly, de Maria y Campos qualified the closing section of *Ballet Simbólico 30-30* as “frankly symbolic” (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 2002, 701).



Figure 10. Performers forming human pulleys, a hammer and a sickle as revolutionary symbols in *Ballet Simbólico 30-30*, unidentified source. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.

The mass ballet was indeed “frankly symbolic” on various levels. On the one hand, the gender distribution of labor in the piece was clearly demarcated. In working through the choreographic formations of the *ballet*, women played key functions while men fulfilled other specific roles. In the content, however, there was intention to have women and men work along each other as they join the revolution and as they sow their liberated land together. Furthermore, Nellie Campobello as the Red Virgin became not only the *motherly* protector but also the valiant agitator and the strategist leader of the revolutionary struggle. The figure and/or label of the “Virgin” might have represented a strategic appropriation of the figure of the “Virgin” as the motherly protector so venerated in México.⁸⁸ Certainly, this could not be a religious “virgin”. Nellie Campobello was not religious at all and in 1931, there was still residue of the Cristero War (1926-1929) in which groups of counter-revolutionary Catholics tried to repeal anti-clerical laws that the government of president Plutarco Elías Calles sought to aggressively enforce.⁸⁹ As Gloria Campobello worked along side her sister while cultivating her own dance skills in order to become México’s first prima ballerina, Nellie Campobello, as a secular Virgin -a Red Virgin, became the female revolutionary strategist in leading the Mexican people towards a collective sociopolitical, economic and cultural transformation, not through the means of prayer but through an armed insurrection, through socialism, through communism. For part of her career, it

⁸⁸ One can think here of the Virgin of Guadalupe (see footnote # 11) as the motherly figure protector of the downtrodden –from the indigenous people being massacred during the invasion of the Spaniards to the Americas in the 15th century to the ones left at the margins in the development of modern México. Some believe that in asking the indian Juan Diego not to fear her and the skeptical bishops when she appeared to him at *El Tepeyac* in 1531, the Virgin of Guadalupe exclaimed as an offer of her protection “am I not here, me thy mother?” These words are inscribed at the entrance of the Villa de Guadalupe shrine in México City, one of the most visited Catholic sites in Latin America.

⁸⁹ *Cristero* was used by counter-revolutionaries to claim that they were fighting in the name of “Cristo Rey” (“Christ the King”). *Cristero* was meant to denote something like “one who fights for Christ”.

seems that through *Ballet Simbolico 30-30*, nationalist revolutionary dance became Nellie Campobello's own revolutionary fight.

While at different levels *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* physicalized Nellie's own revolutionary volition, and México's historical revolutionary development, the dance was intended to have "universal" resonance with its contemporary world. The red colors of the costumes and flags, the massive singing of *The Internationale*, and the human formation of the sickle and the hammer all emblemized México's affinity and solidarity with an international movement for global socialist revolution. The unification of workers at the local national level was intended to resonate with the global movement for social justice through the dance's *universalist* aspirations. In doing so, *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* began to reconfigure Mexican female subjectivity. The *china poblana* that Pavlova had elicited in her refined *El Jarabe Tapatío* in 1919 and which continued to be performed by *tiples* within the "frivolous" performance context underwent a radical transformation. The docile, exotic *china poblana* was replaced by a female revolutionary leader, a "Virgin" dressed with the red colors emblematic of a global socialist movement. While *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* came with its own exoticism, it produced a legitimized way for women to proactively be and impact the world, not just as decorative additions but also as fierce leaders. The dance highlighted a new female subjectivity with which women actively participated in the construction of modern México under the reins of the country's revolutionary ideals.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ This is not to say that the Mexican revolution was "feminist" by *nature*; on the contrary, even international revolutionary movements during the 1930s were masculinized if not masculinizing within a patriarchal modus operandi. *Ballet Simbolico 30-30*, however, exemplified the spaces that women like Nellie and Gloria Campobello appropriated to make feminist interventions within the limitations of the patriarchal and phallogocentric institutions and ideological discourses –from the right and the left– that *contained* such interventions.

Professionalizing Mexican Dancing Bodies, Aspiring to Produce Modern Subjects

As in many other mass ballets by Nellie and Gloria Campobello, performers in *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* were non-professional “dancers”. They were students from elementary and secondary schools, peasants, and members of other diverse groups from among the working classes. In the midst of this mass of *improperly* trained moving bodies, a contingent of students from the Escuela de Plástica Dinámica (School of Dynamic Plastic Art) also found their way across the vast space while performing their assigned choreographic steps. As opposed to *plastic arts* that referred to mostly inanimate and static objects such as sculptures, paintings, or stage sets, the title of this school assumed the body’s solid, three dimensional *nature* as a dynamic entity, as a properly trained moving human dynamo. Hipólito Zybin, a proponent of “dynamic plastic art” in México, defined it as “the art made to personify all the manifestations in the animate and inanimate world by means of the expressively educated human machine” (qtd. in Delgado Martínez 1985, 8). As an implicit legitimizing strategy in the late 1920s and early 1930s, “dynamic plastic art” also rendered dance unquestioningly as equal in status to other plastic arts. This dance school was the first official attempt at professionalizing Mexican dancers. Within the context in which México implemented socialist education, sociopolitical, and cultural policy, the idea of a dance school became a new national unifying mechanism. A dance school could produce bodies representative of the country’s modern aspirations and nationalist ideals. It could serve as a means to socialize the masses within a revolutionary program while legitimizing the power of the state—a project that well established Mexican musicians and muralists had already been helping to consolidate during the 1920s.

In assessing México’s first attempts at professionalizing dancers, Pablo Leredo (1932), hoped that a dance school “could create a dance form with Mexican content but without

cumbersome regionalism, a dance form that speaks to all men [sic]” (33). He hoped that the goal would not be “a narrow ethnic dance but a universal ballet” (Leredo 1932, 33). In the development of these new centers for dance pedagogy, as it had been and continued to be in the construction of post-revolutionary México, notions of the modern and of the universal varied according to what interests were at stake for different factions imagining their own México. For some, modernity meant capitalist industrialization while others favored sociopolitical and cultural revolution; some claimed universal affinity with internationalized bourgeois elites while others’ universality meant solidarity with a global struggle for social justice as they conceived it through socialist reform. As these discourses were negotiated and embodied from 1930 to 1937, the school, where the Campobello sisters taught, changed names, several curricula, locations, and three directors.

On the same program where *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* was presented on November 20, 1931 as part of the 20th anniversary of the onset of the armed phase of the Mexican revolution, the dance students of Hipólito Zybin presented *Fiesta del Fuego (Feast of Fire)*. Zybin was an accomplished Russian ballet dancer touring throughout South America with a company of artists, singers and dancers. As the company disbanded upon their arrival in México City in early 1930, he decided to stay in the country and became active in the development of the foundation of the School of Dynamic Plastic Art. He designed the school’s first program and, as he presented it to Franklin O. Westrup, Director of the Department of Physical Education, Zybin opened his letter with an appealing selling point. He wrote, “it is my wish to restore the ancient Aztec dances of the Mexican Republic”; he continued by stating his desire to “discover” those Aztec dances, study “their choreographic development” and reconstruct them for “their exhibition to the Mexican public” (Zybin qtd. in Delgado Martínez 1985, 14).

Despite his interest in México's autochthonous dances, it was Nellie and Gloria Campobello who taught Mexican Dances under his technical directorship at the school. Zybin's interests focused on institutionalizing classical ballet as the means through which Mexican dancers could be professionalized. He indirectly referenced emerging modern techniques by calling them "free dance . . . with invented *ad hoc* [techniques]". He condemned these physical approaches for "putting on stage fantasies inspired by psychological or social ideas with dancers without having proper physical training" (Zybin qtd. Delgado Martínez 1985, 7-8). He thought that the "contortions" as well as the "radical and extreme" movements of such dance techniques actually distorted the body, that they caused the chest to sink, the extremities to slack, the legs to lose their ability to jump, and an exaggerated body flexibility to weaken the back and thus lessen a good sense of equilibrium (Zybin qtd. in Delgado Martínez 1985, 8). As his preferred approach, Zybin exalted the virtues of ballet technique as capable of developing physically "perfect and beautiful bodies" as well as the inherent "spiritual beauty of classical movement"



Figure 11. Hipólito Zybin teaching at the Escuela de Danza, *Revista de Revistas*, July 10, 1932: 33. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México City.

that enables a dancer to "detach from the terrestrial". He assured that classical technique was unique in cultivating physical agility and precision as well as in developing the ability to execute "almost supernatural jumps" while conveying the exertion of minimal effort. Zybin believed that

classical ballet training was the basis not only for cultivating "human will, intelligence and memory" but also for preparing a body to perform any form of movement that the imagination

and/or choreographer might suggest, even when these movements did not belong to the realm of the classical school (Zybin qtd. in Delgado Martínez 1985, 8). Raquel Gutiérrez, one of Zybin's students remembered her days studying with the Russian teacher, "to be a good dancer, you have to be trained in the classical ballet technique because if you have a classical base, you can do everything. We danced oriental, tap, jazz, classical, Spanish, we could do anything" (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 83).

In his initial proposed curriculum, Zybin asked that students would be admitted at age nine and not older than 12 years old. The program would last eight years and it would include 80 courses in disciplines –such as theater, physical conditioning, other arts, humanities and classes proper of elementary and secondary school- that aimed at providing students with an "integral" education. Josefina Lavalle remembers the process of admission under Zybin's supervision. The exam, she said, consisted of "a careful study of the applicants' muscular constitution. The utmost importance was given to the feet. Having a good arch and instep seemed to be the essential key to the exam. The natural elevation of the leg was less important" (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 110). Gloria Albet reminisced that during the admission examination, Zybin had her and other applicants extend their arms to the sides and walk around the studio before he asked them to first walk on pointe and then on their heels. Albet recounts that jumps were very important insofar as they showed the applicant's ability to point her feet down while in the air - "that", she said, "denoted that we had potential to become ballerinas" (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 112). From the first to the fifth year, students studied classical technique and expressive practice as the fundamental aspect of their training, complemented with other subjects such as lectures and composition. In the sixth year, students learned dances from various countries,

scenography and “practical pedagogy”. The last two years were devoted to prepare students on choreographic repertory for theatrical presentations.⁹¹

There was a significant shift in Zybin’s second curriculum, one that reflected México’s prevalent ideological interests in articulating a modern Mexican ballet. The *foundational* classical ballet technique was then taught throughout the eight years of study, having students learned “modern tendencies within ballet” in the final two years. The class of Mexican dances was then introduced in the curriculum alongside classical technique for the first four years of study (Ramos Villalobos 2009). Dancers from other countries continued to be included in the program as were preparation classes for theatrical presentations of repertory. In this revised curriculum, it was unquestionably established that ballet was the only means for the professionalization of dancers. On this basis, Zybin’s two courses of study illustrated how a *properly* trained professional dancer in the early 1930s was then expected to perform various forms of dance from around the world not merely to be a versatile dancer. Having this ability to literally embody the world through various dance forms affirmed México’s capacity to be one and the same as other civilized nations. At the same time, this performance of dance cosmopolitanism consolidated the specificity of classical ballet –its racial and classist origins- as the defining factor in constructing the realm of the “universal”. A subsequent director of the school, Carlos Mérida, however, proposed a course of study in 1932 in which he stressed the importance of teaching “Mexican rhythms with the goal of preparing and developing a modern Mexican choreographic practice” (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 101). The eventual inclusion of Mexican dances in dance schools’ curricula as a critical component in dance training exposed the enabling paradox of articulating the modern while relying on the “ancient” and the

⁹¹ See details of this and subsequent curricula in Ramos Villalobos, 2009.

“traditional” -an indigenizing maneuvering in the construction of national identity undertaken by many “third-world” countries.

Several months after its inauguration, The School of Plastic Art was disbanded. Whatever the reasons for ending this first serious attempt at producing professional Mexican dancing bodies and modern subjects might have been, they were certainly underscored by ideological tensions. Just as Zybin criticized “free dance” techniques for not properly training the dancing body and for staging “psychological and social” fantasies, he also distrusted the politicization of dance. In rationalizing the various functions that dance had in its contemporary world for street folk, musicians, artists, intellectual and politicians, Zybin assured that the latter wanted “to use art as a powerful propagandistic mechanism for their social ideas, thus demanding the forms of art that more forcefully aroused the benevolent, or ill, instincts of the multitudes” (Zybin qtd. in Delgado Martínez 1985, 7). He might have been encouraged, if not forced, to modify his initial curricular proposal, which excluded Mexican dances even when he originally had sold his idea as wanting to recuperate Aztec dances. While Zybin’s initial proposal reflected his own performing and pedagogical experiences in Russia and Europe, his plan not only reflected but also seemed to counter the Mexican government’s nationalist project of *mestizo* modernity.

Under the invitation of José Gorostiza in representation of the Fine Arts Council, Carlos Mérida became the director of the new Escuela de Danza (Dance School) in April 16, 1932. His interest in indigenism and his experience with the ethnographic study of folklore made him the ideal candidate (Mendoza, 1990). Nellie Campobello became his assistant. Her sister Gloria continued teaching Mexican dances and rhythms, and Zybin was the teacher of “dance technique” (read as classical ballet technique). In the three years that Mérida was in charge of the Dance School, he reduced the plan of study to three years. While ballet continued to be the

foundational training technique along with Mexican dances and rhythms, Mérida instituted the Dalcroze method as a significant aspect of training. Jaques Dalcroze's training method sought to produce a body capable of cultivating an intimate relationship between corporeal and sonorous dynamism. However, the method was not seen by many as appropriate for professional dance training even when it was used for the cultivation of a harmonious body. Its addition to the school's curriculum emphasized an interest in preparing educators who could teach México's children in elementary and secondary schools. If not every Mexican was to be a professional dancer, he/she could at least develop, through the Dalcroze system, a strong, vigorous, healthy and harmonious body, a tendency so much in vogue at the time (Ramos Villalobos 2009). In addition to strengthening a course of study to train not only dancers but also dance teachers and physical educator, Mérida instituted a more rigorous research component aiming at developing choreographies from various states throughout the country.

In establishing the status of dance as an increasingly legitimate art form, Mérida's program of study stipulated in *The Purposes of the School of Dance* that it would provide Mexican youth with the education necessary to satisfy the "need for spiritual expression through dance", just as the School of Music and the School of Painting had been doing (*Propósitos de la Escuela* 1932, 1). There were also clear boundaries as to the seriousness with which these new efforts for professionalizing dancers should be taken. The document outlining the school's goals stated that:

there is intention to make as clear as possible that the purpose of the School is not, for any reason, to be a center for leisure and recreation where students can concern themselves with their fancies within an environment of bourgeois comfort, or where they can waste their time acquiring, while learning certain dances, an ornament—that is, something unnecessary- just to add to their personal belongings in order to procure prestige for their families and for shinning and entertaining their guests during anodyne social gatherings (*Propósitos de la Escuela* 1932, 2).

It was clear that in theory, the School of Dance had no intentions of embracing any bourgeois pretensions. Instead, this educational institution sought to develop a serious embodied art form with which the school could accomplish its most important goal: “the creation of a Mexican ballet” that could respond to the “difficult problem” posed by the challenge of setting the bases for a “modern Mexican choreographic” practice (*Propósitos de la Escuela* 1932, 2).

Mérida was a painter from Guatemala who at one point claimed to be a *mestizo*. While he admitted being “a mixture like myself, the product of maya-quiché and Spaniard”, he also lamented that “the spectacle offered by the brilliant sumptuary of our aborigines, of their dances . . . of the marvelous landscapes that can be contemplated in Guatemala, of the millenary artistic expressions that our grandparents bequeathed to us . . . all make me feel a profound conflict for I was not loyal to my own tradition, my race, for not listening to the remote internal voices that tenaciously called me” (Mérida qtd. in Mendoza 1990, 31). He eventually immersed himself in the study of indigenous people in Guatemala and later in México where he became active in the nationalist muralist movement working alongside Diego Rivera for six years.

Throughout his career, however, Mérida’s sense of aesthetics shifted considerably. He abandoned folkloric motifs in his painting and instead embraced surrealism, symbolism and geometrism to consequently declare his rejection of the Mexican muralist movement. His increased preference for abstraction informed his aesthetic interest as he expressed his views for the articulation of a form of modern art based on national themes. He said, “we are no longer in that epoch [the past], neither the spirit of the Indians nor the ways of working are the same. In order to produce nationalist art, it is crucial that we fuse the essential aspects of our autochthonous art with our current times and ways of feeling –not in its external form [...] but instead, in its essential state of being” (qtd. in Mendoza 1990, 31). These propositions led some

to consider Mérida as an “artepurista” (an art purist)⁹² and less inclined to follow the project of the more *extremist* elements amongst the revolutionary government decision makers (Tortajada Quiroz 1995). With the shifting of government officials in 1935, Mérida was “forced” to leave the direction of the School of Dance, a situation that he qualified as “the interruption of that fascinating and necessary study that a handful of us, hallucinating ones, initiated in favor of Mexican dance” (qtd. in Mendoza 1990, 33). Indeed, Mérida’s access to traveling throughout Europe and the U.S. to witness the developments in dance making there enabled him to continue his fervent advocacy for the articulation of a modernized form of Mexican dance as well as for the professionalization for Mexican dancers, a role I will discuss further in chapter four.

Upon Mérida’s removal from the leadership of the school, Francisco Domínguez became interim director, a post he assumed from 1935 to 1937. Domínguez was an accomplished musician who joined the official efforts in constructing a nationalist culture that embraced both its native roots as well as a universalist discourse that only *advanced* cultures could develop. He participated in the Cultural Missions and conducted extensive research among some of México’s ethnic groups. As a musician he participated in numerous theater and dance performances, including Nellie and Gloria Campobello’s *Ballet Simbolico 30-30*. In his short tenure as a director of the School of Dance, Domínguez extended the program of study from three to five years. While he followed Mérida’s emphasis on Mexican dances based on the rigors of classical ballet technique, he strengthened the musical component in the curriculum: musical theory in general and the study of various Mexican rhythms in particular (Ramos Villalobos 2009).

⁹² “Artepurista” can also be read as someone concerned more with formalist aspects of art making than any other “function” that art might have: social, political, expressive, decorative, etc.

Domínguez became affiliated with the National Conservatory of Music and left the School of Dance's directorship, although he continued to teach there until 1939.

“Contrary to what would have been expected”, after Domínguez's departure, ballet gradually began to gain primacy not only as part of the school's approach to training as it had been the case since 1931 but also in its “artistic production” (Ramos Villalobos 2009, 129). This new tendency would be led by the entering director of the School of Dance, Nellie Campobello, who directed the course of this school from 1937 to 1984. Ramos Villalobos (2009) lists a combination of factors that might have produced this new tendency towards classical ballet. In addition to the reverence with which the Ballet Russes had been regarded in México as a proven testament to the efficacy of ballet in reconfiguring folklore in contemporary ways, Ramos Villalobos (2009) suggests that Gloria Campobello's passion for ballet in general and for becoming a ballerina in particular might have played a significant role in the school's new direction under her sister Nellie. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, this new tendency could have been a reactionary response to the “rivalry” generated by the different training methods offered by foreign teachers, most notably Nelsy Dambé from France and Waldeen Falkeinstein and Anna Sokolow from the U.S. (Ramos Villalobos 2009, 129).

Such rivalry was certainly not just generated by the arrival of foreign approaches to dance training. From the beginning, Nellie Campobello was a controversial figure who often clashed with government officials, teachers in her school, and students as well as their parents (see examples of these interactions in Ramos Villalobos 2009). However, under her directorship, the School of Dance gained more recognition. Professional degrees were conferred for the first time in the school's history and the educational institution was granted the status of “National”. What had started as The School of Dynamic Plastic Art in a small space in the Secretariat of Public

Education in 1930 became The National School of Dance in 1939. The school's curriculum in 1939 was extended from five to six years of study. Spanish dances were revalued and were taught alongside Mexican dances. These two dance forms, however were implicitly categorized as secondary in importance relative to classical ballet's primacy. In addition to the teaching of ballet technique during the six years of study, two more classes were added for the first time in the history of the school. One class was called "classical ballets" and the second one "*divertissements*, the study and practice of old, traditional, and modern ballets" (Ramos Villalobos 2009, 152). These "balleticizing" efforts by the National School of Dance culminated in 1941 with the initial formation of the El Ballet de la Ciudad de México (The Ballet of México City) which was fully sponsored by the government of President Manuel Ávila Camacho who, unlike his predecessor, Lázaro Cárdenas, sought the unification of the country through a "more conciliatory" nationalism (Ramos Villalobos 2009, 144).⁹³

Following the pedagogical efforts led in part by Zybin, Mérida, Domínguez and Nellie Campobello, to be a professional dancer in México in the late 1930s was to be trained in the most sophisticated ballet techniques available in the country by various Mexican and foreign teachers. Having this *foundational* physical training would enable a dancer to perform with equal proficiency dances from ballet, Mexican and an *internationalized* repertory thereby rendering a dancer as a modern cosmopolitan subject. In yet one more apparent contradiction within the government's "revolutionary" efforts, this new subjecthood was a distinguished one among

⁹³ Under president Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) México's project of modernization moved away from his predecessor's, Lázaro Cárdenas, more socialist revolutionary approach to governance. The industrialization of the country became Ávila Camacho's main goal. The advent of WWII shaped the new ways in which his government related to other capitalist nations as México exported raw materials for the construction of war-related material necessities. In return the country received machinery, capitals and credits that enabled the reactivation of the economic sector and the improvement of the country's infrastructure (Ramos Villalobos 2009).

México's body politic. This was made evident by a reprimand written in May 17, 1938 and sent to Nellie Campobello by Celestino Gorostiza, director of the Fine Arts Department on which the National School of Dance was dependent. Gorostiza issued his "severe estrangement" to Nellie Campobello as director of the National School of Dance for having allowed the school students to participate in a "commercial show" at the Alameda theater (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 252).⁹⁴ In his missive, Gorostiza claimed that the very existence of the Fine Arts Department "would not be justified if it was not for its intention of introducing to national artistic activities a very different quality than the one that governs commercial spectacles" (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 252). The representative of the bastion of Fine Arts in México implicitly reified class divisions by distinguishing a presumed legitimacy in institutional Mexican cultural production qualified as "real" legitimate art.

Gorostiza continued by sanctioning that under no circumstances would the Fine Arts Department allow the school's participation in "spectacles perfectly known to belong to an inferior category" nor to alternate with "artist of the most infamous category" (qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 252). As a member of the complex network of authority-experts in cultural matters, in this case the production of dance, Gorostiza reproduced an embodied ideological aesthetics as the basis for his, and others', exclusionary epistemology of refined taste. On this basis, he implicitly reified an artistic subjectivity that imagines and portrays the artist as a metahuman being with access to a spiritual realm unavailable to the ordinary mortal, including performers of "the most infamous category" like Beltri and other *tiples*. Gorostiza worried that this *incompatible* combination of *unequal* cultural productions, commercial and legitimate art,

⁹⁴ See Ramos Villalobos (2009, 253) for Nellie Campobello's energetic rebuttal written to Gorostiza regarding his "severe estrangement" issued to her as the director of the National School of Dance.

could contribute in “disorienting” the public’s capacity for artistic appreciation. He therefore demanded that the National School of Dance should not participate in any kind of public presentations without the Fine Arts Department’s approval and supervision of the “scenography, costumes, music etc...” (Gorostiza qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 252). In his reprimand to Nellie Campobello, Gorostiza established the institutional, watchful regulatory eye which must monitor any cultural engagements that threaten to distort the pedagogical, if not the civilizing, mission of art under the production and management of the state. He rationalized that engaging directly or indirectly with “commercial” and other “inferior” cultural production would undoubtedly be detrimental for “the school itself, for the students who train there, and for the Fine Arts Department” (Gorostiza qtd. in Ramos Villalobos 2009, 252). In other words, the prestige of the nation was at stake through the legitimization of different type of bodies –the school as a legitimate educational body, the student as legitimate artistic dancing body, and the Fine Arts department as a legitimate regulatory body of the state.

Concluding Disclaimer

In 1919, Pavlova set in motion the desire to professionalize Mexican dancers and to develop a dance form that could reflect the country’s nationalist character and universal aspirations. As various developments towards this goal took place, her own approach to synthesize the local and the universal as a *china poblana* dancing her balleticized version of *El Jarabe Tapatío* underwent various transformations. *Triples* like Eva Beltri were inspired to continue dancing their own versions of Mexican traditional dances on pointe at venues considered by some as of very low if any social prestige. The nationalist impetus that Pavlova’s *El Jarabe Tapatío* had catalyzed propelled governmental efforts to institute the folk dance as a

national emblem taught to children at schools and presented to local and foreign audiences by hundreds of couples dancing it together at official celebrations. Pavlova's friend and supporter in México City, Lettie Carroll, adopted ballet as a means to refine some of the "frivolous" dance genres that gained popularity during the mid 1920s as she taught the daughters of the most prestigious Mexican and foreign families living in the city. The Campobello sisters continued embracing ballet as foundational for the training of dancers as they pursued a revolutionary nationalist dance production with universal appeal. With the Campobello sisters, Pavlova's docile *china poblana* –as representative of México's exoticism- was transformed into a radically politicized female revolutionary leader. Although Pavlova did not teach in México, her legacy inspired distinctive approaches in the development of a dance form that could embody México's national *essence* while expressing the country's universal aspirations as a means to establish its affinity with other modern nations around the world.

Zybin, Mérida, Domínguez, and Nellie Campobello were all passionate about the professional development of Mexican dance. Certainly, they were all "visionaries" in their own ways and contributed to that common goal. However, in an attempt to sketch out the main highlights in the development of the first institutional efforts for the professionalization of dancers in México, I have omitted the names of multiple teachers, students and government officials whose work contributed to all that I have summarized under the names of these four school directors. However, for the purposes of my discussion in this chapter, all the named and unnamed participants are here equally regarded as products of their own historical times, the national and international sociopolitical forces that enabled them to become agents of change. I hope that I have demonstrated how México's revolutionary project of nation formation also shifted in relationship to internal and external influences during the 1930s. In the specific case of

dance, the influx of foreign dancing bodies and teachers into these shifting sociopolitical contexts proved to be, directly and indirectly, a critical catalyst in furthering the institutional production of dancing bodies that could best embody the country's modern aspirations, dancing bodies that could produce modern subjects capable of bringing along the masses into a national process of socialization.

The different dance pedagogies employed during the 1920s by private teachers, including Carroll, giving lessons in their homes or small studios as well as the government sponsored efforts in the 1930s by the School of Dynamic Plastic Art, the School of Dance, and the National School of Dance, prepared the generations of Mexican dancers that would change, yet one more time, the direction of concert dance in México City. As these private and institutional efforts accomplished in their respective historical contexts, the development of modern dance in the country during the 1940s provided the bases for embodying a new way of knowing how to be Mexican. These new modern techniques and aesthetic concerns continued to be related in different ways to the ballet tradition that Pavlova had revitalized in the country in 1919 and which many private teachers as well as directors and teachers working at institutionalized dance schools had contributed in establishing. During the 1940s, the direct and indirect relationships between these dance techniques would produce through the dancing body a new way of knowing how to claim affinity with the civilized, modern world, while *proudly* remaining Mexican.

CHAPTER FOUR

Histories of Embodied Ideological Aesthetics in the Production of Mexican Dance as

Legitimate Modern Art

Over the first half of the twentieth century, national and international politics continually redirected the focus of the Mexican government's nationalist revolutionary project of modernization. Popular and "cultured" factions within the revolutionary movement as well as the Mexican and foreign capitalist bourgeoisie living in the country constantly renegotiated their own interests, beginning in 1910 when the armed insurrection first broke up, and again following WWI's reconfiguration of the world order and the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919. The crash of the stock market in the U.S. in 1929 affected countries all over the world and prompted a global economic depression that lasted for most of the 1930s at the end of which WWII (1939-1945) unfolded and the threat of fascism spread. These shifting global conditions led Mexican governments to readapt the ways in which the country should stand in relationship to the rest of the world. As a continuing theme in the country's history of revolutionary aspirations, the institutionalization of the means of cultural productions became crucial in efforts to unify the country, to forge a sense of national identity while aspiring to be relevant as a nascent modern nation-state worthy of joining the international stage of the "first world".

In 1919, Anna Pavlova's elicited rendition of *El Jarabe Tapatío* provided the country with an opportunity to search for a Mexican dance form characterized by combining the nationalist *essence* of the country while implementing the most *refined* dance technique available at the time –ballet. Having as a backdrop the *modernized* ballets choreographed by the Ballet Russes at the turn of the 20th century, Pavlova's internationalized status as an artistic genius rendered ballet as an embodied technology through which to modernize the locally "traditional".

Through this means, the local simultaneously could project the universal thereby enabling México to aspire to join the new world order of civilized nations as a result of WWI. During the 1920s, those advocating for a refined Mexican dance form with universal aspirations competed against an increased interest in so called “frivolous” genres. While performers such as *tiples* danced traditional Mexican dances on pointe at venues considered to be of ill repute, foreign teachers claimed more legitimacy in their teaching and choreographing endeavors. The global economic precariousness of the 1930s spurred widespread critique of capitalism, and many nations explored economic and sociocultural alternatives. México embraced a socialist approach to its public educational system and cultural production. In this context, the institutionalization of dance education sought to legitimize dance as a serious art form that could contribute -as music, literature, and muralism had since the early 1920s- in the formation of México as a post-revolutionary modern nation. This emerging *modernized* dance form -distinctively Mexican but with universal appeal- could enable México to literally embody its post-revolutionary sense of identity while aspiring to join the economic, political, and cultural international stage.

In this chapter I will discuss some significant ideological shifts that prompted professional dancers and their nascent modernized dance forms to take a radically different direction in 1939 and 1940. I will examine how artistic discourses were related to México’s revolutionary project as constituted by socialist economic, political, and cultural policies under President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). With the arrival of two modern dance choreographers from the U.S., Anna Sokolow and Waldeen Falkeinstein, in 1939, new embodied ideological aesthetics revealed some of the tensions inherent in processes of an ideologically revolutionary nation that aspired to join the *modern* world. While Falkeinstein could unapologetically embrace more overt representations of Mexicaness, Sokolow favored a more abstracted approach in

articulating her brand of universalist modernism. My analysis of these two artists' distinctive artistic projects and political assumptions will show how they produced different visions of what it meant to be Mexican in 1940. Before I engage in this analysis, however, I will discuss the role of Carlos Mérida in leading the course of Mexican dance into this new phase. I will then contextualize Sokolow's and Falkeinstein's arrival in México and their distinctive aesthetic projects by examining the relationship between the development of dance in México City and in New York City during the 1930s. As part of this analysis, I will emphasize the role of dance technique as a technology to train bodies, to produce specific subjects, and to articulate embodied ideological aesthetics. I will attempt to show how dance produced different aesthetic ideologies that sustained epistemologies of refined taste as part of processes in the articulation of a Mexican dance form as "real", legitimate Modern art.

In 1930 the School of Dynamic Plastic Art implemented Hipólito Zybin's aesthetic principles as the first institutionalized efforts in professionalizing Mexican dancers. In his first plan of studies the Russian dancer and teacher established that for the serious study of dance, as a dynamic plastic art, students must first be trained in "technique and virtuosity from the Russian classical school as the foundation for all physical training" (Zybin in Delgado Martínez 1985: 10). In 1932, Carlos Mérida assumed the directorship of the School of Dance, which replaced the School of Dynamic Plastic Art. In his three-year tenure as the dance school director, Mérida pursued the challenge of developing a dance form that could respond to "México's current needs", a dance form that could reflect the profound transformation of the country's "peculiar culture . . . Mexican but with universal character" (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 128). Although, Mérida's concerns differed from Zybin's in many respects, he continued embracing ballet as the foundational technique for the physical training of professional dancers.

Mérida was a passionate advocate for the legitimization of dance as an art form. In his 1932 version of “La Danza y el Teatro” (“Dance and Theater”), he claimed that dance was not merely “the sum of certain aspects of the other arts” but that dance had “its own particular essence, absolute autonomy, and it can exist on its own account” (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 129). He also argued that dance had an inherent rhetorical aspect and therefore a dance always offered a “thesis”. As it was the case with many internationalized, cosmopolitan artists serving as cultural architects in México’s nationalist project of modernization, Mérida sought to *elevate* (eliticize by “refining”) Mexican folk and popular culture. Within a context characterized by a global impetus for modernity, accompanied by an implicit international desire for exotic others, Mérida assumed that through a professional school, folk and popular arts could be “renovated”. He assured that dance in particular could be saved from remaining “abandoned, reduced to its impoverished popular forms” and instead be “taken to the heights of its own signification and possibilities . . . it is no longer possible”, he said, “to have dance just as a mere superficial and non-transcendental expression of popular art” (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 130-131). Mérida implied here that Mexican expressive cultures -exotic in their class and/or ethnic origins- must be refined in order to be worthy representatives of the nation and viable commodities for consumption by both *cultured* Mexicans in the country and potential international audiences abroad.

Mérida’s aestheticism echoed Pavlova’s legacy of combining the folk with ballet as high art as well as Zybin’s proposition of ballet as a foundational physical training for performing any form of dance, including indigenous Mexican dances. Mérida believed that Mexican dance could only achieve its full potential in direct relation to its technical perfection. In his “La Danza y el Teatro” (1932), Mérida mentioned the virtues of Isadora Duncan’s “natural dance” and Mary

Wigman's "new dance techniques". He suggested that, "ideally", the work of these two artists could benefit training regimentations that would complement the articulation of "our own expression" (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 135, 138). However, he concluded, "we have to situate ourselves within a rigorous logic, we shall say that in relationship to artificial dance [classical ballet] in its purely technical aspect, that is, its capacity for muscular development, up to date, there is nothing in existence that can substitute it and offer anything better (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 136).

Mérida's rationale for justifying both the employment of classical ballet technique as foundational and the existence of a professional school of dance rested in Moscow's National School of Dance. He noted, however, that while such a school relied on classical ballet technique for the training of its dancers, Russia's choreographic projects were quite modern. He wrote, "Russian choreographers have employed intelligently the technical discoveries of classical ballet. They have adapted this technique to represent modern themes springing from new social conditions, from new aspects of civilization, from new political ideas"⁹⁵ (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 133). For Mérida, as for the Russians, it was not classical ballet as a dance genre but the virtues of its technique that could be adapted as the means of expression of the contemporary world. He also exalted the innovative use of Russian folklore, however, as he noted, "not for nationalist purposes, but instead as elements for plastic [aesthetic, formal] applications" (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 140). This was the aspect of Russian modernized ballet that Mérida appreciated and wanted to adopt: the combination of classical ballet technique and folklore in ways that would enable dance to transcend mere nationalism and instead reflect

⁹⁵ In his essay, Mérida refers to classical ballet [as "artificial dance"] as a dance form that had been preceded by the characteristic "natural dance" of ancient Greece.

the country's inner essence within the context of its contemporary situation. With that inspiration, he noted that elements from México's folklore, popular and *mestizo* culture could provide the basic motifs that once "developed with a good technique, [they] could express significant ideas, to constitute a worthy message in a just, honest and precise manner" (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 141).

While Mérida was imbued "with the modernist, revolutionary, and nationalistic tendencies permeating Mexican art" (Dallal 1986, 84), his revolutionary nationalism was of a specific sort. In line with his perception of Russian contemporary ballets, Mérida warned that folklore and "aboriginal dances" should not be employed merely for nationalist purposes in México. According to him, these cultural *raw* materials should be used for works of ideological character in the form of "plastic rhythms". In other words, for Mérida, ideology could materialize in the "rhythmic" dancing body, properly trained in classical ballet technique. This embodied ideological aesthetic must never, Mérida warned, "tend towards stimulating a nationalist spirit nor seek to offer a gift for the tourist" (Mérida 1932 in Mendoza 1990, 142). He implies here an enduring debate in the production of nationalist, revolutionary artistic expressions. Neither nationalism nor the revolution need be represented in an overt, much less, in a picturesque manner. Modern means of representation must be capable of capturing the *soul*, the *essence* of a nation and its people—even if constituted as ideology embodied in dancing bodies. Mérida succinctly synthesized this dialectic in his "La Danza y el Teatro" (1932). He wrote, "ideological content must be served by the perfection of technique, in the same manner that all acquired technical perfection must be employed to serve ideology, the general or particular content of dance" (Mérida in Mendoza, 1990, 130). Here, ideology and technical perfection cannot be detached from one another. In developing a modern Mexican dance form, Mérida

claimed that this embodied ideological aesthetics must coexist with superb music and scenography. According to Mérida in 1932, it was only within this aesthetic context that a dancing body, trained with perfect ballet technique, could help produce an ideological representation able to transcend its national context and thereby aspire to have universal appeal.

Engaging with México's nationalist project, however in a manner that Mérida would not approve artistically, *Barricada* was a mass dance choreographed by the sisters Nellie and Gloria Campobello, who had become dance makers and teachers fervently working in line with the government's mandates. Premiering in 1935, the dance was characterized by Armando de Maria y Campos as a "generous attempt at creating an exponent of Mexican revolutionary plastic theater . . ." (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 102). In a more generous assessment of the piece, Gerónimo Baqueiro Fóster argued that:

Barricada cannot be considered as a ballet of the ordinary type . . . It breaks with all established tradition. The ignorants believe that it has no precedents or that it is something absurd, incoherent because they have not realized what the work signifies. I don't see it that way, if Stravinsky's *Noces* did not exist, it is possible that [*Barricada*] could have been the first piece of its kind" (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 104).

Baqueiro Fóster's impassionate categorization of *Barricada* as having the quality of Stravinsky's works was also a response to the critics of the dance. In contemplating what he perceived as a real possibility of creating a "genuinely national dance . . . with international value", Barros Sierra asseverated that such accomplishment could not be possible until México could produce "specialized bodies" (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 103). He noted that *Barricada*'s choreography was characterized by the absence of "true dances" due to the "lack of technique in the actors" (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 103).

In a short essay titled "El Ballet Barricada y la Técnica Teatral" ("The Ballet Barricada and Theatrical Technique"), Carlos Mérida offered to "explore some ideas" as an attempt to

contribute to efforts to develop “a modern choreographic practice with idiosyncratic character” (1935 in Mendoza 1990, 214). He concluded his thoughts by acknowledging the “tremendous effort” exerted by the Campobello sisters, maestro Kostakowski, composer of the music, and José Chávez Morado in charge of scenography. However, he evaluated the piece as not a success, but rather, a learning experience. Mérida thought that *Barricada* lacked “rhythm”, but not musical rhythm. The rhythm he expected was the one achieved by the harmonic integration of all the parts included in the production –dance, music, libretto, plastic art expressions. As if he had an ability to see inside audiences’ minds, Mérida claimed that the “divorce” among the parts of *Barricada* was perceptible to the eye of the spectator (perhaps except for the critics who lauded the piece?). Without such “intimate connection”, he wrote, it is not possible to achieve the “precise conditions characteristic of all “perfect theater” (Mérida 1935 in Mendoza 1990, 214). He also faulted the production for not having avoided the presence of a group of “actors” of the “absolute folkloric type –a group of peasants wearing serapes”. As an authority-expert in modern cultural production, Mérida seemed to distrust any elements he perceived as bordering on picturesque representations, which would compromise the quality of legitimate modern art. Also, in keeping with Doris Humphrey who later claimed that “all dances are too long”, Mérida thought, indeed, that “a ballet spectacle cannot last –while still risking to fatigue the viewer– more than thirty minutes” (1935 in Mendoza 1990, 216). He suggested that *Barricada* was unnecessarily long and noted specific areas in the production that could benefit from major editing.

Mérida’s main concern, however, was, as Barro Sierra also noted, the lack of rigorous dance technique. He wrote, “it was notorious the lack of technical preparation . . . it is impossible to attain perfect results without dancing bodies properly trained as to meet the needs of the ballet

. . . and to respond adequately to the exigencies of the directors” (Mérida 1935 in Mendoza 1990, 214). In sum, *Barricada* failed to realize Mérida’s formula for a “perfect” cultural production - the synthesis of ideology and perfect classical ballet technique- a quest for perfection that he had pursued, as he noted in his essay, when he was director of the School of Dance from 1932 to 1935. In essence, the contrasting views offered by de Maria y Campos, Baqueiro Fóster, Barro Sierra and Mérida in relation to *Barricada* in 1935, exemplified the debates of what criteria should constitute Mexican dance as a legitimate art form -Mexican in character but with appeal to international audiences. This was the ongoing debate that Pavlova had helped set in motion back in 1919 when she danced her balleticized rendition of *El Jarabe Tapatio* on pointe. This is the same debate that continued setting bodies in motion during the advent of modern dance in the country in 1940, and which I will continue discussing in various contexts throughout this chapter.

As Mérida articulated it, it was specifically the Russian ballet technique that had proven its ability to serve as the means for representing the contemporary world, even when using folklore as a source. This synthesis enabled not only inclusion of ideological content in artistic production but also the ideological affinity that México and Russia shared through their own histories of revolutionary struggle. Although Mérida advocated for the integration of ideological content and “perfect” technique, his emphasis on the latter seemed to not be in alignment with the fervent revolutionary nationalism embraced by other government officials, even if dance technique was from revolutionary Russia. He was charged by many as being an *artepurista* (art-purist: “overly” concerned with aesthetic formalism) and was eventually removed from his post at the Department of Fine Arts’ School of Dance for refusing to follow the government’s radical nationalist project (Tortajada Quiroz 1995). It might have been an exaggeration to call Mérida an

artepurista, but the derogatory use of this label reflected the sensitive debates over what constituted the right balance between revolutionary nationalistic ideology and ballet dance technique in México during the 1930s. Mérida's detractors seemed to believe that the function of this emerging Mexican embodied ideological aesthetics must be put to the service of advancing the government's revolutionary nationalist ideology. These interests were pursued, with varying results, by two subsequent directors of the School of Dance, Francisco Domínguez (1935-1937) and Nellie Campobello (1937-1983).

Up until 1937, Mérida's views on theater in general and dance in particular were based on his own extensive research in indigenous dances from his native Guatemala and then México. He had traveled to Europe where he not only "observed the most important theater and dance innovations of the time" (Dallal 1986, 84) but also personally interacted with some of the main characters promulgating the modernist vanguard in the old continent (Ramos Villalobos 2009). In 1937, however, Mérida's views regarding the professionalization of dance training and the formation of a modern form of Mexican dance shifted radically. Amidst much resistance, his radical propositions prevailed and as a result, the direction of concert dance in México took a very different direction. That year, Mérida readapted his essay "Dance and Theater" originally written in 1932. He shared this new version as the only presentation addressing the topic of dance as part of the congress of the *Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (LEAR)* (League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists).⁹⁶

⁹⁶ LEAR was instituted by a group of artists and intellectuals in 1933 in order to encourage the production of politically revolutionary art. LEAR was considered the Mexican branch of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers established in 1930 by the communist organization Communist International in the Soviet Union.

In this new version, Mérida seemed to adopt some of Mary Wigman's views, which he had dismissed in 1932 as good but insufficient in comparison to ballet technique as foundational for the training of Mexican professional dancers. In his 1932 "Dance and Theater" he quoted Wigman as saying that "the ballet dancer was no longer representative of an interior expression: [he/she] has fallen into mere virtuosity . . . only concerned with developing idealized agility and lightness" (in Mendoza 1990, 138). In Mérida's 1932 quote, Wigman said that "times change. The War modified aspects of daily living. The revolution tends to destroy the ideal of beauty. The old and endeared tradition begins to lag behind. We return to the human body and its rhythmic expression" (in Mendoza 1990, 138). In 1937, Mérida had turned his gaze towards the United States and cultivated an interest not in Wigman's German expressionist dance but in its reformulations by the emerging modern dance in New York City during the 1930s.

In his presentation in 1937 entitled "Ponencia Sobre Problemas de la Danza Mexicana Moderna" ("Reflections on the Problems of Modern Mexican Dance"), Mérida provided the rationale for his proposed specific course of action. He acknowledged that "the rhetoric of classical ballet –which anachronistically continues to be implemented in more than one dance school, including ours at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts), establishes rigorous laws in developing part of the human body in order to achieve specific attitudes that *were* without doubt representative image of its time" [my emphasis in italics] (Mérida 1937 in Mendoza 1990, 146). In a radical reconsideration of his views, Mérida concluded that ballet technique represented a "system contradictory to the laws proper to the human body instead of finding laws for the natural development of it" (1937 in Mendoza 1990, 146). For Mérida in 1937, what ballet technique could offer, its "rhetoric", was anachronistic and apparently it distressed him that it was still taught at the School of Dance then under the directorship of Nellie

Campobello. He admonished that this dance training “contradictory” to the “natural” laws of the human body needed be replaced by a better alternative.

As if adopting Wigman’s words, Mérida continued by asserting, “but time does not stop . . . the new expression needed new laws . . . in order to deepen its character, dramatizing its form, socializing its content” (1937 in Mendoza 1990, 146). He affirmed that it was in the United States where this new dance form was under “gestation,” and he effusively expressed his admiration for the “extraordinary Martha Graham” who he considered “with no doubt the highest exponent of contemporary choreography” (Mérida 1937 in Mendoza 1990, 147). He lauded the works of those who had followed Graham’s steps: “Anna Sokolow, Doris Humphrey, Lilian Shapero[sic], Charles Weidmann[sic], Tamiris, Lilian Holm [sic]”. He also mentioned what he thought were “profound, penetrating” dances “filled with a sense of social responsibility . . . : *Suite of Soviet songs, Two dances of unrest, Speaker, Two songs about Lenin, Street scenes, Inquisition, Histrionic, Celebration, Gesture, etc.*” (Mérida 1937 in Mendoza, 1990, 147).

In listing these dance titles, Mérida seemed to be attempting to persuade the skeptical members of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists. Although this Marxist-leaning group of cultural producers might have identified with the leftist ideals that some of these titles evoked, they might also have been hesitant to embrace anything that could be perceived as related to American imperialism. Mérida continued by asserting that “the themes of these *ballets* spring out from the very essence of North American life, from its widely varied and rich tradition, from the routines of daily living, from black folklore, from the working people, from the life of the peasant, from the struggles against oppression” (1937 in Mendoza 1990, 147). Strategically, Mérida implicitly draws a parallel here between México’s nationalist revolutionary idealism and the modern dance that had been developed in the U.S. This modern dance produced

by México's northern neighbors represented a new modern way of embodying the synthesis between socially minded, if not revolutionary, ideals and high aesthetics in the form of a newly *perfected* dance technique. If México truly wanted to develop a modern dance form, characteristically Mexican yet with universal appeal, if México truly wanted to join the international modern vanguard, then, Mérida suggested, the professionalization of Mexican dancers and choreographic production must be "under the direction" of choreographer-teachers from the U.S. (1937 in Mendoza 1990, 147).

It was Carlos Mérida himself who in 1939, while visiting New York to "study the rhythms of the city", saw a performance by Anna Sokolow and her group at the School for Social Research (Warren 1998, 63). On that occasion, Mérida found himself backstage extending Sokolow an invitation to visit México. Forty years after that day, the modern dance choreographer remembered, "He [Mérida] asked if I would like to come to México. I said of course I would. I thought he was kidding me. A short time later I received an invitation from the Department of Fine Arts of the Mexican government to perform with my group in México City. He was serious!" (qtd in Warren 1998, 63). Sokolow was not the only choreographer from the U.S. to arrive in México in 1939. Waldeen Falkeinstein also arrived in the country the same year under different circumstances.

Early in her career, Sokolow was part of the branch of modern dance identified in New York City as "revolutionary". This revolutionary dance was developed in the early 1930s by choreographers who engaged Marxist politics in their artistic work in solidarity with the class struggle taking on momentum at the onset of the Great Depression. Waldeen Falkeinstein, a Texan, eventually studied dance in California and also collaborated with people working at the margins of the dance scene in New York City. In the following sections, I will discuss some

developments of leftist politics in relationship to the production of modern dance in New York City during the 1930s. I will do so as an attempt to answer questions that pertain to the role that Sokolow and Falkeinstein played in the formation of Modern dance in México. Because Sokolow actively participated in developing the revolutionary dance movement in New York City, my discussion will pertain directly to what she embodied, what she physically relied on while in México. Discussing this politics of dance making will also indirectly contextualize what Falkeinstein worked against, a topic I will also discuss later in this chapter. With these considerations in mind, I will explore answers to the question of what corporeality Mérida and those who eventually accepted his propositions imagined that Sokolow, and other modern dancers in the U.S., possessed, and why that was so appealing. What histories, what knowledge of the contemporary modern world did these dancers embodied in their dances, in their techniques as training technologies and/or as means of theatrical representation? What was at stake for them? Did all of them relate in the same ways to the world, its politics, economics, and cultural imperatives? Answers to these questions will also reveal parallelisms in the history of dance and leftist revolutionary politics between México and the U.S. that will serve to contextualize debates of what constituted dance as a “real” legitimate art form in these two countries.

Points of Dis/Encounters: Histories of Embodied Ideological Aesthetics

Socialist Mass Dances in México and the U.S.: Towards a Revolutionary Modern Dance

Arriba, esclavos, todos en pié!
El mundo va a cambiar de base,
Los nada de hoy todo han de ser,
Agrupémonos todos,
En la lucha final.
El género humano

Es la internacional.

. . . Enslaved masses, stand up, stand up
The world is about to change its foundation
We are nothing, let us be all
This is the final struggle
Let us group together, and tomorrow
The Internationale
Will be the human race.⁹⁷

La Internacional -chanted by communists, socialist and anarchists in different countries- was sung in all Mexican schools as part of Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas' (1934-1940) leftist-leaning governmental policies, which stressed that socialist and cultural education was paramount for his nationalist revolutionary project (Tortajada Quiroz 1995). Cárdenas instituted many of the revolutionary premises that previous presidents did not *dare* to implement with the determination he did: agrarian reform in favor of people who worked the land, the establishment of unions for the organization of more politically active working classes, the expropriation of oil from foreign companies in the country and its subsequent nationalization. Under his government, the Communist Party emerged from obscurity and joined the Popular Front which in 1938 helped establish the Mexican Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Mexicano) (Tortajada Quiroz 1995) which was supposed to unify the masses under the most progressive political forces in the history of the country after its armed revolution of 1910. Cárdenas' politics concerned with the masses in relationship to cultural production might be summarized in his own words when he affirmed that "culture that lacks a sense of solidarity with the pain of the people is not fecund, it is limited culture, mere adornment of parasites that get in the way of our program for collectivity" (qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 88). Cárdenas' sociopolitical, economic and cultural national unification was not only meant to democratize the country guided by revolutionary

⁹⁷ These are excerpts in Spanish and English from the *Internationale*'s first stanza.

policies but also to help the country fend against American imperialism and rising fascism in Europe. It was in this revolutionary nationalist context where Mérida *artepurista* approach to cultural production found resistance by some among Cárdenas' government and which eventually contributed in his removal from the School of Dance. As I have discussed in chapter one and two, since its beginning in 1910, the Mexican revolution had never been constituted by a monolithic political block. Cárdenas' institutional revolutionary movement was not the exception. In terms of cultural production, different factions continued debating some of the same questions that Pavlova's balleticized *El Jarabe Tapatio* had raised in 1919. However, despite the competing aesthetic and ideological interests debated during Cárdenas' presidency, Mérida remained a fervent advocate for Mexican arts in general and dance in particular as he continued assuming different government posts intermittently.

It was also under the auspices of Cárdenas' leftist-leaning government that Nellie Campobello, along with other teachers –including her sister Gloria, taught at the School of Dance, which had been founded by presidential decree in 1931 under an equally fervent nationalist yet less politically radical government of president Abelardo L. Rodríguez. It was in alignment with Cárdenas' mass-concerned politics that the Campobello sisters, along with musicians and painters as scenographers and costume designers, continued presenting mass dances such as *Ballet Simbólico 30-30*, a dance representing the fervent nationalism that had characterized Mexican governments since 1910 as well as the revolutionary ideology that brought them to power. In spite of skeptical critical reception by people like Mérida and Barros Sierra, the Campobello's produced, with the support of Cárdenas' government, new mass dances such as *Barricada* (1935), mentioned earlier, and *Tierra (Land)*, a mass dance whose premiere in

1936 included 3,000 students from different schools to represent “México’s agrarian revolution” (Segura qtd. in Tortajada Quiroz 1995, 104).

The Campobello’s mass dances, however, were not the only ones enacting embodiments of socialist political ideology while employing various aesthetic devices in their nationalist revolutionary representations, which often concluded with performers and audiences singing the *Internationale*. According to dance historian, Ellen Graff (1997), the *Internationale* served as the sound background for Judith Segal’s dance piece choreographed and performed with the initially hesitant but ultimately cheerful blessing of the Communist Party U.S.A. Segal choreographed this piece in 1924 as part of a mass memorial service scheduled in Chicago in memory of the recently deceased Lenin. In 1927, the New Playwrights’ Theatre, directed by Edward Massey presented *Mass Revolutionary Pageant*, which included one thousand workers as the cast and for which Segal choreographed the dance aspect of the production. The dance was a more developed variation of Segal’s piece choreographed for Lenin’s memorial service in 1924 and it was deemed a success in its new reiteration. Reportedly, the piece contributed to stirring up the revolutionary ideals of the 20,000 audience members gathered at the Madison Square Garden who, along with the performers, ended by fervently singing the *Internationale*. Graff (1997) quotes the editor of *Freiheit*, Moissant Olgin whose observations about the Pageant were published on the *Daily Worker*. The editor wrote, “[. . .] the actors are workers animated by the class struggle and participating in the battles of the working class, [. . .] spectators and actors are united by a common bond of class emotions, [. . .] the things performed on the stage are of vital importance to all concerned [. . .]” (27). For these characteristics, the Pageant was lauded by the critic as a model for “pointing the way [towards] a real proletarian mass-theater” (qtd. in Graff 1997, 27). Segal continued presenting variations of these “successful” mass dances into the

1930s, a decade in which the economic precariousness in the U.S. provided the space for revolutionary politics to circulate and be embraced by many artists –including other *revolutionary* dancers and choreographers like herself.

Although the Campobello sister's mass dances in México and Segal's in the U.S. engaged with socialist revolutionary politics and aspired at the same time to have some universal appeal, they nonetheless employed distinctive choreographic and technical approaches. Their artistic labor functioned differently in fulfilling the unique aspirations and in employing the resources that these dancers as well as government officials imagined and shared in these two different cultural contexts. In México debates regarding ideological choreographic content in relation to the *proper* aesthetic means of representation were framed by an institutional nationalist revolutionary discourse. Those favoring more overt representations of Mexicaness were often accused of producing picturesque exoticism for consumption within the tourist industry. People advocating for a more abstract approach in representing the cultural *essence* of what it meant to be Mexican, were often charged, as Carlos Mérida was, of being “artepuristas” merely concerned with aesthetic formalism, an approach believed by the skeptics to be unsuitable in the production and communication of a truly revolutionary national spirit. In the United States, debates around what constituted a modern dance practice as “real” legitimate art were not related, as in México, to establishing a nationalist revolutionary state. Unlike in México, revolutionary politics in the U.S. were not as widely supported, much less instituted, by the government. The most progressive support the U.S. government provided to dance, after much demands, was in 1935 through the Federal Dance Project (FDP) as part of president Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) designed to aid the unemployed masses (Graff 1997). Despite the lack of interest and support by the U.S. government for instituting a

revolutionary state, the pervasive radical politics circulating in the country were strong enough to galvanize artists and intellectuals in general and to polarize modern dance makers in particular.

Modern Dance and the Politics of the Revolutionary and the Bourgeois in New York City in the 1930s

During the early 1930s, dancers and choreographers embraced varying aesthetic ideologies with which they engaged with the world in distinctive ways. Some pursued abstracted dance representations of mythical and/or psychological themes while others concerned their dances with the immediacy of the economic precariousness that people in the U.S. were experiencing. Some favored “excellence” in technical proficiency in staging their aesthetic musings while employing *legitimized* dance techniques developed by highly respected choreographers. Others were more tolerant of various degrees of physical technical ability in representing the plight of the unemployed and/or exploited masses. The intricate complexities inherent in these embodied ideological aesthetics served as the context in which modern dance bodies and subjects were identified as *either* “bourgeois” *or* “revolutionary”. Those invested in modern dance as a high art form concerned with the innermost truths and mysteries of the human psyche and the human spirit, while emphasizing the formal aesthetic principles of dance production, were not called *artepuristas* as Mérida was called in México. Resonating with *artepurista* implications, however, these dance makers were identified as “bourgeois” dancers. Contrastingly, “revolutionary” dancers were those who unapologetically embraced Marxist politics, and sometimes workers as performers, in their dances with a fervent commitment to radical sociopolitical and economic change. Their committed revolutionary choreographic efforts

towards social justice coalesced in the collective known as the New Dance Group of which among many others Judith Segal was a part.

Ellen Graff (1997) explores this ideological dichotomization and demonstrates that the revolutionary and the bourgeois were more flexible categories than they would appear to be. She exposes how dancers from both camps of dance production interacted with one another in various ways. Some of them would take classes from and dance for so called bourgeois dancers while also teaching and dancing for and with those committed to the working class struggle. While acknowledging this ideological and physical porousness, Mark Franko (1995) regards Graff's somewhat "integrative" approach with suspicion for it "intentionally blurs the differences between 'bourgeois and revolutionary' dance as they existed in the thirties" (2002, 8). In what follows, I will assume Graff's mistrust towards dualistic models of producing and circulating knowledge by employing dichotomizations, such as revolutionary and bourgeois, and which often mask the intricate relational complexities implicated in the purported two sides of a given binary. Nevertheless, I will argue, as Franko may suggest, that a pair of "labels" such as those distinguishing two different approaches to dance making during the 1930s were not only complex but also culturally and historically determined. I will therefore also assume that the "revolutionary" and the "bourgeois" binary can still be productive in excavating the spaces between and beyond these "labels" in order to expose the power dynamics involved in the formulation of two poles seemingly, and in some respects factually, in oppositional binarism.

There were clear distinctions and specific claims made by bourgeois and revolutionary artists in ways that their work articulated, explicitly and/or implicitly, different sets of politics. Their explicit and/or implicit aesthetic assumptions in their approaches to dance making characterized not only how dancers related to the world personally but also how they contributed

or not to the ongoing process of constructing a truly democratic society in a volatile economic environment. The implicit politics inherent in the dances of bourgeois choreographers impacted the field of dance in general through an ongoing process of innovative aesthetic experimentations. Part of the gratification and sense of accomplishment resulting from such labor was the reconfiguration of the codes and conventions that defined dance as modern dance. In the name of embodied high aesthetic standards in the development of cultural sophistication, whose values and interests were validated and reproduced discursively as superior? For many, the work of bourgeois dancers was not only a reflection of but also a mechanism for reproducing their own class and racial privilege.

Although bourgeois dance production during the 1930s carried its own political implications, bourgeois dance makers generally claimed distance from “politics”, read as politics expressed in an overt manner. As specific examples in the next section will illustrate, these dancers regarded politics as belonging to the realm of the mundane, a lesser form of art. For them, politics contaminated the inherent spiritual capacity of high art to probe the innermost depths of *the human experience*, an experience apparently beyond the immediacy of people suffering the consequences of what was thought at the time to be a corrupted and decaying economic system. The exclusionary politics embedded in the work of bourgeois dancers and choreographers also helped them to think of their own work as “real” legitimate art while all that the revolutionary dancers could aspire to was to produce mere embodied political propaganda. As many others among the privileged classes of participants in the ownership of the means of production –including cultural production-, bourgeois dancers enjoyed the benefits of an enabling circularity of privilege. That is, their access to resources granted by their class and

racial privilege enabled them to reproduce themselves as worthy of receiving more by virtue of their *achieved*, read privilege-enabled, cultural sophistication and technical proficiency.⁹⁸

During times of scarce resources, the United States government, through the Federal Dance Project, developed and implemented an epistemology of dance professionalization that determined standards for who would and would not have access to state resources (Graff 1997). As some highly respected dancers in the field became agents of the state in instituting these aesthetic metrics for inclusion and exclusion, the role of the trained body took heightened prominence. Technical proficiency was then not only deemed crucial in the ideological function of defining a subject as bourgeois or revolutionary but also to have access to material resources. In addition to their embodied ideological aestheticisms, the competition for resources among bourgeois and revolutionary dancers further complicated the ways in which these artists thought about themselves as individuals, as an artistic cohort, and as members of larger social body politic. Meeting the embodied aesthetic standards that would make them worthy of receiving state resources became equated with the technical proficiency that would render them worthy bodies -or not- for producing dance as “real” legitimate art –high modernist art.

As I discuss the role of dance technique in the production of bourgeois and revolutionary subjectivity in New York City in the 1930s, it will become evident that neither of these were monolithic categories within themselves. In other words, concern with dance technical excellence was not a characteristic trademark exclusive of the so-called bourgeois dancers. Different factions amongst those who identified with the revolutionary dance movement also

⁹⁸ See Manning for some of the racial dynamics taking place during this period of history in the development of modern dance in New York City, especially modern dance produced by African American choreographers during the 1930s.

debated technical proficiency as valid means of representation in the service, or not, of their revolutionary cause.

In México City in 1935, Carlos Mérida and Barro Sierra criticized the Campobello sister's *Barricada* for the lack of rigorous dance technique among the participant performers in this mass dance. Indeed, in addition to including students from the School of Dance, the multitudinous production employed several hundreds of students from various schools as well as workers, peasants, and members of other factions from the Mexican working classes. Similarly, performers in Judith Segal's mass dances were subjected to comparable criticisms. Despite the outburst of support by 20,000 *comrades* fervently cheering and singing the *Internationale* at the end of *Mass Revolutionary Pageant* for which Segal choreographed the dances in 1927, Graff (1997) notes that "Segal's dancers were amateur performers who probably had more enthusiasm than technique" (27). Most of them were workers and members of the Artef Theatre, an association of Jewish workers who gathered to practice acting at the end of a day's work and which occasionally took classes with the renowned ballet teacher Michel Fokine (Graff 1997). Segal recruited other dancers for these particular projects employing a very flexible criteria, as she said, "Anybody who would walk decently, I picked" (qtd. in Graff 1997, 27). Graff's note above illustrates the concern that some people in the U.S. had, as was the case in México, in relation to rigorous dance technique as a valid means of representations constituting "real" legitimate art. Notwithstanding these debates, many revolutionary dance groups, especially in the early 1930s, continued including workers and other non-dancers in their choreographies. However, some of these dance makers embraced the issue of dance technique and revolutionary ideology differently and at times inconsistently.

During the 1930s in New York City, debates regarding dance technique were intimately connected to concerns with the thematic content of dances. To further illustrate the main ideological premises embodied in bourgeois and revolutionary aesthetic approaches, I will juxtapose revolutionary dancer and dance critic Edna Ocko's and dance critic and historian John Martin's views in relation to dance production. In efforts that contributed to consolidate dance as a legitimate art form, Martin systematically described the main premises of the relatively new modern dance in his book *The Modern Dance* published in 1933. The book is organized in four sections –Characteristics of the Modern Dance, Form, Technique, and The Dance and the Other Arts. In the first three sections of his book, Martin identifies and discusses the core elements and values that according to him constituted modern dance up until the early 1930s. In his last section, Martin examines the relationship of dance to other arts -drama, music, architecture and poetry- while attempting to demonstrate the validity of dance as an art form and its ability to stand on its own or in equal standing when combined with other arts.⁹⁹ In this process, Martin demonstrates how dance had embodied the modernist values -and ideological assumptions- that permeated most artistic production at the turn of the 20th century. He formulates a coherent dance theory that contributed to the project that people like Duncan and her contemporaries had tried to achieve –the legitimization of dance as a high art form. In his legitimizing efforts, Martin's discourse implicitly foregrounds the formal aspects of dance in alignment with avant-garde European modernism that proposed abstraction and formalism as its main innovating premises. While he includes in his book one section on “Form” and one on “Technique,” he does not have a section, or even a significant discussion, of something related to “Content.”

⁹⁹ There are many resonances between Martin's claims here and Carlos Mérida's 1932 “Dance and Theater” (“La Danza y el Teatro”).

Ocko, on the contrary, was neither hesitant nor apologetic in her dance reviews to discuss and even directly urge choreographers, including those she identified as bourgeois, to consider the content of their work. She strongly advocated for a revolutionary modern dance form concerned not merely with aesthetic formalism but also with engaging through content with the immediate volatile sociopolitical and precarious economic context in which dance production was taking place. In reviewing the dance season of 1933, Ocko identified two threads that characterized what she called “the current bourgeois dance season” and which represented for her a form of “escapism.” She asserted that the bourgeois public have tended to favor artists from distant places who could provide the “esoteric,” the “exotic,” and the “bizarre.” On the other hand, Ocko argued that “native” dancers preferred to depict “ancient culture and ideology” rather than finding their inspiration in the more pressing present, at the time characterized by the effects of the Great Depression. Ocko repeatedly criticized Martha Graham for indulging herself in “medieval mystery plays,” “stone carvings of the Incas,” and in recreating “the majestic, hollow grandeur” of court dances (see for example “The Dance Season in Review” 1933 and “Whither Martha Graham” April, 1934). Ocko even directly requested “Miss Graham to open her eyes and mind to the world as it is today” (1933 in Garafola 1994, 68).

Ocko not only used her writings to critically review what she considered bourgeois content in modern dance but she also wrote in defense of the revolutionary dance she advocated for when attacked from both camps -the revolutionary and the bourgeois. As for the latter, who else but Martin; his emphasis on the formal aspects of dance rather than its content might be telling of the apolitical aesthetic ideology he privileged in relation to dance making. In 1936, he summarily and derogatorily dismissed the First Dance Congress, which offered six evenings of talks and performances –including folk dance, ballet, and modern dance, for lacking any artistic

merit. Martin characterized the Congress as an “unofficial political rally, making use of the dance merely as a springboard [as] young Left-wingers kept the Congress in their hands” (qtd. in Ocko 1936 in Garafola 1994, 93). In her article, “The Dance Congress”, Ocko (1936), refuted some of Martin’s claims perhaps most significantly by highlighting the fact that out of the six-day-Congress, Martin only attended the talk session of which he was a part. She added that most of his criticisms of the Congress were based on somebody else’s reports. Ocko also provided specific examples of representatives from various dance forms not only in the participation but also in the organization of the Congress.

The revolutionary dance critic, however, did not refute “unfounded” criticism only coming from what seemed to be a paternalistic bourgeois position. Her disagreements with other revolutionary writers evinced the ideological heterogeneity that characterized advocates of the revolutionary dance. Under the premise that “revolutionary criticism which is so destructive is not revolutionary criticism,” she also took to task the well known communist writer Michael Gold for having lambasted against performances included in the Workers Dance League Festival in 1934 because, according to him, dancers employed “bourgeois” dance technique (Ocko 1934, 71), Ocko reminded Gold that many of the new, young revolutionary dancers joined the cause out of disillusionment with capitalist bourgeois ways rather than because they had a vision for a new social order. Therefore, in relation to their employment of bourgeois dance technique, she responded:

As for technic –again I make exception to your hasty analysis. Most of these dancers are professional students. Technics do not pop out of a Jack-in-the-box. They are the product of years of training, and it requires many more years of training to destroy what one has lived by and to build anew. The young revolutionary dancer has neither time nor inclination at present to sit down and consciously plan an uncharted technical course to pursue for herself merely because an artist who has already evolved a complete system of body training happens to be bourgeois. She uses what time and talent she has to

compose dances based on those issues she deems revolutionary (Ocko 1934 in Garafola 1994, 71).

Ocko implicitly admitted, contrasting Gold's criticism, that "bourgeois" technique could adequately serve the revolutionary purposes of the young dancers for such is the physical history they had embodied as professional dance students of bourgeois teachers.

She also suggested, however, that such technical embodied technology could eventually, "with many more years" be "destroyed". She continued her rebuttal directly addressed to Gold by asserting in reference to the young revolutionary dancers, "the more revolutionary they become, and I reiterate mildly, that takes time, the more they will find the bourgeois technic they employ inadequate and sterile, and out of the pressure of new, exciting, courageous revolutionary ideas will come the urgency to discard old technics and create a revolutionary one peculiar to their needs" (Ocko 1934 in Garafola 1994, 72). Ocko's seemingly contradictory claims reveal, in fact, that the adequacy of bourgeois technique was contingent on the level of political maturity or immaturity of the dancers employing it. She suggested that as the "political education" of the young revolutionary dancers "intensified", they would be better able to realize the need for creating innovative techniques reflective of the anti-bourgeois premises of the revolution (Ocko 1934). In his article, *Dance: Which Technique?*, published in May 1934, Ezra Freedman discussed three approaches that revolutionary dancers debated in determining what dance technique should characterize their dance production. As Freedman compared the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, the writer noted that some revolutionary dancers thought that it was appropriate to adopt bourgeois techniques as the only means of representation while others proposed that a purely revolutionary technique should be developed. The more eclectic argued that in choreographing revolutionary themes, revolutionary choreographers must develop

their own technical means while also taking from the bourgeois technical repertoire whatever was of use for developing their politicized choreography.

Ocko saw an added function of the more eclectic approach to revolutionary dance production. She recognized the need to present their work to two types of audiences. There were the ones who demanded simplicity and clarity so as to render dances' messages "comprehensible" and the more varied audiences, including the bourgeoisie, who also attended concert dance recitals sponsored by the Workers Dance League. Members of this bourgeois audience, Ocko (1935) suggested, were more inclined to appreciate "excellent" dance technique (in Garafola 1994, 76-68). In making these distinctions, Ocko seems to have worried about not being able to communicate a revolutionary message to bourgeois audiences who were not receptive of dances who employed poorly trained performers. Whether revolutionary choreographers relied on bourgeois technique, an alternative to that, or a combination of both, Ocko favored a form of modern dance that, as a legitimate artistic revolutionary expression, must pursue professional technical excellence.

She often criticized, sometimes harshly, revolutionary dance groups and exhorted them to either stop presenting dances until more "professional" groups joined them or until existing groups improved their own technique and portrayal of ideology (Ocko 1935 in Garafola 1994, 76-68). In her review of the Workers Dance League's recital of revolutionary dance, Ocko commended the "sincere efforts" of groups such as The Red Dancers and the Nature Friends. She thought that their work had a place in the recital program for they surely would appeal to the "untrained eyes of thousands of people who have never seen dance before" (Ocko 1935 in Garafola 1994, 76). More firmly, however, Ocko assured that dance groups like these two were "not only unsuited technically for recital work, but as a matter of fact [were] creating, not concert

dances, but a commendable variety of agit-prop dance” (Ocko 1935 in Garafola 1994, 76).

Contrastingly and presumably for their better technical proficiency, she qualified revolutionary dance groups such as The New Dance Group and the Theater Union Dance Group as the ones creating dances that in her words “rightfully belong to the *concert* stage” [her emphasis] (Ocko 1935 in Garafola 1994, 76).

It seems that the technical inefficiency and the overly literality of the representational means of groups like The Red Dancers and the Nature Friends rendered their dancing bodies and dances unworthy of the concert stage while relegating them perhaps to union halls and other community venues. In these venues, workers and other people with “untrained eyes” could experience the “agit-prop dance” that would stir their revolutionary emotions in the absence of their ability to appreciate sophisticated, and perhaps tasteful, dance technique constitutive of “real” legitimate revolutionary art. Ocko also critiqued the Red Dancers’ dance *Black and White* for employing rudimentary and literal means to choreograph interactions between a “negro” and a white dancer struggling independently on the same stage before raising their fists heroically to salute each other. She claimed that this demagogical strategy was designed merely to create the “ideal conditions for applause . . . lusty applause” (Ocko 1935 in Garafola 1994, 77) -indeed to merely stir the emotions of the unsophisticated dance viewer. Edna Ocko was certainly one of the most fervent advocates of the revolutionary dance movement in New York City during the 1930s. However, as I have discussed above, her advocacy exposed the variety of approaches that dancers and writers associated with the revolutionary dance movement debated amongst themselves.

Taking a Stand: José Limón's Notion of Depoliticized Modern Dance as Legitimate Art

For some dancers and choreographer in New York City during the 1930s, the lines between what dance as art was and was not -in relation to revolutionary and bourgeois discourses- were more easily discernible. In his unfinished memoir, José Limón (1998) remembered how “[t]he components of ‘pure dance’ –movement, rhythm, dynamic, form, and style...” studied under his mentor Doris Humphrey helped him “. . . always to seek an impassionate formalism” (28). Limón thought not only that such “pure dance” formalism was the solid basis on which modern dance in the United States should be based but also that such endeavor should be a depoliticized one. Other dancers who thought like him regarded politics as contaminants of art. However, not being sure to what extent Limón’s words might be reflective, or not, of what those around him thought about themselves, it seems that he took some liberty in speaking on behalf of the inhabitants of what he called “our miniscule universe” -presumably composed by Humphrey, Charles Weidman and company; he recalled:

Things were going from bad to worse in the country. The unreal world of politics, senseless and strident, would impinge crudely on our minuscule universe. One day we learned that a certain Franklin Delano Roosevelt [. . .] had supplanted the ineffectual Mr. Hoover and was now president of the United States. So removed, so ignorant were we when it came to anything that did not concerned our obsessive preoccupation with dance! (Limón 1998, 38-39).

Here, Limón stresses the nature of dance as an art form seemingly independent from the realm of politics. During the 1930s, this particular relationship between art and politics was embraced by choreographers and dancers considered by many as bourgeois.

Limón and people in *his* “miniscule universe”, however, could not be totally immersed in their “obsessive” investment in dance. The dire consequences of the Great Depression were such that they could hardly go unnoticed by the most stubborn *artepuristas* whose class privilege, nevertheless, could shield them from the economic tribulations suffered by the majority. As

Limón (1998) admitted that their political “innocence” was not to last for long, he wrote, “there was widespread deprivation, hunger, misery, and protest [. . .] Most girls in the company came from comfortable middle-class families and were immune to the contagion of poverty. But others were not so fortunate” (39). The immunity to poverty and the luxury of engaging in a depoliticized dance production characterized by many as bourgeois was the direct result of the privileged class status of “most” girls in Humphrey and Weidman’s company. At the same time, Limón noted that others were not as fortunate, and when one reads his memoir, one can realize that at different times in his career, Limón himself was one of the “unfortunate” ones. Also, implicit in his admission, the situation was not just about “the country” when “country” served as an abstracted category that could help situate what was “going from bad to worse in the country” in a less threatening greater distance. As he admitted, the situation was in fact being experienced by some unfortunate dancers within the immediacy of his “miniscule universe”. Actual people’s bodies, the dancing bodies with whom he was dancing daily, were being directly affected negatively by the scarcity of economic resources. The generalized, and somewhat abstracted, situation of the country could be felt more palpable within the walls of their dance studio.

Having fellow dancers in the company who were being directly affected by the economic meltdown was not a sufficient condition, according to Limón’s notion of legitimate art, to politicize the art created by his mentors, Humphrey and Weidman. In his memoir, Limón also provided us with a fascinating, vivid example that made evident the frictions and tensions between art and politics as they were being articulated by bourgeois and revolutionary dancers in the quotidianess of their dance studio. He recalled:

There were numerous meetings instigated by a sort of committee composed of our more militant colleagues [. . .] The meetings became tempestuous when Doris would point out [. . .] that she disapproved of injustice and the exploitation of the poor by the rich, but saw no cause for nor possibility of armed and bloody insurrections, Russian style [. . .]

her works and those of Charles, were works of art, not propaganda tracts. They were based on a humanistic concern with man and his condition (Limón 1998, 70).

Although Limón acknowledged that Humphrey and Weidman could embrace aestheticized political subtlety in contrast to the unrefined violent Russian approach to political engagement, he took the liberty of defining what “real” legitimate art was and was not, for him, for his mentors, and for all of his fellow company dancers. “Works of art” as opposed to “propaganda tracts” should be, according to Limón, the reflection of the most sublime modernist bourgeois values, “a humanistic concerned with man [sic] and his condition.”

Limón’s investment in re-imagining his mentors as creators of legitimate “works of art” rather than political propaganda Russian style seem to have served him in fashioning while validating his own identity as a refined bourgeois dancer-choreographer. Despite his insistent willingness to speak for Humphrey, Weidman and other members in their company, it is fascinating how Limón’s memories vivified images of what it might have been like to be in a dance studio during the 1930s. One can just imagine how some of the exponents of revolutionary and bourgeois ideologies negotiated space on the dance floor and beyond. With some willingness and effort, one can see and smell the sweaty, dancing bodies, rubbing against each other’s skin, gasping for air, trying to catch up with their breath, not only because of the physical energy exerted by the “dancey” movements they were asked to execute as part of a work of art, but also, because of the muscular tensions and the bodily frictions of their distinctively embodied ideological aesthetics and political concerns.

Integrative Embodiments: Anna Sokolow as the Rebel and the Bourgeois in New York City

During the 1930s

While riding in a taxi in New York City in the early 1960s with Anna Sokolow and José Limón, Ray Cook, Sokolow's longtime dancer, remembered their conversation. He said, "Anna was explaining to José Limón that whereas she danced about the piles of garbage seen around us everyday, [he] danced about the single flower that bloomed on top of that pile" (qtd. in Sokolow 1993, 2). For Sokolow the piles of garbage represented perhaps what Limón had referred to as the "widespread deprivation, hunger, misery, and protest" that was affecting most people in the country and to which some of his privileged dance colleagues within his "miniscule universe" were immune during the 1930s. Those who enjoyed such social and economic immunity tended to dance for the blooming flower on top of those piles of garbage. Some of them pretended to embrace a totally depoliticized embodied aesthetic practice. The more progressive among them pursued political aesthetic subtlety in order to avoid contaminating the beauty of that blooming flower—the symbol of legitimate art whose aesthetic sophistication functioned for presumably receptive individuals as the means to access the realm of Beauty and profound Truth.

In 1933 Nell Anyon¹⁰⁰ asserted that in order to "clarify" what was the task of revolutionary dance, one ought to understand the position of the modern bourgeois dance" (in Franko 1995, 113). She poignantly noted that in the midst of such precarious social and economic environment, some "American dancers consider their art as above their actual lives. Thus we have dances of 'the life of the bee' and none of the lives of working men" (Anyon 1933 in Franko 1995, 14). Anyon suggested that this intentional attempt to avoid the topic of "working men" indicated "a passive adherence to bourgeois society" (1933 in Franko 1995, 14). Although

¹⁰⁰ Nell Anyon was the pseudonym used by dancer Nadia Chilkovsky (Franko 1995, 113).

the aestheticized political subtleness of Humphrey's *The Life of the Bee* might have allegorically spoken about the lives of "working men", Anyon implied that the "bourgeois" approach was not as politically effective in exerting sociopolitical change.

As Ocko had made evident, many dancers whose work engaged more directly with the piles of garbage that characterized the dire situation of the world around them did not see a need to discard so called bourgeois techniques in order to further their politically revolutionary message. In the early 1930s, Anna Sokolow was one of these revolutionary dancers. In retrospect, Ethel Butler reflected on the launching of Sokolow's Dance Group of the Theatre Union in 1933 and which eventually changed its name to The Theatre Union Dancers and then simply to Dance Unit. Butler said, ". . . Anna and I were already a group of sorts. We had been doing performances for a lot of Socialist and Communist organizations together. Most of the dances dealt with the conflict between workers and their capitalist bosses" (qtd. in Warren 1998, 33). As many other dance groups in New York City during the early 1930s, Sokolow produced her artistic work under the banner of "Dance Is a Weapon in the Revolutionary Class Struggle," which was initially formulated by the Workers Dance League, a collective that provided organizational support to emerging groups of dancers engaged with revolutionary politics (Graff 1997, 7).

In 1965, in yet one more period of political and social unrest in the history of the United States, Anna Sokolow related her experience during the 1930s to the role of the artist. In her essay, *The Rebel and the Bourgeois*, she wrote:

The trouble with the modern dance now is that it is trying to be respectable. The founders of the modern dance were rebels; their followers are bourgeois. The younger generation is too anxious to please, too eager to be accepted. For art, this is death. To young dancers, I want to say: 'Do what you feel you are, not what you think you ought to be. Go ahead and be a bastard. Then you can be an artist' (Sokolow 1965, 29).

Although Sokolow made a distinction between “rebel founders” of modern dance and their “bourgeois” followers, she did not make any differentiations among the category of founders. As I have discussed above, during the 1930s, there were the rebels whose main concern was in challenging the aesthetic boundaries of the field of dance in general and of their own dance form in particular. There were also the rebels whose artistic investment was represented in the articulation of revolutionary politics in direct relationship to the social and economic context in which dance was being produced. This latter group of rebels –the revolutionary dancers- could employ established dance “bourgeois” techniques -or not- as their means of representation. In suggesting criteria constitutive of artistic identity, Sokolow prompted young dancers to avoid being “bourgeois followers” and instead be daring, bold, risk-taking “bastards” who could engage with the immediacy and urgency of pressing topics characteristic of their time. Of paramount importance for her was that “art being created now be related to now, to our time” and as for the artist he/she must “be conditioned by the life around him[sic]” (Sokolow 1965, 33).

For Sokolow, however, this “bastard” artist, engaged with his/her present time through embodied revolutionary politics, must also be well trained with excellent technique. Sokolow started as a dancer for Martha Graham who in the 1930s was considered by many like Ocko a bourgeois dancer-choreographer. Sokolow’s dance technique might have been so refined at the time she was dancing in the Graham company that Louis Horts, who often conducted Graham’s rehearsals, frequently “used Anna as a model” (Warren 1998, 21). Sokolow herself remembered fifty years later, “I could jump and I could turn . . . I should have been a ballet dancer” (Warren 1998, 21). Although Sokolow’s technical proficiency could have enabled her to be a ballet dancer –apparently regarded as the prototype of dance technical excellence-, she was one of

those “bastard” dancers willing to dance about the piles of garbage around them. Sokolow and many like her would one day dance and/or take classes with bourgeois choreographers and teachers and another day danced with politically radical dancers –many of whom would not dream of having Sokolow’s dance technique. She was equally willing and committed to dancing for bourgeois audiences as well as to “take a step further” and take her dances “into the union halls and factories where America’s workers gathered” (Perpener III 1994, 23).

While visiting Russia in 1934, Sokolow succinctly synthesized her views about excellence in dance technique in relation to revolutionary political commitment. In a letter to her friend, Ronya Chernin, Sokolow sent instructions for rehearsing her group in New York City, since she would not be back from abroad on time to supervise her dancers before their next presentation. Sokolow wrote:

I feel very responsible now toward the group and shall always do my best to create dances of importance and significance. But as I said before I left, the most important thing now is for the group to work especially hard on pure dance technique because we must do the ‘March of the Pioneers’ . . . with a brilliance and technical assurance that it needs. Of course in comparison to the other groups ours has [“]excellent technique[“] but we know our own technical shortcomings and the *March* shows them too obviously (qtd. in Warren 1998, 41-42).

The technical competency of Sokolow’s group was of such a high level that it already set them apart from the rest. In addition to the prestige and status that such technical accomplishment might have gained for her group, she still worried about further refining their technical means of representation. Whatever she thought that the *March of the Pioneers* had to offer, its reception must not be short-changed by anything short of “excellent technique”.

In her letter to Chernin, Sokolow continued reconciling this fervent commitment to embodied aesthetic excellence with her political militancy by addressing the accusations by some that she was an abstractionist, which resonated with similar charges made against Carlos Mérida

as *artepurista*. She wrote, “the comments about our being ‘abstract,’ that will be a problem always and I am so sure that we will finally convince them that our approach is the only approach as far as using the art as a weapon of propaganda, and that art and propaganda are too closely related to make such distinctions (Warren 1998, 42). Unlike José Limón who thought that the works of his mentors, Humphrey and Weidman, were “works of art, not propaganda tracts”, Sokolow saw no distinction between the art and the propagation of revolutionary ideology. Like Mérida had claimed in 1932 in his “Dance and Theater”, Sokolow regarded art making and political militancy as dependent on one another. Both conceptualized excellent dance technique and ideological content as one and the same –not the best but, according to Sokolow, the only embodied ideological aestheticism effective as a weapon in the class struggle.

Within their unique cultural contexts and fields of operation, Ocko, Sokolow and Mérida were exemplary of these hybrid embodiments of the revolutionary and the bourgeois, a class of “bastard” artists, as Sokolow would put it. They represented a sort of a class of “bourgeois dissidents” (Williams 1989), those whose progressive aspirations were enabled by the luxury of “choosing to be revolutionary” afforded by their privileged position in a socially and economically stratified society.¹⁰¹ Dance technique in these various contexts represented the implicit means by which bodies were disciplined to embody specific epistemological assumptions about the historically and culturally constructed nature of their subjecthood as well as their relation to others and the world around them. Such determinations were shaped during the 1930s in New York City as dance technique was debated in terms of its representational

¹⁰¹ According to Raymond Williams (1989), the processes involved in the evolution of the bourgeoisie have produced “. . . its own successions of distinctively bourgeois dissidents. This is a key element of the politics of the avant-garde, and we need specially to remember it as we look at forms which seem to go beyond politics or indeed to discount politics as irrelevant” (56-57). The *definition* following my use of William’s term “bourgeois dissidents” in my text is my own interpretation of his concept.

positionality along a continuum established by the binary of the revolutionary and the bourgeois. In México City, debates about professional technical training of Mexican dancers, first through ballet and later through modern dance from the U.S. were reconstituted in efforts to consolidate a modern Mexican subjectivity. There, the debates polarized Sokolow's approach as a more universalist and formalist modernism and Falkeinstein's modern dance as a picturesque representation of overt nationalism. The debates that these two artists helped to set in motion in México City during 1939 and 1940 exposed the nation's struggles in constructing a national cultural identity that could be distinctively Mexican yet that integrated universal human commonalities. Their distinctive artistic approaches renewed the hope of developing a dance form that could integrate México's rich cultural tradition yet that it could express its readiness to join the modern world.

The Embodiment of Revolutionary Modernism: Anna Sokolow in México City (1939-140).

My discussion of dance and politics in New York City during the 1930s represents a kind of snap shot of the history that Sokolow embodied as she arrived in México City in 1939. It was that embodied history that most likely resonated with Mérida when he saw her and her group dancing at the School for Social Research earlier that year. The high regard they both shared for a politically engaged dance practice characterized by excellence in technical proficiency was almost identical. Sokolow had said in 1934 in regards to excellence in dance technique that "art and propaganda are too closely related to make [any] distinction" (Warren 1998, 42). Similarly, Mérida claimed in 1932 that "ideological content must be served by the perfection of technique, in the same manner that all acquired technical perfection must be employed to serve ideology" (130). While Sokolow was often referred to in the U.S., according to Cook, as "a romantic

classicist with a sharply developed sense of social consciousness” those who became her dancers in México regarded her as “a rebel, but with discipline” (in Sokolow 1993, 4). In the U.S. this romantic classicism contributed to reconfigure Sokolow in the latter years of her career as having a developed sense of social consciousness rather than having a fervent commitment to revolutionary politics. In México, however, she was perceived as a disciplined dancer but still a rebel, that is, as I will discuss below, a *true* revolutionary. This was perhaps the reason why she was deemed suited to help transform the country’s nationalist revolutionary spirit into an embodied art form expressive of high aesthetics as she also trained highly professional and disciplined Mexican dancers.

In 1939 México was a country in which classical ballet was still revered among some factions within the general population. As Mérida pointed out in 1937, Russian classical ballet technique was still being “anachronistically” taught at dance schools, including the School of Dance directed by Nellie Campobello and sponsored by the Mexican government. In this context, it is uncertain how Mérida negotiated the invitation of Anna Sokolow back in México with people from the Department of Fine Arts and theater promoters for there seems to have been a major misperception of what kind of dancing she was bringing to country. At their arrival, Sokolow and her dancers were shocked to see some large billboard announcements that read, ““Anna Sokolow, La Gran Bailarina Rusa’ [The Great Russian Ballerina]”” and others that described her company as ““Anna Sokolow y su Cuerpo de Ballet” [and her Corps de Ballet]”” (Warren 1998, 64). According to Warren (1998), Sokolow’s Russian name probably led Mexican publicists and impresarios to assume that she would be presenting Russian Ballet (Warren, 1998). She was also mistaken apparently by some writers as not a citizen from the United States but as a Russian.

Although Sokolow, the misperceived Russian ballerina, was in fact a “barefoot social reformer” (Warren 1998, 65), she enjoyed stardom treatment upon her arrival in México City. She met the class of Mexican artist and intellectuals that had contributing in shaping the country’s cultural revolution after the armed insurrection of 1910. She remembered, “I was introduced to all the great artists –Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros- and they accepted me as a fellow artist and were interested in my work” (qtd. in Warren 1998, 69). The enthusiastic reception with which she was embraced led her to declare that “for the first time in my life I knew what it felt like to be an artist [because Mexicans] have a tradition of respecting art and whoever is involved in art is respected there” (Warren 1998, 70). In addition to the adulations she received as a star figure of the modern dance, critics appraised her work as the embodiment of *true* revolutionary dance, as “real” legitimate art.

In his review of one in a series of Sokolow’s shows at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts) in April 1939, César Ortiz seemed to have confirmed what Sokolow had written to her friend Chernin while traveling in Russia in 1934. She had asseverated that they would finally convince everyone in New York City that her company’s approach was “the only approach as far as using the art as a weapon of propaganda” (Warren 1998, 42). Ortiz concluded that Sokolow’s art of “profound humane and social content” characterized by “natural grace . . . and nearly Greek rhythm” forced her few “ignorant” retractors to recant their “*interested* opinions and slanders” [my emphasis] (1939, 3). He reported that Sokolow’s dances had awaken the “pleasant sensation of superiority that only real art can elicit” (Ortiz 1939, 3). He lauded *Poema Guerrero* (*War Poem*) as a “faithful reproduction of the rhythm of death” contextualized by war and fascism (Ortiz 1939, 3). He described the bodies moving with “strange contortions” in expressions of agony as if in a battle field where torsos were being torn apart by the fire of heavy

artillery as legs and arms agitatedly dangled in the air signifying the muted protest of humanity. Ortiz (1939) characterized *Exilio (The Exile)* as a dance with “clear political message and defined antifascist stand” (6). He highlighted the fact that despite its keen political content, the artistic value of the dance was never compromised at all by any demagogical strategies. He claimed that *Exilio* was a clear example of what “real revolutionary art” could be and noted how much from this type of true art could Mexican dance groups learn, those groups that according to him “have relied on the gratuitous recourse of the red flag and the overall to create ‘revolutionary’ dance” (Ortiz 1939, 6).

Writing for *El Popular* in April 27, 1939, Lya Kostakowsky echoed Ortiz’s views but with many direct comparisons. She framed her discussion of Sokolow’s work by opening with a brief analysis as to why the majority of efforts to articulate a modern dance form in México had failed. For such failures, she faulted the people who have produced such spectacles without knowing anything about art in general and dance in particular. Kostakowsky charged those artistically unsophisticated people for naively thinking that in creating a revolutionary dance it would suffice to have on stage a group of people acting “revolutionarily” while wearing overall and carrying red flags. Without naming Nellie and Gloria Campobello as its choreographers, Kostakowsky then criticized *Ballet Symbolico 30-30* for its colorful unpleasantness and for being emotionally and technically hollow. She clarified that if this particular mass dance was presented for “at least two hundred times” in the previous three years, it was only due to the stubbornness of those who attempted to create a “proletariat art”. Such a lower form of art, according to her, not only approached the “Revolution” equivocally by demagogic means but it also had ruined the future of many Mexican artists who once held artistic promise.

Kostakowsky suggested that the “Revolution” as well as the protest against fascism and the construction of a new world order was a big enterprise not to be played with lightly and naively. She declared that an “authentically revolutionary artistic manifestation must be, before anything else, art” (Kostakowsky 1934, unidentified pg, number). As an example of such “real” legitimate revolutionary art, the critic praised sokolow’s *La Matanza de los Inocentes (Slaughter of the Innocents)* as a representation of the tragedy of a Spanish mother carrying her dead son in her arms while running under the strikes of fascist airplanes. Without employing any demagogical and literal means such as banners and the like, the representational power of this dance, according to Kostakowsky, was such that one’s hands would clench while sensing the barbarism that the regime of Spanish dictator, Franco, represented in Spain.

If among the Mexican elites since the late 1910s the bourgeoisie despised the popular “frivolous” genres, as I have discussed in the previous chapters, these critics as a particular class of revolutionaries despised any demagogical and picturesque representations of a “populist” revolution. As a type of “bourgeois dissident” amongst a broad range of revolutionary approaches, Ortiz and Kostakowsky craved sophisticated revolutionary art not “proletariat agit-prop” as Ocko would also call any literal and allegedly demagogical means of representation employed by revolutionary dancers in New York City during the 1930s. For all the sophisticated artistic virtues of Sokolow’s art, including the extraordinary harmony and technique of her sixteen dancers, Kostakowsky enthusiastically praised Sokolow’s dance work as leaving her with a taste of a new “progressive art” -the prototype of “real” legitimate revolutionary art.

The Embodiment of Dance Innovation: Waldeen Falkeinstein in México City (1939-1940)

The same year, 1939, Waldeen Falkeinstein arrived in México City for the second time after touring in Canada and the United States, including “successful” performances at the “Guild Theatre” and “Town Hall” in New York City (*El Universal* 1939a, 15).¹⁰² Waldeen had visited México in June 1934 as part of Michio Ito’s group of soloist dancers - Waldeen, Bette Jordan, Jocelyn Bruke, and “the man of the thousand masks” Josef Josef (*La Prensa* 1934a, 13). At that time, Ito, a Japanese dancer residing in the United States, was lauded in México for bringing a “note of pure art, a manifestation of beauty and spiritual solace” (Amendolla 1934, 4). With an orientaling desire, another reporter noted how Ito had been called “Japan’s Spiritual Ambassador in the West” (Granada 1934, 24). Ito’s shows in México City were attended by multitudes of “cultured people” (*La Prensa* 1934b, 13) as well as by members of other sectors of the population. The diverse audiences who crowded the Teatro de la Secretaria de Educación as well as the Arbeu and the Hidalgo theaters were further enticed to attend by the “popular” prices offered for two shows and for the inclusion of Xenia Zarina, a dancer already popular in México City at the time, in those performances (H.R.S. 1934).

Writing for *Revista de Revistas* in 1934, Cosme Granada celebrated the resilience with which Ito surfaced from myriad tribulations in London before embarking on a successful international dance career. Ito toured in London, his native Japan, Canada, México, and other countries as he established his home base in the U.S. Granada noted especially Ito’s success in New York City and at the Hollywood Bowl in California where he met Waldeen for the first time. Granada concluded that after years of struggles, including establishing his reputation as an

¹⁰² In México Waldeen Falkenstein was invariably referred to in print and in person as “Waldeen,” her first name. I will honor this tradition by referring to this dance artist as “Waldeen” and not Falkeinstein in what remains of this chapter.

artist in the midst of the “preventivenees” implemented by the U.S. against the “Japanese race”, Ito became a “cosmopolitan” figure (Granada 1934, 24). In 1934, Granada gestured towards the contradictory milieu in which Ito found himself as a “cosmopolitan” artist while negotiating the markings of his racialized body within a context discriminatory of Japanese bodies like his.

In 2009, Yutian Wong dug into that muddy territory. She suggests that Ito’s upper class status amongst Asian immigrants contributed in gaining him access to the U.S. despite the country’s rhetoric of anti-Asian immigration (Wong 2009). Wong examines the racial implications of the category of the “international artist”, what Granada called the “cosmopolitan figure”, to discuss how the term rendered racialized bodies like Ito’s eligible for social acceptance while maintaining his bodily difference as an exotic commodity. The privileged international –cosmopolitan- artist could then cross borders as a type of “global cultural citizen” who presumably transcends his/her racial, gender, class and ethnic identity. Where whiteness remains ever invisible and unquestioned, the non-white international artist like Ito participates in reproducing the trope of the universal as defined by Western values and as he/she travels *freely* around world. This privilege is granted to the non-white international artist as long as his/her racialized body does not become a potential threat, as it was the case for Ito after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into WWII (Wong 2009). Ito was imprisoned and he eventually opted for repatriation to Japan rather than enduring the humiliation of spending time in intern camps for Japanese people during 1942 (Wong 2009). While socially accepted during the heap of his artistic career during the 1930s, Ito’s racially marked body rendered him unsuitable to be a part of the canonical history of modern dance, which implicitly reinforced U.S. nativism (Wong 2009). This is the type of complex situation that international artists such as Ito experienced with

Waldeen as one of his company members touring Japan, Canada, the U.S. and México during the 1930s.

Like Ito, Waldeen was *forgotten* from canonical historical records of modern dance in the United States. While conducting research for his book Waldeen: La Coronela de la Danza Mexicana, César Delgado Martínez was surprised to find only one photograph and newspaper article about Waldeen at the Lincoln Center Library in New York City. The reasons for *forgetting* her were certainly different than those that applied to Ito. She was trained in ballet since a very early age and when she was 13 years old she was already a soloist with the Koslov Ballet and the Los Angeles Opera. But soon after reading Duncan's *My Life* at the age of 15, Waldeen strove to find her own dance style and create her own choreographic compositions. She chose to collaborate with people like Ito who were at the margins of what she perceived as mainstream modern dance in New York City. Ito's work not only carried oriental appeal but it was perhaps a more *authentic* racially marked dance fusion rather than a *pure* American modern dance or an *imitation* like those staged by artists like Ruth St. Denis.

Waldeen refused to study with St. Denis and repudiated New York City's dance scene in general and Graham's technique in particular (Delgado Martínez 2000). As she remembered, "I did not have any intention of falling into the trap of a new formalism; for me, the majority of dance styles in New York had fallen into that" (qtd. in Delgado Martínez 2000, 23). Still embracing some of the most salient tenets of modernism at the time, Waldeen recalled, "I was looking for a type of corporeal movement that was free, daring, sensual, a movement capable of expressing the inner world of the dancer as well as the external reality of life and society. For me, this did not imply a type of movement with the coercive seal of the latest technological artifacts, with their anti-humanism and automatization of men and women" (qtd. in Delgado

Martínez 2000, 23). It seems that Waldeen was finding her own movement based on what she was learning from Ito. John Martin wrote about her, “the method that she has developed reveals the characteristic strengths of both styles, of the ballet and of the Japanese dancer [Ito]. The former gives her a brilliance that she uses well and the latter has enabled her to acquire attacking precision” (qtd. in Delgado Martínez 2000, 24). Waldeen’s career was characterized by that sense of revelry that led her to associate with people like Ito, to develop her own dance style and to move away from the modern dance being produced in New York City during the 1930s.

The primary reason for *forgetting* Waldeen from official modern dance historical records in the U.S., however, was because when she went to México with Ito in 1939, she fell in *love* with the country, eventually became a naturalized Mexican citizen and stayed there until the end of her life. Upon her arrival in México City in 1939, newspaper reporters assured that Mexican audiences still remembered her visit in 1934. During that first visit, there was a consensus that amongst performers in Ito’s group, Waldeen was the one who stood out the most. She was characterized by a reporter as “Terpsichore’s magistral priestess” and was lauded for her full commitment to dancing from beginning to end with all of her “body and spirit” in ways that her temperament and expressive force captivated her audiences (Amendolla 1934, 4). Amendolla (1934) even dared to express her reverential admiration by assuring that Waldeen was as “full of grace as the Ave María” (4).¹⁰³ In 1919, a similar comparison made by a newspaper in reference to Pavlova, cost both the newspaper and the Russian ballerina visiting México the “minor ex-communication” by the Catholic Church. Waldeen did not face such consequences from what some

¹⁰³ Amendolla was alluding to the figure of the Virgin Mary through an evocation of the Hail Mary, one of the most revered prayers for Catholics in México. To contextualize the phrase, I partially quote the Hail Mary, “Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus . . .”.

might have considered Amendolla's religious sacrilege. Instead, the critic's comparisons with Terpsichore established Waldeen's affinity with Greek mythology as a source of artistic legitimization and sophistication and with the Ave Maria as a localized symbol of spirituality



Figure 12. Waldeen dancing in México City, *Revista de Revistas*, June 17, 1934: 27. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.

within the context of México, a heavily Catholic country at the time. Other chroniclers implied a different “spiritualizing” discourse, not based on religious references but on high art’s desexualizing embodied ideological aesthetics. Arturo Rigel (1934) thought that Waldeen’s “spontaneous” rhythms, filled with grace and emotion, transcended her human nature. He wrote that Waldeen’s dancing, which sacrificed all vanities, rid her body -a “palpitating

sculpture”- of any “tempting sexual characteristics” (Rigel 1934, 27). Her desexualized dancing body fused with music to serve a higher aesthetic purpose.

For all those characteristics, Waldeen continued to be seen in México City during her second visit in 1939 as “a woman, who before anything else, [was] an artist” (F. M. 1939a, 3). This time, she arrived in the city with two other soloist colleagues, Winifred Widener and Elizabeth Waters (M. F. 1939b). On aesthetic grounds in this occasion, the critics highlighted Waldeen’s “rebellious” character. She was perceived as an artist whose nonconformity with the classical vocabularies repeated by dancers from the Romantic epoch led her to be at odds with

the dance form in which she was trained since a very early age. She held contempt for those classical dancer's pointe shoes that elevated their bodies away from the ground on which human reality was anchored (F. M. 1939a). Despite her training in the "severe discipline imposed by Russian ballet", another commentator noted, Waldeen developed "her true path towards a free choreographic expression" as a wide open field for her creative genius and "highly personal style" (*El Universal* 1939b, 7). Her dancing steps, according to a writer identified as F. M. (1939c), "realized plastically what some audacious painters have merely begun to see" (1). "Waldeen embodies", the writer assured, "a modern, sober, innovator spirit" (F. M. 1939c, 1).

In 1939, Waldeen was received in México as a "sober", modern dancer. However, unlike Sokolow, rather than being perceived as a "social reformer", Waldeen was deemed a dance innovator. While some writers praised *her* rebellious character, others resented her not only as a dancer but also as representative of a newly modern dance genre arriving in the city. It was none other than Carlos Gonzalez Peña, one of the main chroniclers of Pavlova's visits to México City in 1919 and 1925, who voiced his discontent. In his article "La Farsa del Baile" ("The Farce of Dance"), he complained, among other things, about the new terminology being used to describe dance spectacles. Being a well versed and respected music critic, it bothered him that modern dance programs and marketing ads referred to modern dance events as "dance concerts". Quoting a dictionary, Gonzalez Peña reminded his readers the meaning of the word "concert" which signified "music show". "Concert" for him belonged exclusively to the province of music. More than contesting the semantic technicalities of descriptors such as "dance concert", Gonzalez Peña's critique focused on the poor care with which music was included –or not- in one of Waldeen's "concerts". He complained that a "home piano" replaced what should have been an orchestra, presumably the hallmark characteristic of serious dance. The disappointed writer

resented how the dance was for him “divorced” from the chosen music: Bach and Beethoven. He criticized Waldeen’s “predilection for certain ‘moderns’” amongst whom was the Black composer, H. B. Forsythe, and with racist overtones, Gonzalez Peña (1939) despised Waldeen’s three “negro spirituals” (3). If that was not enough, Waldeen dared to dance a “Chacona” without

music. How could there be dance without music, the critic seemed to have wondered.

Nostalgically, Gonzalez Peña assured that Terpsichore began to disappear ever since the “crazy” Isadora Duncan began “doing her thing”.¹⁰⁴ As if following a lineage from Duncan to Waldeen, he affirmed in one of his reviews, “what once we used to understand as dance, is no longer dance”. He sarcastically described what he saw on stage, “one lift a leg, then the other leg, then an arm, then the two arms, then grimaced, then three stompings with the feet, then two circles around the stage, with a crude gesture . . .



Figure 13. Waldeen dancing in México City, *Revista de Revistas*, July 15, 1934: 26. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México City.

¹⁰⁴ He calls Duncan a “destornillada” in Spanish and which I am translating as “crazy”. “Desatornillada/o” suggests, as if a person was a machine, that his/her screws have been loosen or taken away; therefore, he/she, as if he/she was a machine, could not function properly. Without his/her “screws” properly in place and tightened up, the person thinks and behaves erratically, as a “crazy” person. This metaphorical use of the term still has currency in México today)

and suddenly, the dancer collapses”¹⁰⁵ (Gonzalez Peña 1939, 10). To juxtapose this *distorted* dance practice alongside what he considered the proper standard for serious dance, Gonzalez Peña quoted Teófilo Gautier who in 1837 wrote, “Dance is nothing else but the art of displaying correct and elegant forms in a diversity of positions that favor the development of the line” (qtd. in Gonzalez Peña 1939, 10). As if desiring to preserve conceptions of dance with a history of hundreds of years, the dismayed critic disliked Waldeen’s and other modern dancers’ diverse vocabularies, their bare feet, their musical choices and the ways they related –or not- to music. He admitted that Waldeen was perhaps more beautiful, as a woman, than she was in 1934, however, he found her a bit “chubby”. Either her body type or her exposure to Ito’s style, the critic suggested, rendered Waldeen’s movement with a certain heaviness that prevented her from enjoying the “flexibility . . . that is for the dancer what the agility of her vocal chords is for the singer” (Gonzalez Peña 1939, 10).

All the things that a critic like Gonzalez Peña might deem antithetical to serious dance happened as he witnessed Waldeen’s and her colleagues’ work on stage at the Palace of Fine Arts in 1939. As he concluded disappointedly that the “supreme expression of dance consists now in not dancing”, he probably never imagined that Waldeen would become one of the most significant precursors in the development of Mexican nationalist modern dance on the *concert* stage.

¹⁰⁵ Gonzalez Peña is probably referring here to a dance by Elizabeth Waters performed in one of the shows presented along with Waldeen and Widener. For a very short description of what Waters does on stage in one of her pieces and which echoes Gonzalez Peña’s critique see F. M. (1939b).

The Question of Mexican Dance as “Real” Legitimate Modern Art: Waldeen’s and Sokolow’s Distinctive Approaches

A newspaper note published on March 30th, 1939, reported that la Casa del Artista (House of the Artist) was forming the first “corps de ballet” which would soon start rehearsing four ballets by Mexican composers. The unidentified writer of the note was certainly not relying on the most accurate language to describe that it was not a ballet company but that what was being integrated was the first modern dance group ever to be composed by Mexican dancers. The House of the Artist was founded by the Secretariat of Education, and none other than Carlos Mérida was a member of the institution’s Council as director of the Plastic Arts department (*El Universal* 1939c). That month, Waldeen had concluded a series of her shows and was teaching her “difficult postures” to advanced students at the School of Dance (*El Universal* 1939d). However, she was not involved in the organization of the dance group sponsored by the House of the Artist. A note published two months later, in May 27, announced that Sokolow was the person hired for eight months to train the “corps the ballet” under the modern techniques that the “Russian artist possesses” (*El Universal* 1939e, 5). The new group of dancers was composed by fifteen girls some of who had recently graduated from the School of Dance. It seemed that the various efforts to professionalize Mexican dancers during the 1930s had successfully produced the dancers that would participate in the modernization of Mexican dance during the 1940s.

The newspaper report delineated the specific role of Sokolow and the purpose of her group with the following words: “the goal is not that Mrs. Sokolow imprints in our dancers any particular foreign styles but instead that she enables them technically through the field of modernism so that they can, by themselves, face the problems posed by the creation of a Mexican Ballet which must arise from México’s folkloric sources” (*El Universal* 1939e, 5). At

last, ever since Pavlova's balleticized rendition of *El Jarabe Tapatio* set in motion the desire to form a Mexican dance form as legitimate art in 1919, the conditions seemed to be all there in 1939 to fulfill that desire. The institutional support, a talented modern choreographer, a generation of professional young dancers and México's folklore as a source of inspiration all seem to represent a real promise in the search for a Mexican dance form that could capture the traditional and modern *soul* of the country.

After a few private presentations and a show at the Fábregas Theater, the Department of Fine Arts presented to the general public three ballets by the Ballet de Bellas Artes (Ballet of Fine Arts) under Sokolow's direction (*El Universal* 1940a). The program included *Don Lindo de Almería* (*Don Lindo of Almería*), *Los Pies de Pluma* (*The Feathered Feet*), and *Entre Sombras Anda el Fuego* (*The Fire Walks in Between Shadows*). Contrary to the original idea of inaugurating the new dance group with ballets written by four Mexican composers, of the three dances, only *The Fire Walks in Between Shadows* was composed by a Mexican musician, Blas Galindo. Although Sokolow met some of the most active Mexican artists and intellectuals upon her arrival in the country, her first artistic collaborations were mostly with Spanish artists who had fled from Franco's dictatorship and were then exiled in México under president Lázaro Cárdenas' government. These artistic collaborations seem to have *betrayed* the goal of relying on Mexican folklore as a source of inspiration while pursuing universal themes in the dances that should represent the aspiring modern nation.

In September 6, 1940, a newspaper note reported that the "dancer of supreme elegance", Anna Sokolow would inaugurate the Fall season on the 17th at the Palace of Fine Arts (*El Universal* 1940b, 6). However, she would be leading not the state sponsored Ballet of Fine Arts but her newly formed group La Paloma Azul (The Blue Dove) whose goal was to provide its

dancers with “modern and eclectic techniques” as well as to cultivate the lofty ideal of producing culture and art that could constitute the basis for future national spectacles (*El Universal* 1940c, 8). The new program included the three dances previously presented with the Ballet of Fine Arts and a few premieres that included the collaboration of some Mexican artists: *Antigona* (*Antigone*) with music by Carlos Chávez, costumes and decorations by Carlos Obregón Santacilia; *La Madrugada del Panadero* (*The Dawn of the Baker*) with libretto and music by the Spaniards José Bergamin and Rodolfo Halffter respectively; *El Renacuajo Paseador* (*The Wandering Tadpole*) with music by Silvestre Revueltas and costumes by Carlos Mérida; and *Balcon de España* (*Spanish Balcony*) counted with the Mexican Symphonic Orchestra to play music composed and arranged by Spanish musicians Antonio Soler and Rodolfo Halffter.

Although the initial modern dance troupe of the Ballet of Fine Arts subsidized by the state as well as the newly formed La Paloma Azul enlisted the collaboration of some Mexican Artists, some critics and government officials perceived most of the dances as too concerned with Spanish themes. *Don Lindo de Almería* was the first and one of the most celebrated of Sokolow’s achievements during her first phase in México as a choreographer. The work had actually being conceived by Bergamin and Halffter before they left Spain where Picasso and Joan Miró had agreed to collaborate in producing the piece before they all abandoned the project due to the political turmoil experienced in the country (Warren 1998). Halffner found out that Sokolow spoke some Spanish and knew a little of flamenco dancing and proposed to her to stage *Don Lindo de Almería*, a dance based on scenes from life in the Andalusian region of Spain (Warren 1998) and characterized by Jesús Bal y Gay (1940a) as possessing a “‘shophisticate’[sic] Spanish-ism” (2). The least appreciated for its aesthetic merits was *Lluvia de Toros* (*Rain of Bulls*), a dance inspired by the works of Goya, a Spanish artist highly

celebrated during the 19th century. Most of all other dances in between portrayed the subtleness of life in Spain and/or represented allegories about the political tribulations that Spain was undergoing under Franco's dictatorship and its relationship to European fascist regimes.

The underlying assumption in these dances as legitimate works of art was that Spain, its life and tribulations, could have universal resonance with the rest of the world, including people in México. As many other modern dancers in the U.S., Sokolow had choreographed her affinity with the Spanish cause and antifascist position before ever knowing that she would visit México. Her cause, the Spanish and antifascist cause, was indeed a matter of concern embraced by many Mexicans as well. Kostakowsky experienced and expressed this identification when she saw Sokolow's work in México City early in 1939. The critic claimed that one could sense the barbarism of Franco's regime and clench one's hands while witnessing the tragedy of the Spanish mother carrying her dead son resulting from aerial attacks by the fascist, as represented in Sokolow's *Slaughter of the Innocents* (Kostakowsky 1934, unidentified pg. number). However, the need to remain connected to Spain and critique its relations to fascism through *universalized* dance representations was not to be funded by the Mexican government. After her initial short season as the choreographer for the first Mexican modern dance company, the Ballet of Fine Arts, Sokolow lost institutional support in part because her preference for Spanish themed dances did not align with the Department of Fines Arts' goal of developing a genuinely Mexican dance form. Nevertheless, Adela Formoso de Obregón Santacilia, a philanthropist born in México to Spanish parents (D'Erzell 1940), took it upon herself to subsidize the work of

Sokolow and her Mexican and Spanish associates under the name of La Paloma Azul, a gesture some critics were grateful for (Bal y Gay 1940b; F.M. 1940; *El Universal* 1940d).¹⁰⁶

Larry Warren states that the name of La Paloma Azul was associated with the title of a traditional Mexican song and that it was also the name of a bar where people related to the



Figure 14. Sokolow’s La Paloma Azul, *El Universal*, September, 19, 1940: 12. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México, City.

project gathered (1998). Despite these Mexican roots of La Paloma Azul, some writers appreciated, as if adding prestige to the dance group, the European associations the name evoked. As if acknowledging that México was a *mestizo* country -the product of its indigenous peoples and their conquest and colonization by the Spanish during four centuries, Bal y Gay (1940b) thought that La Paloma Azul was a “good title for a Mexican dance company,

reminiscent of our European aesthetic affinities” (10). F. M. (1940) characterized the name for the Mexican modern dance group as a “poetic one . . . and

evocative of another group that was once famous in Europe” (11). The European associations that La Paloma Azul mobilized were specifically related to Spain. The group’s Spanish collaborators and sympathizers, including its private funder, extended their initial intentions and began to use “La Paloma Azul” as an umbrella term to present other artists from Spain alongside Sokolow’s Mexican modern dance troupe.

¹⁰⁶ Adela Formoso de Obregón Santacilia was the wife of artist and architect Carlos Obregón Santacilia who designed decorations for Sokolow’s *Antigone*.

In September 29, 1940, Bal y Gay (1940c) complained disappointedly, “it is a pity that the Mexican troupe ‘La Paloma Azul’ offered to us an entire program of ‘imported dance. It is a pity from a Mexican stand point” (2). The critic noted that “the corporeal reality that animated the stage was a Spanish group” directed by Antonio Triana and which included the Mexican dancer Margo in the troupe’s Spanish dances (Bal y Gay 1940c, 2). Bal y Gay (1940c)

Figure 15. La Paloma Azul features Spanish dances, *El Universal*, September 27, 1940: 12. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México, City.



characterized La Paloma Azul’s *inclusive* strategy as a “lamentable mistake” (2). He claimed that the

Spanish association’s goal should be the creation of a dance form of Mexican characteristics in its adaptations of modern techniques even if the group’s directors were foreigners and the dances were not exclusively Mexican in character (Bal y Gay 1940c, 2). For him as for many others, it was not necessary to see “México” on stage in an overt manner but to see Mexican bodies employing modern techniques while dancing the most universal aspects inherent in the *essence* of the nation. In another of his articles,

Bal y Gay (1940d) assured that *El Renacuajo Paseador* (*The Wandering Tadpole*) with Revueltas’ music and Mérida’s costumes, which according to the critic, “infantilizes [the audience] for the duration of the dance”, would lead La Paloma Azul towards the right direction; the dance was based on a story for children but it was staged and choreographed with a “very serious” artistic approach (2). Although some among the Mexican public, critics, artists, intellectuals, and government officials were willing to embrace Spanish themed dances and

artists, others were not. This resistance, as well as the withdrawal of Mrs. Adela Formoso de Obregón Santacilia's financial support, seemed to have contributed in the disbanding of La Paloma Azul towards the end of 1940. With the disappearance of this somewhat "Spanish-ish" group, Sokolow concluded her first contributions to the development of modern dance in México, first with the government-sponsored Ballet of Fine Arts and later with the privately funded La Paloma Azul.¹⁰⁷

Mérida, who had invited Sokolow to New York City, and, as part of the House of the Artist's Council, who hired Sokolow to lead the first Mexican modern dance company, the Ballet of Fine Arts, agreed with Bal y Gay. In recounting the short history of La Paloma Azul as published in *El Universal* in December 3, 1940, he admitted the group's organizers committed the "capital error" of distorting the group's initial intentions by associating La Paloma Azul with a series of Spanish dances by Spanish artists (Mérida 1940, 3). Mérida noted that there was resistance among some of the organizers of the project, including himself, and that the artistic "grafting" yielded the much feared results, "a very explicable antagonism between the two widely dissimilar parts in the show" (Mérida 1940, 3). This mistake, he assured, caused the project to be cut from ten to only five of the projected shows thus preventing the young Mexican dancers from gaining more performing experience and of sharing with their audiences México's new embodied modernism—even if most of their own pieces were inflicted with Spanish overtones.

Mérida's strongest complaint, however, was expressed with this question, "what did the corresponding official government organization do to encourage and support [La Paloma Azul]?" (Mérida 1940, 3). He decried the lack of institutional support to the artistic cause of the

¹⁰⁷ Sokolow continued visiting México and working with Mexican dancers throughout her life.

group as he denounced the inadequate technical assistance and limited time the modern dance troupe was given at the Palace of Fine arts for dress rehearsals and shows. For *Lluvia de Toros* (*Rain of Bulls*), Sokolow's dancers were allowed to rehearse one hour at the artistic precinct the day before the show. The short rehearsals for which the company had been scheduled early in the morning of the day of the dance's premiere were cancelled in order to accommodate the presentation of *The Wizard of Oz* by a group of preschoolers for about two hundred of their "sleep-weary mothers" (Mérida 1940, 3). For *El Renacuajo Paseador* (*The Wandering Tadpole*) La Paloma Azul rehearsed at the Palace of Fine Arts one and a half hours the day prior and only half an hour before the show. During the dance premiere, the staff refused to move a large duck, designed by Mérida, onto the stage, for which the set piece did not appear in the show. The stage-hands were not willing either to pull the backstage ropes that would lift a set-designed pig on which *Don Lindo of Almería* was supposed to rise to the heavens. This lack of technical assistance and limited rehearsal time represented a hindrance to the quality of the work showcased by Sokolow's Mexican modern dance company. As he said it, Mérida (1940) could not understand the "silent war" that the leadership at the Palace of Fine Arts waged against La Paloma Azul (3). Without naming anybody specifically, he expressed his and others' desire that the government supported "not one but two, three, or four dance companies", but he found it, as he said it, "absurd, penurious, and unintelligent to grant exclusive institutional protection to only one group" (Mérida 1940, 3).

A newspaper note reported in October 8, 1940 that rehearsals for the "new" Ballet of Fine Arts, previously directed by Sokolow, were underway. While La Paloma Azul had been presenting shows, the Department of Fine Arts had gathered an artistic Council to oversee the development of a dance repertoire that could contribute to the creation of "a dance [form] of

profound Mexican style and spirit” (*El Universal* 1940, 7). The Council would be integrated by Celestino Gorostiza, director of the Department of Fine Arts, as president; Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, a reputed painter, as scenographic advisor; Seki Sano as stage director; and Waldeen as the group’s choreographer. This new group of artists and government officials –including the director of the Department of Fine Arts- replaced the House of the Artist’s Council that had hired Sokolow to lead the Ballet of Fine Arts. The new Council under Celestino Gorostiza seem to have embraced the mission of ensuring that the development of a genuinely Mexican dance form took the *right* direction, which had not been the one taken by Sokolow and her associates. It seems that while Sokolow’s *La Paloma Azul* was enjoying private funding for the creation and presentation of mostly Spanish themed dances, The Department of Fine Arts was planning to satisfy a nationalist desire for a dance company that could embody a universalist discourse while readapting dance techniques in ways that dances could *touch* the Mexican public in a more deeply and direct fashion. The newspaper report asserted that the training for this new group of Mexican dancers under Waldeen’s choreographic direction would consist of the “basic study of universal dance, contemporary as well as classical ballet techniques, and styles from foreign and folkloric dances” (*El Universal* 1940, 7).

This artistic Council had clear goals. The new Mexican dance group would be cosmopolitan in nature; it would include dance styles from other countries. Under Waldeen’s choreographic directorship, the Ballet of Fine Arts would employ the classical techniques that had been proven to be foundational in the formation of professional dancers across geographical borders. The new dance troupe would also rely on the most contemporary dance techniques as a way of corporeally embodying and producing modernity on stage. Sokolow, like many other modern dancers in the U.S. at the time, was choreographing dances about *universalized* human

political struggle as it was being experienced in Spain after the Spanish Civil War in 1939 when fascism began to take momentum under Franco's ruling. However, organizers of this new Mexican dance troupe had a desire to no longer take Spain, its life and political tribulations- as the only valid source from which to realize, extract, and represent a presumably universal human bond and solidarity. Waldeen's reinvigorated Ballet of Fine Arts would rely –unapologetically- on Mexican folklore and *reality* as inspiration for enacting on stage new ways of being a member of the modern world while preserving one's own national identity.

The silent war” that Mérida accused the official institutions of waging against La Paloma Azul was not just on the allocation of resources. It was a “war” that would shift from “silent” to “louder” on aesthetic and ideological grounds as Sokolow's and Waldeen's approaches to dance making in México City produced distinctive embodied ideological aesthetics. Waldeen, who had been initially considered by critics as a dance innovator on purely aesthetic terms became aesthetically and politically “radicalized”. In many ways Waldeen had been politically defiant for most of her life as expressed in the choices she made as to who she would associate with in terms of modern dance production in New York City –“revolutionary” or “bourgeois”. In México, her *love* for the country's exoticism, a *love* most foreigner visitors at the time proclaimed upon their arrival in the country and/or as they imagined it from afar, took a strategically politicized form. Waldeen fully embraced México's fervent revolutionary nationalism as she experienced it in 1934 and 1939. She admired president Lázaro Cárdenas for his defiance of American imperialism and for his government's implementation of socialist policies.

As a modernist, she was equally concerned with universalism as the hallmark of “real” legitimate art as were Sokolow and most Mexican cultural architects inside and outside the

government. Unlike Sokolow, however, Waldeen was not apologetic in choreographing both abstractions of the *essence* as well as the most overt aspects of Mexican culture in her dance representations on stage. As if assuming that Waldeen's work -marked by Mexicaness- could not be as "universal" as Sokolow's Spanish themed dances could be, Warren (1998) noted that Sokolow, as opposed to Waldeen, "chose a more universal approach, believing that México would, in time, take its place as an international dance center" (75). Sokolow not only disdainfully referred to the work of Waldeen's eventual followers approach to dance making as "Welcome-to-sunny-México" (qtd. in Warren 1998, 75) but she also assured that "in México as in any other place in the world . . .the picturesque point of view is death to any art . . . [dance that is] too *pintoresco* [picturesque] and too concerned with being nationalistic and patriotic . . . is too small" (qtd. in Warren 1998, 121).¹⁰⁸ For Sokolow, a dance that was too concerned with nationalist and picturesque representations, as Waldeen and her followers were accused of, compromised "the larger potential of that art" (Warren 1998, 121). Based on these aesthetic criteria, a dance choreographing Mexican nationalist themes by employing "picturesque" representations lacked any universal potential and thus merely portrayed a localized caricature that could not be regarded as "real" legitimate modern art.

¹⁰⁸ Sokolow made these statements in a conference title "The Art of Choreography" in México City in 1956 when she and Merce Cunningham were part of a contingent of artists who were invited to teach and participate in two dance conferences at the Palace of Fine Arts. According to Warren (1998), Sokolow began to express at the conference the frustration she had always experienced while trying to produce work in México under constant questioning about nationalist content or lack thereof in her pieces.

Choreographing Politics, Dancing México and the Universal: *La Coronela* as Il/Legitimate Modern Art

While in México, and perhaps also in her Spanish themed dances, Sokolow seemed to have pursued an approach to dance making that foregrounded the abstraction of cultural essentials. In other words, she sought to abstract the essential elements of a culture in ways that their potential universal resonances with other human beings would not be compromised. Her aesthetic means of representation, therefore, did not need to assume any “literal” and obvious traces of nationalism. Waldeen’s approach was certainly not a foreigner’s naïve expression of her fascination with the exoticism of her adopted country that could in time feed into México’s tourist industry –albeit it could have. Her approach represented a strategic cultural essentialism that functioned at different levels simultaneously. Her dances –inflected with nationalist overtones- participated in the legitimization and consolidation of state power; they also contributed to the creation of a national identity that “third world” countries like México developed in order to appeal to the “first world” while retaining their local roots. Waldeen’s work also responded critically to the country’s current reality, a reality experienced differently by Sokolow and her Spanish associates.

Waldeen’s first program with her state-sponsored Mexican dance company resembled the representational approach that Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco and others had developed as part of México’s revolutionary nationalist project. A dance that showcased the ability of Mexican dancers to express the universal explicitly and three other works that referenced parts of México’s colonial and revolutionary history constituted the inauguration of the Ballet of Fine Arts on November 23, 1940 at the Palace of Fine Arts. *Seis Danzas Clasicas: Variaciones (Six Classical Dances: Variations)*,

Procesional (*ProceSSIONal*), *Danza de las Fuerzas Nuevas* (*Dance of the New Forces*) integrated the first part of the show and *La Coronela* (*Female Colonel*) closed the evening. *Seis Danzas Clasicas: Variaciones* (*Six Classical Dances: Variations*) were a short series of dances based on music by Johann Sebastian Bach and according to Horacio Quiñones (1940) writing for the magazine *Hoy*, they evinced México's "comprehension of what is universally human" (72). These classical dances were meant to serve as proof that the Ballet of Fine Arts was capable of choreographing and performing the universal in a more explicit manner because Mexican dancers were as capable as any other dancer in the modern world to do so. Including in the program dances inspired by Bach's music not only associated the new Mexican modern dance company with classical music as one of the highest standards of universality, as conceived in the Western world, but also as a gesture of modernity. Bach's music had been considered by many, including the Mexican critic Gonzalez Peña, as not written, thereby not suitable, for dance. However, as Duncan had danced to Bach's music in defiance of classical precepts, so did Waldeen and her dancers. As a universalist modern intervention alongside three nationalist revolutionary dances, *Seis Danzas Clasicas: Variaciones* (*Six Classical Dances: Variations*) represented a choreographic statement that could have stated, "look we can dance to the rhythms of what makes us all human, but we also choose to dance the universal through our own idiosyncrasies".

Mestizo Universalism

As a newspaper put it, *Procesional* was a dance that reflected "the Spanish domination in México" (*El Universal* 1940f, 8). The work's symbolism played various critical functions simultaneously. It evoked the Spaniard colonial domination that took México four centuries to

end—at least officially- by declaring its independence in 1810 and an additional one hundred years to start an armed revolution in 1910 as an attempt to remedy the neglect to which the majority of Mexicans have been subjected after the country's independence. The references to this domination in Waldeen's *Processional*, as in the work of the muralists, reminded people of their colonial history as part of their *mestizo* identity. Waldeen's interest in choreographing the historical dominion of the Spanish over México also posed a critique to what she and other Mexicans perceived with suspicion as an increased cultural presence by exiled Spaniards currently in the country.¹⁰⁹ I am referring here exclusively to the antagonism and resentment that some experienced when Sokolow, in association with her Mexican and Spanish associates, choreographed Spanish themed dances first with the Ballet of Fine Arts and later with La Paloma Azul. Waldeen's *Processional* constituted an implicit critique to Sokolow's and her associates' aesthetic and ideological concerns. It seemed to denounce the potential for a contemporary cultural domination by the Spanish while also reclaimed México's *new forces* among its people, culture and politics as a legitimate source for dance representations with universal appeal. In this process of representational legitimization, Waldeen was willing to employ any means necessary—"picturesque", nationalist or otherwise- to strategically take a stand on how she and her Mexican associates believed México should look on stage.

According to critics, *Danza de las Fuerzas Nuevas (Dance of the New Forces)* "expressed the agitated life of modern México" (*El Universal* 1940f, 8) and the country's faith in its future (Quiñones 1940, 72). Although there were no further specific descriptions of this

¹⁰⁹ For instance, as an end-of-the-year reflection on various performances in theaters throughout the city during 1940, Roberto El Diablo (1940) described the Spanish presence with the following words: "Because of the increased flow that the Spanish immigration current has experienced in recent times, the so-called 'refuges', they had a manifested meddling in our theatrical activities . . ." (22).

dance, it most likely depicted some form of the *new forces* that the Mexican nationalist revolutionary murals represented: the indigenous, peasants, the working masses –men and women- as well as revolutionary figures united against capitalist exploitation while also reaffirming their national cultural identity. *La Coronela* certainly choreographed these new forces on stage as mobilized by a revolutionary female colonel. *La Coronela* was divided into four sections: *Damitas de Aquellos Tiempos (Ladies of Those Past Times)*, *Danza de los Desheredados (Dance of the Disinherited)*, *La Pesadilla de Don Ferruco (Mr. Ferruco's Nightmare)*, and *Juicio Final (The Final Judgement)*. *Damitas de Aquellos Tiempos (Ladies of Those Past Times)* choreographed a satiric representation of the frivolities and banalities that characterized, according to the creators of *La Coronela*, the female bourgeoisie under Porfirio Díaz's regime prior to the Mexican revolution of 1910. The second section of the dance, *Danza de los Desheredados (Dance of the Disinherited)*, was characterized by the plight of the dispossessed who had been exploited by the capitalist bourgeoisie; the dance also portrayed the inevitable uprising of the people led by a determined female revolutionary leader. In *La Pesadilla de Don Ferruco (Mr. Ferruco's Nightmare)*, the masses in process of liberation celebrated the fall of the powerful *ferrucos* who contributed in sustaining prevalent systems of domination. El *Juicio Final (The Final Judgement)* represented the damnation of all those – irrespective of their ties to influential people- who had exploited the indigenous, the peasants and the working masses (Delgado Martínez 1994).



Figure 16. *La Coronela's Dance of the Disinherited*. Drawings by Germán Oracio, *Hoy*, November, 1940. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.

Sonia Verbitzty (1940), one of the very few female music critics at the time, sat at the premier of *La Coronela* with heightened expectancy. Before the first musical notes could be heard and the curtain began to rise “I waited”, she said, “with anguish, with shortness of breath, my throat was dried” (2). As most critics and audiences in general, Verbitzty was deeply *touched* by the emotional force of the *Danza de los Desheredados* (*Dance of the Disinherited*), the dance of the dispossessed and exploited. About this section of *La Coronela*, the critic recounted:

a group of disinherited female silhouettes began to emerge from the shadows. With severely slow and profound lines, with a sharp F in the lower tonalities, Revueltas sings [and the women dance] pain . . . an implacable pain . . . the pain of a whole race, of the people of a country. The Mexican woman moans, she bends down due to her torment as the music expresses her agony. There are accents of supplication, accents of revelry, of cries and grumbles. Pain and more pain. It seems as though all that México has suffered for centuries has been accumulated in its son Silvestre Revueltas [and in the dancers' moves] (Verbitzky 1940, 2).



Figure 17. *La Coronela's Dance of the Disinherited*. Drawings by Germán Horacio, *Hoy*, November, 1940. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.

Verbitzky's experience of the dance and the music of *La Coronela* synthesized for her the pain that the dispossessed amongst the Mexican people in general and women in particular had endured as a result of the country's history of colonization by the Spanish, of subjugation under Díaz's regime, and of exploitation by the capitalist bourgeoisie. The identification Mexican

audiences experienced with this section of *La Coronela* –especially in rural areas- was so



Figure 18. *La Coronela*. Drawings by Germán Horacio, Hoy, November, 1940. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, México City.

intimate that Waldeen once recalled how the public often asked that the piece was performed again before the next section of the dance would start, which happened at least once (qtd. in *La Coronela* (1940) [VHS], 2001).

In addition to its strong appeal to local audiences, many thought that *La Coronela* could offer a role model to other struggling nations around the world. While WWII was underway and the strong stand against fascism was embraced by some dancers in the U.S. and México –in Spanish disguise- as a universal cause during 1940, *La Coronela*'s nationalist revolutionary *roots* also offered an alternate form of universalism. According to Quiñones (1940) this dance represented the “beginning of a vigorous Mexican renaissance . . . what is ours expressed to such human heights that it is universally valid . . . a Mexican thing with universal essence”

(72). He went further to make a distinction perhaps in reference to Sokolow's *La Paloma Azul* approach. He wrote about *La Coronela* and the Ballet of Fine Arts,

“a small group of fortunate artists had managed to extract from our very inner core the elements

to create a superior expression of Mexican characteristics. Not Spanish. Not Indigenous. Mexican” (Quiñones 1940, 72). Quiñones was not ignoring the Spaniard element in his formula, but he implicitly refuted it as the sole ingredient. This new “superior” form of expression was neither solely indigenous; it was Mexican –a *mestizo* culture composed by the indigenous and the European, capable of being universal while retaining its local roots. Still trapped within a Western discourse, this *mestizo* universalism, however, challenged the implicit and/or explicit privilege given to whiteness as the prototype of the so-called universal. In the words of Delgado Martínez (1994), *La Coronela* was “an expression of the victory of a group of people who fight for their freedom” (23). Perhaps as an attempt to legitimize *La Coronela* as “real” legitimate modern art for its presupposed capacity to transcend time and geographical borders, Martínez Delgado’s strategic wording implies that any group of people fighting for their liberty could identify with the Mexican dance. In the turbulent global context of the early 1940s, *La Coronela* implicitly claimed that not just the Spanish plight under Franco but also that the Mexican nationalist revolutionary struggle could serve as a universal model for pursuing freedom, for demanding people’s rights, for engaging in revolutionary action.

In reflecting about some inroads towards this articulation of the local and the universal, some writers also noted the potential that *La Coronela* and the Ballet of Fine Arts had for providing a renewed sense of national unification. For many this artistic accomplishment was indeed the “first serious effort” (*El Universal* 1940g, 7), the “first serious step” in communicating through dance in an intimate way with the Mexican people (Muños 1940, 11). In his article “Our First Corps de Ballet: The Modern Dance”, Mauricio Muños, from the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, lauded the work of the School of Dance under the direction of Nellie Campobello for having produced a generation of professional dancers eager and ready

to take up the challenge in the modernization of Mexican dance. He also acknowledged the efforts of the House of the Artist for hiring Sokolow to lead the first Mexican modern dance company. He applauded the artistic contributions of Spaniards like Halffner and the financial support of Mrs. Adela Formoso de Obregón Santacilia, who had subsidized *La Paloma Azul*. In a conciliatory tone, Muños claimed that the only way to continue creating “authentically national” dances that could speak to Mexicans as well as to people in other parts of the world would be to overcome institutional and private antagonisms in what should be a collective effort. For Muños, the newly invigorated Ballet of Fine Arts and its *La Coronela* represented the hope for a national reunification of its fractured social factions, an unlikely possibility.

The Politics of De/Politicizing Dance: Embodied, Verbal and Written Discourses

The debates engendered by Sokolow’s and Waldeen’s distinctive approaches to modern dance making exposed many of the tensions inherent in México’s complex processes of national identity formation during the 1930s and 1940s. At the core of these debates was not so much whether or not a dance should represent a political intervention, but instead it was the means used in such choreographic endeavor that were disputed. However, the artistic and ideological antagonism that developed between Sokolow and Waldeen was perhaps mostly characterized by the way they contextualized their dances on stage rather than by the ways their dancers move in space. In a section of *La Coronela*, Waldeen included segments of choreography in which the dancers performed steps evocative of Mexican traditional dances while interspersing them with leg extensions clearly citing classical ballet technique.¹¹⁰ Depending on what the intention of

¹¹⁰ These observations are based on a reconstruction of *La Coronela* produced by the UTEC and INBA in 1986.

each section in *La Coronela* was, these extensions along with *attitudes* and *développés* were just a few examples of the balletic vocabulary that Waldeen combined with Mexican traditional steps as well as with more abstracted movement vocabulary as shown in the drawing in figures 16-17 above. Germán Horacio made these drawings while visiting rehearsals for *La Coronela* in 1940.¹¹¹ His figures correspond with the dancers' costumes, poses, and the movements they evoke, as shown in the dance section, *Danza de los Desheredados (Dance of the Disinherited)*, in a reconstruction of *La Coronela* produced in 1986 in México City (*La Coronela* [DVD] 1986). The simple blouse and long, wide dark-blue skirt was complemented, in the reconstruction of the dance, by a black shawl that the women wore around their heads. The plain and austere color of their costumes effectively portrayed these women as a type of universal mother, daughter, wife, or female citizen whose abstract movement vocabulary re-produced an embodied representation of human suffering and struggle in the midst of sociopolitical turmoil. This universalist section of the piece, however, existed within the context of the most explicit representations of Mexican revolutionary nationalism employed in other sections of the dance thereby articulating a form of *mestizo* universalism.

When Sokolow qualified the work by Waldeen's followers as a "Welcome-to-Sunny-México" approach to dance production (qtd. in Warren 1998, 75), she was perhaps making this characterization based on the fact that Waldeen and her students included in their choreographies steps, costumes, and sets that could be identified as explicit referents to Mexican folklore and nationalism, and for Sokolow, any dance that was ". . . too *pintoresco* [picturesque] and too concerned with being nationalistic and patriotic . . . is too small" (qtd. in Warren 1998, 121). For

¹¹¹ Germán Horacio's drawings were included as part of Quiñones' (1940) article, "El Ballet Mexicano", in which he lauded *La Coronela* as a truly Mexican dance with universal reach (72).

her, any explicit traces of picturesque folklore and/or nationalism compromised the universal potential characteristic of “real” legitimate modern art. Although she claimed to do something more artistically legitimate than Waldeen, her dances about universal political struggle continued to be identified with a specific geographical locale –Spain. Like Waldeen, she developed her own abstract dance vocabulary although it was inspired by her former teachers’, Graham, technique, which Waldeen had especially repudiated and characterized as one of many “trap[s] of a new formalism” while she was working in New York City with Ito in the 1930s (qtd. in Delgado Martínez 2000, 23). Also, like Waldeen, Sokolow was combining her own Graham-inspired abstract movement technique with ballet vocabulary while teaching and choreographing in México City. According to Warren (1998), Sokolow’s reencounter with ballet in México would affect her critical reception back in New York City. As Margaret Lloyed of the Christian Science Monitor commented about the “changing Anna [Sokolow]”, “[t]he social comment was sweeter . . . [and] there was . . . a new lightness of mood and manner in her dancing (lifted by ballet techniques)” (qtd in Warren 1998, 78).¹¹²

Despite their similarities, the differences that in fact existed between Sokolow and Waldeen approaches to dance making were further magnified by the ways these artists discursively evaluated each other as artistically oppositional. However, in spite of their differences, these two artists could be considered “bourgeois dissidents” in representing their political progressiveness through aesthetic means distinctively informed by high modernism, Bal y Gal, the Mexican critic, would represent another force of contention –the outspoken “bourgeois”. As I discussed earlier, Bal y Gay was very disappointed when those associated with

¹¹² See Warren (1998) for more on the negative ways in which critics in New York City thought that Sokolow’s approach to choreography and dancing was compromised as a result of her stay in México City.

Sokolow's *La Paloma Azul* included Spanish dances by dancers from Spain as part of shows by the reconfigured organization. He had nevertheless generally praised Sokolow's dances with her privately funded dance group. Although many thought that Sokolow's works stressed more Spanish instead of Mexican themes, Bal y Gay did not mind that her dances were not necessarily Mexican in character in an explicit manner. For the critic, however, Waldeen's *La Coronela* was a more problematic work for the ways it articulated its politics. He expressed his views strategically in two separate articles published in different dates.

On December 3, 1940, Bal y Gay (1940e) strategically highlighted the *purely* aesthetic merits of Waldeen's Ballet of Fine Arts' repertoire as he warned readers that in a later article, he would discuss the "legitimacy of certain inspirations" evident in the dances (8). In the current article, he praised *ProceSSIONal* for using "subtle musical and plastic allusions" in creating an atmosphere that truly felt as if audiences were taken back in time to México's viceroyalty epoch. He thought that the dance's moves were arranged in an orderly fashion and that its music was "noble, of good taste, without unnecessary effects and thus of profound efficacy . . ." (Bal y Gay 1940, 8). Bal y Gay asserted that *La Coronela* had been Waldeen and her collaborators' great success and that the dance was characterized by the choreographer's signature movement vocabulary, ably executed by the dancers. The critic was delighted by the music by Revueltas and approvingly commented on the costumes, lighting and other theatrical strategies. In general, the critic lauded the formal aspects of the first program of the Ballet of Fine Arts under Waldeen's choreographic direction.

Only five days later, on December 8, Bal y Gay summarized in his second article titled, "El Arte y La Política" ("Art and Politics"), one of the most conservative notions of art as purportedly the most noble vehicle for the purification and edification of the human *spirit* – a

position embraced by the most reactionary amongst the Mexican bourgeoisie. The critic reiterated his appreciation for *La Coronela*'s aesthetic accomplishments. However, he wanted to question the "legitimacy of certain sources of inspiration when it comes to create art" for which he started his impassionate commentary by condemning what he called the dance's "original sin: its political sentiments" (Bal y Gay 1940, 2). He noted that the explicit intention of the dance was to exalt the Mexican revolution and refused to "take advantage" of his position as a writer to spill any more "political propaganda", for otherwise, he would be committing the same "sin" that he was attempting to condemn (Bal y Gay 1940, 2).¹¹³ Bal y Gay (1940) equated *La Coronela* with a few murals that were threatened to be destroyed because of their political content and assured that those works were "conceived by politics not *Art*" [my emphasis] (2). He rationalized that true "Art" belonged to the "dominion of the spirit" and, in his own words, that the "salvation of the Art of the future resides in a eugenics that refutes all parasitic or deleterious elements to artistic creation and delectation" (Bal y Gay 1940, 2).

It was clear that in his second article, the critic dissipated what might have seemed an initial ambivalence between his appreciation for *La Coronela*'s formal aesthetic aspects and his repudiation for the dance's firm political expressivity. Bal y Gay was an astute, indeed, an artistic performative writer. In his first article, he had strategically focused on praising *La Coronela* solely for its aesthetic merits. In his second article, he slashed his critical whip against

¹¹³ Bal y Gay was not the only one who suggested that Waldeen and her collaborators were political opportunist using art for the "illegitimate" purpose of instilling in the populace their revolutionary political propaganda. Roberto El Diablo (1940) celebrated the artistic promise of the Ballet of Fine Arts' young Mexican dancers but declared that the technique "imposed" to them by their teacher, Waldeen, had deviated from classical precepts in favor of the prevalent "political opportunism" and assured that for that reason, the modern dance group "did not satisfy the general public's taste" (23). Roberto El Diablo was one of the same critics who in 1919 had venerated Pavlova for revitalizing México City's spiritual life with her Europeanized ballet repertoire. See chapter one and two of this dissertation for some of his reactions to what he deemed Pavlova's spiritualizing prowess.

the nationalist revolutionary dance work for its purported contamination of “Art” through politicized “parasitic and deleterious” intentions. In separating aesthetic analysis and political critique in individual articles, Bal y Gay choreographed what was for him the clear, irreconcilable division between aesthetic formalism and political commentary in dancing and/or writing. The talented yet conservative critic neglected the fact that dance is always produced in a sociopolitical context informed by historically determined economic and cultural imperatives. He ignored that a dance work is always imbued with a politics as the dance simultaneously reproduces –implicitly and/or explicitly- different sets of politics in response to the complex context in which it is produced. For Bal y Gay, “Art” and politics must be separated for to combine “Art” with politics, he wrote, “is to prostitute it”; according to him, politics must be left where it belonged, “in newspapers, books, and conferences” (Bal y Gay 1940, 2). For the critic, dance must not tend to the concerns of the mundane but to the delights of whatever was for him, the human spirit.

As if trying to justify his position –which to some extent it did- Bal y Gay made a telling confession. He wrote, “many Mexicans would tell me that I cannot feel the Mexican Revolution. It is true for I have not experienced it. But what nobody can take away from me is the possibility that I can feel what is Art” (Bal y Gay 1940, 2). Bal y Gay’s specific reason for not having experienced the Mexican revolution is less interesting for me than are the various reasons for which he, and people like him, could possibly not *feel* such, or similar, experience. Class privilege is certainly not a sure guaranty of immunity in times of sociopolitical and economic turmoil. This privilege, however, increases the likelihood that the most affluent members of society could buffer the impact of a precarious national or global context, just as José Limón admitted that many of the affluent dancers in Humphrey’s company were “immune” to the

severe effects of the great depression in New York City during the 1930s. A privileged social status can certainly prevent someone from experiencing the immediacy of exploitation and marginalization. How difficult can it be for an individual in that social position to conceive the urgency for social justice not only through “books and conferences” but also through art in general and dance in particular as many revolutionary dancers did in the 1930s in New York City and in México City? The depoliticization of art and dance can be seen more often than not as the luxury product of class privilege and its detachment from the urgency of engaging in a democratic distribution of wealth and resources. Sublimating dance as “real” legitimate modern art in the name of cultivating a pretentiously universal human spirit to the expense of the politics that impact the regulation of bodies implicitly functions to preserve a socially stratified status quo. Thus in that *secured* social arrangement nobody can take away from people like Bal y Gay the possibility to feel what is “real” legitimate modern Art, uncontaminated by the politics of the mundane.

Towards De/Constructions of Artistic Identity: Modern Dance in New York City and México City

Just as some dancers worked with both revolutionary and bourgeois choreographers in New York City during the 1930s, Mexican dancers worked with both Sokolow and Waldeen in México City during the 1940s. Although aesthetic and ideological distinctions among people who intentionally politicized their dances were equally blurry, there were some premises that various factions claimed as constitutive of what represented –for them- “real” legitimate modern art. People like Humphrey and Weidman in New York City as well as Sokolow and Mérida in México City represented what Raymond Williams (1989) would call, a class of “bourgeois

dissidents”. If Humphrey was willing to “disapprove of injustice and exploitation of the poor by the rich”, she preferred not to address that situation with an “armed and bloody insurrection, Russian Style” (Limón 1998, 70). She would probably have agreed with Bal y Gay, who concluded his critique of *La Coronela*’s politics by saying, “rather than calling ourselves comrades, let us call each other gentlemen” or ladies.¹¹⁴ In México City in 1940, Sokolow and Mérida favored an abstract approach to embodied politics while refuting traces of anything overtly nationalist or rudimentarily picturesque. The artistic progressiveness of these “bourgeois dissident” artists privileged a subtle if not “tamed” politics adorned with highly sophisticated aesthetics to produce an explicit formalism with implicit politics. Anything that compromised the formal primacy in this approach to dance making with its subtle politics as a secondary and/or tangential byproduct, would render the work as anything but “real” legitimate art. Although Waldeen might have been accused by people like Sokolow for producing illegitimate, picturesque dances suitable only for tourist consumption, Waldeen’s highly modernist form of indigenized universalism rendered her a unique type of “bourgeois dissident” invested in México’s revolutionary nationalism.

In the realm of cultural production, the purely conservative “bourgeois” and the more progressive “bourgeois dissident” would condemn others either for daring to employ dancers with little or no professional training, for approaching revolutionary representation inadequately, or for politicizing dance in the first place. Graff (1997) noted that Segal employed amateur performers “who probably had more enthusiasm than technique” (27) and thus many considered her work as mere political propaganda. While in 1935 Mérida and Barro Sierra harshly criticized

¹¹⁴ Bal y Gay used the word “comrades” in allusion to the way many communists in México, and in other countries, called one another.

the Campobello sisters' *Barricada* for the lack of technical sophistication and other poorly accomplished formal aspects of the production, in 1939 César Ortiz criticized Mexican dance groups that had relied, according to him, "on the gratuitous recourse of the red flag and the overall to create 'revolutionary' dance" (1939, 6). With almost Ortiz's exact words, Lya Kostakowsky (1939) slashed against the Campobello's *Ballet Simbolico 30-30* for its lack of formal refinement and characterized it as the prototype of "proletariat art" (unidentified pg. number). In New York City, people like Edna Ocko would criticize revolutionary dance for its lack of excellent technique or like John Martin for its overt political intentions. Ocko (1935) called revolutionary dance groups like The Red Dancers and the Nature Friends as "unsuitable" for the concert stage because their poorly technical work merely amounted to "a commendable variety of agit-prop dance" (in Garafola 1994, 76). Martin would accuse the "young Left-winger" dancers of using the First Dance Congress in 1936 in New York City as an "unofficial political rally, making use of the dance merely as a springboard . . ." to forward their political agenda (qtd. in Ocko, 1936 in Garafola 1994, 93). Like Martin, Limón and Bal y Gay shared a notion of "real" legitimate modern art as a form of cultural production beyond the contamination of mundane politics.

Although there were commonalities in conceptions about the relationship between arts and politics as well as the language used to describe it, New York City and México City represented two very different contexts in terms of dance production. In New York City, the so-called revolutionary and bourgeois aesthetic and political approaches to dance making reflected the diverse ways in which artists were willing or not to engage with the urgency and immediacy of a precarious economic environment. In México City, revolutionary dance production was informed by a fervent nationalist project geared towards the consolidation of a collective identity

as a modern nation -a national modernization contested by moderately progressive as well as bourgeois forces. As I near the conclusion of this chapter, and this dissertation, I have chosen to juxtapose some highlights in the development of modern dance in these two cities not as an attempt to make an exhaustive comparison of their dis/similarities. Rather, I placed them alongside one another hoping to elucidate epistemological assumptions embodied in these dance histories as they reveal some of the nuanced complexities inherent in processes of becoming human.

If this sounds pretentious, I would say then that this has been an effort to understand how dance contributes to *constructing* what dancers, choreographers, audiences and funders, as well as dance critics, historians and scholars believe about themselves and others. The claims these different constituencies articulate in regards to what constitutes “real” legitimate modern art for them, invariably reflects in complex combinations their racial, social, gender and cultural backgrounds. Choreographers and writers who disregard politics as part of the process of dance production as well as those who choreograph politics in an explicit or implicit fashion put at stake the very core of their identity, their privilege, their allegiances, their particular sense of collectivity and relationality. Their choreographic strategies preserve and/or further not only their ideological but also their material interests. They create and establish a notion of what reality should be while others seem to question and strive to reconstitute that reality. By imbuing their choreographies with distinctive impassioned affective investments, dancers and writers hope to set themselves apart: some as members of a class of beings with access to an abstracted spiritual realm or superior intangible knowledge while others aspire -through any means necessary- to a mundanely terrestrial egalitarianism.

Epilogue: *La Coronela* as Point of Departure, a Point of Culmination, and as Just one More Dancing Step

Many have accurately characterized *La Coronela* as a point of departure for the development of a nationalist revolutionary form of dance, genuinely Mexican yet with universal expressive capacity. However, the fact that I have been writing variations of the second clause of my previous sentence throughout this dissertation might suggest that *La Coronela* also represented a point of culmination. Anna Palvova was indeed not the beginning either when she choreographed a balleticized rendition of *El Jarabe Tapatío* twenty-one years before Waldeen's dance about a female colonel leading a revolution was presented in 1940. However, Pavlova's visit to the country reinvigorated the desire to develop a dance form that could embody the country's *mestizo* identity while employing the most sophisticated and prestigious dance technique at the time, ballet. The appropriation of Mexican folkloric and popular culture in this post-revolutionary nationalist project of modernization responded to the ongoing need of consolidating a unifying local identity while at the same time trying to appeal to the modern world. Having the so-called "frivolous" genres as a backdrop during the 1920s and 1930s, the government instituted the professionalization of Mexican dancers as an effort to realize a national dance company worthy of representing México on the international stage. The works choreographed and presented by dance teachers and their students, as well as workers and peasants included in some of those productions during the 1930s represented the nationalist revolutionary building blocks on which *La Coronela* was anchored. The musicians and muralist who have also contributed to México's cultural revolution provided the space in which to conceive *La Coronela*. Sokolow and her Spanish associates might have unintentionally fueled Waldeen's and her Mexican collaborators' choreographies of revolutionary nationalism. In 1939,

the state-sponsored School of Dance had produced the first generation of professional dancers who along with Sokolow would start the first modern dance company in the country, and those who with Waldeen would present the first genuinely Mexican modern dance piece with universal aspirations, *La Coronela*. In a sense, the dance represented the culmination of at least two decades of heated debates and passionate efforts.

Most reviews of *La Coronela*'s season premiere at the end of November in 1940 lauded the piece, in many different ways, as the promising beginning of a modern dance form, universal in its intent and profoundly Mexican in its *essence*. Similarly, most Mexican dance historians characterized the dance as a beginning. Following this premise, in collaboration with various institutions, the dance research center, Cenidi-Danza, based in México City produced a documentary titled *La Coronela (1940) Punto de Partida (La Coronela (1940) Point of Departure)* in 2001. Waldeen's dance certainly constituted a point of departure for artists who continued engaging with a dance making characterized by a revolutionary nationalism and which led to the so-called golden age of Mexican modern dance in the early 1950s when Miguel Covarrubias invited José Limón and other foreign choreographers to teach and choreograph in México City. The debates as to what constituted "real" legitimate modern art, however, did not start with the first presentation of *La Coronela*; they were pervasively present even before Pavlova visited the country in 1919.

The artistic antagonism between Sokolow and Waldeen was embodied by two factions of their students who were eventually identified as *Las Sokolovas* and *Waldeenas*. Although these dancers shifted allegiances often, they embraced distinctive values that characterized their respective teachers as they continue working in developing modern dance in México. In 1947 the Department of Fine Arts founded a second dance school, the Academia de la Danza Mexicana

(Academy of Mexican Dance). Guillermina Bravo and Ana Mérida were appointed first directors of the new school. However, soon after the inauguration of the school, Bravo left the co-directorship after being charged with leading a communist cell (Tortajada Quiroz 1995). Like her mentor, Waldeen, she had taken a more radical approach to dance making and political discourse. Bravo founded her own Ballet Nacional de México in 1948 and which eventually became one of the most “artistically stable and solid dance companies in México and Latin America” (Dallal 1986, 107-109).

Modern dance was not the only path that Waldeen’s and Sokolow’s disciples took. In 1952, Amalia Hernández, one of Waldeen’s students contributed in forming, along with her mentor, the Ballet Moderno de México but Hernández opted for an independent career and formed a new dance company that focused on Mexican folklore. She would make a successful career presenting works that were reminiscent of what Sokolow despised so much about Waldeen’s and her follower’s work and which she characterized as the “Welcome-to-sunny-México” approach. With a company of eight dancers, Hernández was soon hired by a television station to perform a weekly dance program on the air. In the late 1950s her Mexican folkloric dance company was embraced by the ministry of tourism and began to travel to other countries as a cultural ambassador. Her company caught the attention of Mexican president Rodolfo López Mateos who pledged to make Hernández’s company “the best dance company in the world” (qtd. in Ballet Folklórico de México 2012: <http://www.balletamalia.com/eng.html>). What would eventually become her Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández was hired as a company in residence by the Department of Fine Arts, initially as a tourist attraction, and began to perform three shows a week since 1959 to the present time.

While *La Coronela* can represent a point of culmination and a point of departure, the dance seemed also to have constituted just one more step in the ongoing search for approaches to dance making that could integrate Mexican dancers' local identities with their cosmopolitan aspirations. As I traveled back and forth to conduct archival research for this dissertation, I met many choreographers, dancers, dance administrators and writers. As I heard their artistic concerns during our causal conversations at a bar or restaurant in the evenings, I detected echoes of the newspaper articles that I had read, or skimmed through during the day while probing the archives at the library. Not that these artists and writers are fixed in the past, but similar questions still linger as Mexican dancers and choreographers negotiate their artistic interests while their dance production is still mainly funded by the state.¹¹⁵ In this context, these contemporary artists continue to debate what constitutes "real" legitimate modern art, worthy of funding by the state as well as of satisfying the demands imposed by international dance markets. They ask themselves in various ways how much can one mark one's difference to satisfy the desire for exotic others on the national and global stages; how much Mexican or "neutral" can they be while fashioning their own identities as Mexicans and/or as some variation of the "citizen of the world." In a time where some people pretentiously proclaim the transcendence of human identity markers in the name of an "equal opportunity" post-racial, post-gender, post-class post-etc. world, many Mexican dancers wonder how much and when they must mark their difference as a response to colonizing maneuvering that pretends to universalize a western, white, male, heteronormative universe. As I wrote this dissertation, as I talked to and danced with my Mexican colleague choreographers, dancers and writers, as I saw their dances on stage, I

¹¹⁵ México's taxation system does not provide many incentives to private corporations who may contribute to funding dance companies and/or other organizations invested in cultural production.

continued to see the history of Mexican dance evolving. In this process, I make a conscious effort to sense and feel the ghost of Pavolva, the Campobellos, Sokolow, Waldeen and many others, dancing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ali, Ben. "Algunas Reflecciones Acerca del Ballet Mexicano". *El universal Ilustrado*, Marzo 1927: 30-31.
- Amendolla. "Una Fiesta de Plasticidad y Belleza fue la Presentacion de Michio Ito el Notable Bailarin Japones y sus Solistas" *La Prensa*, Junio 4, 1934: 4.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London; New York: Verso, 2006.
- Anyon, Nell. "The Task of the Revolutionary Dance." *New Theatre*. (September-October, 1933). In Franko, Mark. *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995: 113-115.
- Aulestia, Patricia. *Las "Chicas Bien" de Miss Carroll: Estudio y Ballet Carroll (1923-1964)*. Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura; Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza José Limón. México DF: México, 2003.
- . "Victoria (Vicky) Ellis". *Cuadernos del CID-DANZA, no. 16: Una Vida Dedicada a la Danza*. Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes/Dirección de Investigación y Documentación de las Artes. México DF: México 1987: 3-6.
- . "Lettie Carroll". *Boletín Informativo del CID-DANZA, no. 2. Sección de Invitados*. Centro de Información y Documentación de la Danza. México DF: México, 1985: 6-8.
- Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández, 2012; <http://www.balletamalia.com/eng.html>. Website.
- Bal y Gay, Jesús. 1940a. "La Paloma Azul: Resumen de su Primera Temporada". *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas Musicales*, Octubre 20, 1940: 2, 3.
- . b. "Sandor.- La Paloma Azul". *El Universal*, Sección, *Cronicas Musicales*, Septiembre 22, 1940: 10, 11.
- . c. "La Paloma Azul: Españolizada". *El Universal*, 2da Sección: *Cronicas Musicales*, Septiembre 29, 1940: 2.
- . d. "El Renacuajo Paseador .- Adiós a Revueltas". *El Universal*, 3ra Sección : *Cronicas Musicales*, Octubre 6, 1940: 2.
- Beard, Mary and Henderson, John. *Classics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

- Best Maugard, Adolfo. *Metodo de Dibujo: Tradición, Resurgimiento y Evolución del Arte Mexicano*. México: Ediciones la Rana; Departamento de la Secretaria de Educación Publica, 1923; Secretaria de Educación Publica, 1964.
- Bidault de la Calle, Sophie. *Nellie Campobello: Una Escritura Salida del Cuerpo*. Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura. Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información José Limón. México DF: México, 2003.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Buffalmacco. 1919a. "Pavlowa, Emperatriz de Rusia Desea Conocer Xochimilco y Visitar el Teatro Lirico". *El Pueblo*, January 21, 1919: 3.
- b. "El Ballet Ruso, en Arbeu". *El Pueblo*, Secc. *Los Espectaculos*, January 26, 1919: 5.
- c. "La Maravilla del Ballet Ruso". *El Pueblo*, Secc. *Los Espectaculos*, Enero 29, 1919: 3.
- d. "La Maravilla del Ballet Ruso". *El Pueblo*, Secc. *Los Espectaculos*, Febrero 1, 1919: 7.
- e. "Raimunda, en el Arbeu". *El Pueblo*, Secc. *Los Espectaculos*, Febrero 5, 1919: 8.
- f. "Volinine y Vlasta Maslowa, Intimos" *El Pueblo*, Febrero 4, 1919: 7.
- g. "Lo que Dijeron a la Señora Pavlowa en el Extranjero, Respecto a México, y lo que Ella ha Venido a Encontrar: Palabras de Sinceridad y Entusiasmo". *El Pueblo*, Marzo 27, 1919: 3, 5.
- h. "La Fantasía Mexicana: Ballet de Merito". *El Pueblo*, Secc. *Los Espectaculos*, Marzo 19, 1919: 7.
- Carter, Mary. 1985a. Entrevista a Lettie H. Carroll. San Antonio Evening News, June, 1924. In Bastien, Kena. "El Jarabe Tapatío y la China Poblana". *Boletin Informativo del CID-DANZA*, no. 3. Centro de Información y Documentación de la Danza. México DF: México, 1985: 18-20.
- b. Entrevista a Lettie H. Carroll. San Antonio Evening News, June, 1924. In Bastien, Kena. "Miss Lettie Carroll en La Basilica de Guadalupe". *Boletin Informativo del CID-DANZA*, no. 2. Sección de Invitados. Centro de Información y Documentación de la Danza. México DF: México, 1985: 23-24.
- CENART. BMP 59. Biblioteca Centro Nacional de las Artes del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes. Documento en Expediente Best Maugard, Adolfo: BMP 59.

- Clitandro. "Las 'Danzas Aztecas' de Norka Rouskaya". *El Universal*, 1919: 7.
- Consejo Nacional Para Prevenir la Discriminación (CONAPRED) <http://www.conapred.org.mx/>, Website.
- . http://terratv.terra.com.mx/Noticias/Actualidad/Mexico/Conapred-realiza-video-sobre-Racismo-en-Mexico_5178-356586.htm, Online video.
- Cronica Ilustrada*, 1968a. "Revolución Mexicana". *Documenta Americana*, No. 73, Editada por Publex, México, Enero 10, 1968.
- . b. "Revolución Mexicana". *Documenta Americana*, No. 72, Editada por Publex, México, Enero 3, 1968.
- Dallal, Alberto. "Anna Pavlova en México". *Anales II E60*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1989: 163-178. (http://www.analesiie.unam.mx/pdf/60_163-178.pdf).
- . *La Danza en México*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986.
- Daly, Ann. *Done Into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1995.
- de Alhamar, Alvaro. "Norka Rouskaya se Va". *El Universal*, Enero 13, 1919: 3.
- de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.
- DeFrantz, Thomas R. *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- de la Rosa, Leopoldo. "La Semana Lirica: La Musica y la Danza". *Revista de Revistas*, Febrero 2, 1919: 5.
- Delgado Martínez, César. *Waldeen: La Coronela de la Danza Mexicana*. FONCA, Escenología, A. C.: México, 2000.
- . *Guillermina Bravo: Historia Oral*. Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes; Cenidi-Danza "José Limón", México: México City, 1994.
- . "Escuela de Plástica Dinámica". *Cuadernos del CID DANZA No. 2*. Centro de la Información y Documentación de la Danza (CID-Danza): México City, 1985.
- de Linares, Antonio G. "El Arte de la Elevacion". *El Universal Ilustrado*, Agosto 14, 1919: 15.
- D'Erzell, Catalina. "Mujeres de México: Adela Formoso de Obregón S.". *Revista de Revistas*, Enero 14, 1940: 2.

- Desmond, Jane. "Dancing Out the Difference: Cultural Imperialism and Ruth St. Denis's 'Radha' of 1906". *Signs*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Autumn, 1991): 28-49.
- Doria, Leblanc y Francisco "Artistas Mexicanas de 1927". *Universal Ilustrado*, Agosto 5, 1926: 20-21.
- El Pueblo*, 1919a. "La Emperatriz del Baile Anna Pavlowa, Que se Encuentra en México". *El Pueblo*, Enero 22, 1919: 4.
- . b. "La Muñeca Encantada: Bailable de la Compañía 'Pavlowa', Argumento". *El Pueblo*, Enero 24, 1919: 5.
- . c. "Han Sido Excomulgados un Diario Local y la Pavlowa". *El Pueblo*, Febrero 12, 1919: 3.
- . d. "Fueron Anoche Sorprendidos Veinte Afeminados". *El Pueblo*, Marzo 13, 1919: 5.
- . e. "La Eximia Bailarina Anna Pavlowa Celebra Esta Noche su Beneficio". *El Pueblo*, Febrero 11, 1919: 7.
- . f. "Mañana Hay Una Matinee Economica en el Arbeu". *El Pueblo*, Febrero 12, 1919: 7.
- . e. "Una Verdadera Lucha en la Plaza de 'El Toreo'". *El Pueblo*, Enero 31, 1919: 7.
- El Universal*, 1940a. "Ballets .-Jorge Sandor .-Angel Reyes". *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas Musicales*, Marzo 31, 1940: 11.
- . b. "La Gran Bailarina Anna Sokolow de la Paloma Azul". *El Universal*, 2da sección, Septiembre 6, 1940: 6.
- . c. "Anna Sokolow Triunfa en su Temporada de Ballet". *El Universal*, Septiembre 18, 1940: 8.
- . d. "Prominente Dama Opina de un Film". *El Universal*, Octubre 25, 1940: 14.
- . e. "Estudio Basico de la Danza Universal: Ha Comenzado el Entrenamiento de un Ballet Mexicano, Nueva Técnica". *El Universal*, Octubre 8, 1940: 7.
- . f. "Gran Temporada en el Palacio de Bellas Artes". *El Universal*, 2da Sección, Octubre 25, 1940: 8.
- . g. "'La Coronela', Ultima Obra de Revueltas, Sera Presentada en Bellas Artes". *El Universal*, Octubre 11, 1940: 7.

El Universal, 1939a. “Waldeen, la Sensacional Bailarina, que Debutará en el Teatro de Bellas Artes”. *El Universal*, Febrero 16, 1939: 15.

———. b. “Acontecimiento Artístico para Hoy: Waldeen, la Magnífica Danzarina, Dará Un Concierto en Bellas Artes”. *El Universal*, Marzo 1, 1939: 7.

———. c. “Inauguración de la ‘Casa del Artista’”. *El Universal*, Marzo 30, 1939: 14.

———. d. “Teatros: Danzas y Danzarines”, *El Universal*, Marzo 28, 1939: 10.

———. e. “Permanecerá en México la Danzarina Anna Sokolow”. *El Universal*, Mayo 27, 1939: 5, 6.

El Universal, 1932a. “Nacionalismo, no Antiextranjerismo”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Editorial*, Abril 26, 1932: 3.

———. b “Buenos Espectáculos a Precios Reducidos”. *El Universal*, Mayo 8, 1932: 1, 12.

El Universal. “Una Estrella que Surge”. *El Universal*, Marzo 4, 1927: 4.

El Universal, 1925a. “Por que Ayer no Pudimos Atender a Todos los que Deceaban Abonarse a la Temporada Pavlowa, Hoy y Mañana Continuará Abierta la Oficina para Abonarse...”. *El Universal*. Abril 5, 1925: 9.

———. b. “Pavlowa and Company Arrive Tomorrow on Special Train”. *El Universal*, Secc. “English News Section”, April 6, 1925: 2.

———. c. “México y la Liga de Naciones”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Editorial* Abril 22, 1925: 3.

———. d. “La Nota de México a La Liga de Naciones”. *El Universal*, Abril 21, 1925: 1.

———. e. “México es la Nación que Continuará La Obra Civilizadora de España”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Página Española*, Mayo 6, 1925: 6.

———. d. “A Tribute to Pavlowa: By the American Consul General, Alexander W. Weddell”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English News*, Abril 20, 1925: 2.

———. e. “El Presidente de la Sala de Armas Bersin”. *El Universal*, Sección: *La Semana Social, Fiestas*, Abril 26, 1925: 4.

———. f. “La Alada Artista Anna Pavlowa fue Obsequiada en la Sala de Armas Bersin Con un Lunch Champagne”. *El Universal*, 2a. Sección: *Sociedad al Día*, Abril 27, 1925: 2.

———. g. “El Hada de las Danzas Anna Pavlowa, que Celebra Mañana su Function de Gala”. *El Universal*, Abril 29, 1925, 4.

- . h. “En Honor de la Eminente Artista Anna Pavlowa, el Señor Don José de Viadero y Rondero Ofrecio un Almuerzo”. *El Universal*, 2a. Sección, Mayo 4, 1925: 2.
- . i. “La Temporada de Anna Pavlowa”. *El Universal*, Sección: *La Sociedad al Dia*, Mayo 2, 1925: 4.
- . j. “Miss Marie Gloria Hill”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English, News of the World*, April 8, 1925: 2.
- . k. “Student Dramatic Club Score Great Success, With ‘The Chinese Lantern’”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English, News of the World*, April 4, 1925: 2.
- . l. “Un Grupo de Alumnas de Miss Lettie H. Carrol . . . Dara Concierto”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Fiestas, La Semana Social*, Mayo 10, 1925: 4.
- . m. “Pavlowa Leaves Saturday for Los Angeles to Appear in Films”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English, News of the World*, May 7, 1925: 2.
- . n. “‘Carroll-Can’ Revue to be Presented Last of May”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English, News of the World*, May 7, 1925: 2.
- El Universal*, 1919a. “La Desigualdad Social”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Editorial*, February 19, 1919: 3.
- . b. “México en Versalles”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Editorial*. February 3, 1919: 3.
- . c. “Editorial; Protesta la Decision del Gobierno de Indemnizar Extranjeros por Daños Causados por la Revolución”. *El Universal*, Febrero 27, 1919.
- . d. “El Derecho de los Extranjeros a Ser Idemnizados por los Perjuicios que se les Causo Durante la Revolución”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Editorial*. Marzo 7, 1919: 3.
- . e. “Una Gran Fiesta de Cultura y Dos Concursos: Como Celebrara ‘El Universal’ el Advenimiento de la Paz”. *El Universal*, Enero 12, 1919: 2.
- . d. “‘The Evening Post’ y un Articulo de C. Gonzalez Peña”. *El Universal*, Sección: *El Mundo Atraves del Cable*, Enero 11, 1919: 4.
- . e. “No Se Viste de Pavlowa”. *El Universal*, Marzo 16, 1919: 8.
- . f. “México Manifiesta su Calida Admiracion al Extraordinario Arte de Anna Pavlowa”. *El Universal*, Febrero 17, 1919: 1.
- . g. “La Cia. ‘PAVLOWA’ Iniciara Otra Temporada en el Arheu”. *El Universal*, Marzo 9, 1919: 8.

- . h. “Anna Pavlowa: Con su Asombroso Exito ‘Fantasía Mexicana’, Unicamente Hoy en el Teatro Granat”. *El Universal*, Marzo 22, 1919: 3.
- . i. “Ultima Funcion de la Pavlowa en ‘El Toreo’”. *El Universal*, Febrero 21, 1919: 7.
- . j. “Anna Pavlowa Triunfó Ayer Nuevamente en el Coloso de la Condesa”. *El Universal*, Febrero 24, 1919: 5.
- . k. “El Ultimo Miercoles de la Compañia ‘Pavlowa’”. *El Universal*, Marzo 5, 1919: 7.
- . l. “Anna Pavlowa en su Exito Asombroso ‘Fantasía Mexicana’ en el Teatro Granat”. *El Universal*, Marzo 27, 1919: 7.
- . m. “Se Reducen los Impuestos a la Empresa del Arbeu”. *El Universal*, Febrero 8, 1919: 8.
- . n. “Los Bailables de Hoy en el Arbeu”. *El Universal*, Marzo 14, 1919: 7.
- . o. “Anna Pavlowa Podra ser Admirada Hoy, por Todas las Clases Sociales en el Teatro ‘Granat’”. *El Universal*, Marzo 20, 1919: 7.
- . p. “Plaza de Toros ‘El Toreo’: Gran Festival Bufo-Taurino-Burlesco”. *El Universal*, Anuncio en Sección: *Teatros y Cines*. Marzo 9, 1919: 8.
- . q. “Anna Pavlowa en Chapultepec”, *El Universal*, Febrero 7, 1919: 3.
- . r. “Homenaje a la Eximia Artista Anna Pavlowa”. *El Universal*, Anuncio en Sección: *Teatros y Cines*, Febrero 27, 1919: 7.
- . o. “El Homenaje”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Por los Escenarios: Grandes y Pequeños Sucesos*, Marzo 4, 1919: 7.
- . p. “Plaza de Toros ‘El Toreo’: Charlot, Don José y Su Botones”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Teatros y Cines*, Marzo 8, 1919: 7.
- El Universal Ilustrado*. “El Ballet como un Nuevo Sentido Educacional”. *El Universal Ilustrado*, Junio 16, 1927: 32-33.
- . “La Reina de Lava y la Frondas del Bosque”. *El Universal Ilustrado*, Febrero 7, 1919: 14.
- Erdman, Joan L. “Performance as Translation: Uday Shankar in the West”. *The Drama Review*, 31, No. 1 (Spring, 1987): 64-88.
- Fernández S., Lourdes "Los pies de Seda de Eva Beltri". en: *Homenaje. Una vida en la danza. Segunda época*. INBAL/Cenidi-Danza/Amateditorial. México DF: México, 2010.

- F. M. "Teatros". *El Universal*, Septiembre 22, 1940: 11.
- F. M., 1939a. "Palacio de Bellas Artes: Presentacion de Waldeen". *El Universal*, 3ra Sección: *Teatros*, Febrero 19, 1939: 3.
- . b. "Por Otros Escenarios". *El Universal*, Agosto 8, 1939: 8.
- . c. "Granados y Waldeen en Bellas Artes". *El Universal*, 3ra. Sección: *Teatros*, Marzo 5, 1939: 1.
- Foster, Susan L. "Closets Full of Dances: Modern Dance's Performance of Masculinity and Sexuality". In *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On and Off the Stage*. Ed. Desmond Jane C. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001.
- . "Choreographies of Gender". *Signs*, Vol. 24, No. 1, The University of Chicago Press, (Autum, 1998): 1-33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175670>.
- . et. al. "Introduction". In *Corporealities: Dancing, Knowledge, Culture, and Power*. Ed. Foster, Susan L. London; New York: Routledge, 1996: v-xvi.
- . *Choreography and Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- . *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Foucault, Michel and Miskowiec, Jay. "Of Other Spaces". *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Spring, 1986): 22-27.
- . *Discipline and Punish*. Trans. By Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books, 1977.
- Foulkes, Julia L. *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*. Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Franko, Mark. *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2002.
- . *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Freedman, Ezra "Dance: Which Technique?". *New Theatre*, (1934). In Franko, Mark. *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995: 122-124.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1970. 30th Anniversary Edition. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. Introduction by Donaldo Macedo. New York; London: Continuum, 2000.

Gamboa, José Joaquina, 1925a. "Anna Pavlowa". *El Universal*, Sección: *Teatralerias*, Abril 12, 1925: 5.

———. b. "Anna Pavlowa". *El Universal*, Sección: *Teatralerias*, Abril 21, 1925: 5.

———. c. "Anna Pavlowa". *El Universal*, Sección: *Teatralerias*, Abril 13, 1925: 5.

———. d. "El Beneficio de Anna". *El Universal*, Mayo 2, 1925: 5.

———. e. "Hoy es el Ultimo Lunes de Anna Pavlowa, La Incomparable, en México". *El Universal*, Mayo 4, 1925: 5.

———. f. "La Figura del Dia: Anna Pavlowa, La de los Pies Alados". *El Universal*, April 11, 1925: 1-2.

García Cabral, E. "Una Vision de la Antigua Elade". *Revista de Revistas*, Dibujos, Febrero 9, 1919: 12.

Gonzalez E., Carlos. in Clitandro. "Las 'Danzas Aztecas' de Norka Rouskaya". *El Universal*, 1919: pg. 7.

Gonzalez Peña, Carlos 1929. "Danzarinas". *El Universal*, Mayo 12, 1929: 3-4.

———. 1925a. "El Bataclismo y la Bataclanizacion: Observaciones al Marge de la Epidemia Teatral Reinante". *El Universal*, Mayo 10, 1925: 3, 10.

———. b. "El Arte de Ana Pavlowa: Soplos Arcanos de Eternidad". *El Universal*, Abril 19, 1925: 3, 6.

———. c. "Bocetos Dominicales: El Drama Mimico Musical". *El Universal*, Marzo 29, 1925: 3.

Gonzalez Peña, Carlos, 1919a. "El Tercer Concierto de Casals". *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de 'El Universal'*, Enero 8, 1919: 3.

———. b. "La Presentacion de Pablo Casals". *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de 'El Universal'*, Enero 4, 1919: 3.

———. c. "La Presentacion de Ana Pavlowa". *El Universal*. Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de 'El Universal'*, January 26, 1919: 4.

———. d. "El Te-Concierto de los Sres. Nieto en la Secretaria de Hacienda". *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de 'El Universal'*, Enero 19, 1919: 3.

———. e. "El Despertar de Flora". *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de 'El Universal'*, Febrero 9, 1919: 3.

- . f. “La Muerte del Cisne’, en el Teatro Arbeu”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, Febrero 2, 1919: 3.
- . g. “El Beneficio de Ana Pavlowa con ‘Giselle’”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, Febrero 12, 1919: 3.
- . h. “Las Sonatas Para Violin y Piano de Beethoven”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, Febrero 10, 1919: 3.
- . i. “La Bella Durmiente Del Bosque”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, Enero 29, 1919: 3.
- . j. “‘Amarilla’ y ‘Chopiniana’”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, Enero 31, 1919: 3.
- . k. “Un Poema de Glazonow: ‘Raymunda’”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, February 5, 1919: 3.
- . l. “Los Interpretes Rusos de la Danza”. *El Universal*, Marzo 2, 1919: 9.
- . m. “Ana Pavlowa y el Baile Popular Mexicano”. *El Universal*, Sección: *Cronicas de Arte de ‘El Universal*, Marzo 19, 1919: 3.
- Graff, Ellen. *Stepping Left: Radical Dance in New York City, 1928-1942*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Gramsci, Antonio. “The Intellectuals”. In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Trans. & Eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1992: 1-23.
- Granada, Cosme. “Michio Ito: Embajador Espiritual de Oriente”. *Revista de Revistas*, Junio 3, 1934: 24.
- Hammergren, Lena. “The re-turn of the *flâneuse*” in *Corporealities: Dancing, Knowledge, Culture, and Power*. Ed. Susan L. Foster. London & New York: Routledge, 1996: 53-69.
- Hedrick, Tace. *Mestizo Modernism: Race, Nation, and Identity in Latin American Culture, 1900-1940*. New Brunswick, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- Herner, Irene. “What Art Could Be: A Revolutionary’s Struggle, From Pistol to Palette” in *Convergence: Autry National Center Magazine*: “Siqueiros in Los Angeles: Censorship Defied” (Fall 2010): 9-23.
- Hollister, C. Warren. *Roots of the Western Tradition: A Short History of the Ancient World*. 6th Edition. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Press, 1996.

- Horosko, Marian. "Pavlova and Muriel Stuart". In *Dance Magazine: "A Dance Magazine Portfolio Produced by William Como and Richard Philp"*, January, 1976: 63-64.
- Hoy. "Eva Beltri se Retira". *Hoy*, Agosto 29, 1940: 79.
- H.R.S. "Michio Ito se Beneficio con Teatro Lleno". *La Prensa*, Junio 28, 1934.
- Hyden, Walford. *The Genius of Dance: Pavlova*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1931.
- Kostakowsky, Lya. "La Juventud de Anna Sokolow". *El Popular*, April 27, 1939.
- La Coronela (1940) Punto de Partida*. Investigación: Josefina Lavalle; Realización, Guión y Edición: Lourdes Roca, Eugenio Cobo y Josefina Lavalle; Producción: Eugenio Cobo y Josefina Lavalle. CONACULTA, FONCA, INBA, CENART, México DF: México, 2001. VHS Documental.
- La Coronela*. Dirección Artística, Ana Mérida; Montaje Coreográfico, Evelia Beristain y Josefina Lavalle. Producido por la Unidad de Televisión Educativa y Cultura (UTEC) en colaboración con el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA), 1986, DVD.
- La Prensa*, 1934a. "Michio Ito se Pasa al Arbeu". *La Prensa*, Junio 14, 1934: 13.
- . b. "Michio Ito y su Cuadro de Ballet, Vuelven al Teatro Hidalgo. —La Function de Hoy". *La Prensa*, Junio 16, 1934: 13.
- Lavalle, Josefina. "Anna Pavlova y El Jarabe Tapatío" en *La Danza en México: Visiones de Cinco Siglos*. Eds. Maya Ramos Smith y Patricia Cardona Lang. Antología: Cinco Siglos de Crónicas, Crítica y Documentos (1521-2002). Vol. I, CONACULTA; INBA: México, 2002: 635-650.
- . "El Jarabe Como Género Bailable en los Escenarios Teatrales del Siglo XIX y XX". *Signos. El Arte y la Investigación*, DIDA/INBA: México City, 1988: 153-174.
- Leredo, Pablo "La Escuela de danza". *Revista de Revistas*, Julio 10, 1932: 31-33.
- Limón, José. *José Limón: An Unfinished Memoir*. Ed. Lynn Garafola. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998.
- López, Rick A. "The Noche Mexicana and the Exhibition of Popular Arts: Two Ways of Exalting Indianness" in *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in México, 1920-1940*. Eds. Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006: 23-42.
- Los Editores. "Presentación". En Best Maugard, Adolfo. *Método de Dibujo: Tradición, Resurgimiento y Evolución del Arte Mexicano*. México: Ediciones la Rana; Departamento de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1923; Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1964: 7-9.

- Magdiel. "Pulque". <http://mexicofoodandmore.com/drinks/pulque-the-story-behind-the-drink.html>. Retrived January 7, 2012.
- Malloch, Douglas. "Pavlova, All Nations are Thine". In Money, Keith. *Anna Pavlova: Her Life and Art*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff, Inc., 1982: 246.
- Manning, Susan. *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 2004.
- Martin, Randy. *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Mauss, Marcel. "Techniques of the Body". In *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (February 1977): 70-87.
- Méndez de Cuenca, Laura. "Como Juzga La Mujer Mexicana a La Pavlova". In *Revista de Revistas*, February 9, 1919: 13.
- Mendoza, Cristina. *Escritos de Carlos Mérida Sobre el Arte: La Danza*. INBA/Centro Nacional de Investigación y Documentación de Artes Plásticas. México: 1990.
- Mérida, Carlos. "La Paloma Azul; Lo Que el Publico No Ve". *El Universal*, Sección: *El Ojo de la Llave*, Diciembre 3, 1940: 3.
- . "El Ballet Barricada y la Técnica Teatral", 1935, in Mendoza, Cristina. *Escritos de Carlos Mérida Sobre el Arte: La Danza*. INBA/Centro Nacional de Investigación y Documentación de Artes Plásticas. México: 1990: 214-217.
- . "La Danza y el Teatro", 1932 in Mendoza, Cristina. *Escritos de Carlos Mérida Sobre el Arte: La Danza*. INBA/Centro Nacional de Investigación y Documentación de Artes Plásticas. México: 1990: 127-143.
- Money, Keith. *Anna Pavlova: Her Life and Art*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff, Inc., 1982.
- Muños, Mauricio. "Nuestro Primer Cuerpo de Ballet: La Danza Moderna". *El Universal*, Octubre 16, 1940: 11.
- Novack, Cynthia J. *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- Ochse, Julien. "A Ana Pavlova". Redactor del *Gil Blas*, Paris. Traducción especial de *Revista de Revistas*, Febrero 2, 1919: 16.
- Ocko, Edna. "The Dance Congress," *New Theater* 3, no.7, (July 1936). In *Of, By, and For the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s*. Ed. Garafola, Lynn. In *Studies in Dance History* vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 92-95.

- . “The Dance League Recital,” *New Theater*, 2, no. 2 (February, 1935). In *Of, By, and For the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s* Ed. Garafola, Lynn. In *Studies in Dance History* vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 76-78.
- . “Reply to Michael Gold” *New Theater* (July-August, 1934). In *Of, By, and For the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s*. Ed. Garafola, Lynn. In *Studies in Dance History* vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 70-72.
- . “Whither Martha Graham,” *New Theatre* 3, no. 5 (April 1934): 7. In *Of, By, and For the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s*. Ed. Garafola, Lynn. In *Studies in Dance History* vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 68-70.
- . “The Dance Season in Review.” *Workers Theatre* 5, nos. 7-8. (July-August, 1933) In *Of, By, and For the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s*. Ed. Garafola, Lynn. In *Studies in Dance History* vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 67-68.
- Orion. “Norka Rouskaya Resucitara el Pasado Artistico de la Raza Azteca”. *El Universal*, Febrero 1, 1919: 3.
- Observator. “Anna Pavlowa: La Danzarina Unica”. *El Universal*, 5a. Sección: *Suplemento “Magazin Dominical”*, Abril 19, 1925: 18.
- Olariaga, Luis. “El Capitalismo y la Crisis Mundial”. *El Universal*, Abril 25, 1932: 3.
- Ortiz, César. “La Danza Moderna”. *El Popular*, Abril 21, 1939: 3, 6.
- O’Shea, Janet. *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007.
- Patton, Granville. “Miss Carroll’s Revue Classique”. *El universal*, Sección: *Anglo-American Notes in News of the World*, Julio 13, 1927: 2.
- . “Local Girls Make Their Bow Tonight as Professional Dancers”. *El universal*, Sección: *Anglo-American Notes in News of the World*, Julio 13, 1927: 2.
- . 1925a. “Miss Carroll’s Class To Meet Pavlowa”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English News Section, Anglo American Notes*, Abril 16, 1925: 2.
- . b. “‘Carroll Pageant’ Review” and “Carroll Pageant”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English News Section, Anglo American Notes*, Junio 1, 1925: 2.
- . c. “Miss Carroll Training for May Festival”. *El Universal*, Sección: *English News Section, Anglo American Notes*, April 30, 1925: 2.

- Perpener III, John O. "African American Dance and Sociological Positivism During the 1930s". In *Of, By, and For the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s*. Ed. Garafola, Lynn. In *Studies in Dance History* vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 23-30.
- Prensa Asociada. "Como Puede México Entrar en la Liga de las Naciones". *El Universal*. Marzo 28, 1919: 1.
- Printemps, Mlle, 1919a. "Cadencia en los Movimientos de la Mujer". *El Universal*. Sección, *Pagina Femenil*, Marzo 23, 1919: 13.
- . b. "Los Teatros". *El Universal*. Sección, *Pagina Femenil*, Marzo 16, 1919: 13.
- Propósitos de la Escuela*. "Propósitos de la Escuela". In Archives of the Escuela Nacional de Danza Nellie y Gloria Campobello. Folder 00, México: México City, 1932: 1-2.
- Quiñones, Horacio. "El Ballet Mexicano". *Hoy*, dibujos de Germán Horacio, Noviembre 1940: 72-73.
- Ramos Villalobos, Roxana Guadalupe. *Una Mirada a la Formación Dancística Mexicana (CA. 1919-1945)*. México: INBA/Centro de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza José Limón, 2009.
- Rigel, Arturo. "Waldeen: Artista y Creadora" Fotos de Agustín Jiménez, *Revista de Revistas*, Julio 15, 1934: 26-29.
- Roberto El Diablo. "Ballet y Revista". *Revista de Revistas*, Sección: *El Año Teatral*, Diciembre 29, 1940: 22-23.
- . "Después de Medio Siglo", *Revista de Revistas*, Sección: *Cronicas Teatrales*, Marzo 30, 1919: 20.
- Rodríguez, Luis A. "La Fantasía Mexicana". *El Universal Ilustrado*, Sección: *Teatros y Musica* Marzo 28, 1919: 10.
- Romero, Manuel Antonio. "Homenaje a Ana Pavlowa". *El Universal*, Sección: *La Sociedad al Día*, Febrero 26, 1919: 3.
- Ruiz, Luis Bruno. "Homenaje a Anna Pavlova: Bajo los Puntos Suspensivos de tus Pies, mi Raza Palpita". *Balletomania: El Mundo de la Danza*, no.1, Vol. 1. México City, Septiembre-Octubre, 1981: 20-24.
- Sanchez Azcona, Juan. "Vanguardismo y Retaguardias en el Ciclo Revolucionario" *El Universal*, Abril 22, 1932: 3.

- . “No Hemos Sufrido Agravio: No es lo Mismo no ser Invitado, que ser Excluido; México y la Liga de Naciones”. *El Universal*, Marzo 24, 1919: 1.
- Savigliano, Marta E. *Tango and the political economy of passion*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.
- Segura, Felipe. *Gloria Campobello: La Primera Ballerina de México*. Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza “José Limón”. INBA: México. 1991.
- Sevilla, Amparo. *Danza, Cultura y Clases Sociales*. México, INBA/Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza “José Limón”, 1990.
- Siqueiros, David A. “Tres Llamamientos de Orientación Actual a los Pintores y Escultores de la Nueva Generación Americana” (1921). En *Palabras de Siqueiros: Selección, Prólogo y Notas de Raquel Tibol*. Ed. Tibol, Raquel. México D.F: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996: 17-20.
- Sokolow, Anna. *Ballade/Choreography*, Anna Sokolow; Music by Alexander Scriabin; text and labanotation by Ray Cook; edited by Ann Hutchinson Guest. Yverdon, Switzerland; Philadelphia, Pa.: Gordon and Breach, 1993.
- . “The Rebel and the Bourgeois”. In *The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief*, Middletown Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press: 1965.
- Sorondo, Xavier. “Ana Pavlova, el Pajaro de Fuego”. *El Universal*. Enero 22, 1919: 1.
- Srinivasan, Priya. “A ‘Materialist’-ist Reading of the Bharata Natyam Dancing Body: The Possibility of the ‘Unruly Spectator’”, in *Worlding Dance*. Ed. Susan L. Foster. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009: 53-75.
- . “The Bodies Beneath the Smoke or What’s Behind the Cigarette Poster: Unearthing Kinesthetic Connections in American Dance History”, in *Discourses in Dance*, Summer 2007: 7-47.
- Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.
- The Dying Swan. Dancer, Anna Pavlova; Choreographed by Mikhail Fokine (1905). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMEBFhVMZpU> Youtube Video.
- The Mexican Herald*. “New York Praises Dancers From Russia”. *The Mexican Herald*, México City, October 29, 1910: 1.
- The Storm that Swept México* Dir. Raymond Telles. Coproduction of ITVS in association with LPB, 2010. Documentary Film.

- Tortajada Quiroz, Margarita. "Transgresoras-Constructoras del Cuerpo y las Imágenes I. Las Pioneras de la Danza Escénica Mexicana del Siglo XX: Nellie y Gloria Campobello". En *La Danza en México. Visiones de Cinco Siglos, Vol. I. Ensayos Históricos y Analíticos*, Dirigido por Maya Ramos y Patricia Cardona, CNCA-INBA-CENIDI Danza "José Limón – Escenología, México, 2002, pgs. 685-715.
- . *Danza y Poder*. 1a. ed. Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes; Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza José Limón. México, D.F., 1995.
- Unidentified source*, "El Escuadron de Bailarinas", México City, November 1913: 1. Digital file in my possession; available upon request.
- Unknown*. "Ana Pavlowa Visito el Museo Nacional". México City, 1919: Digital file in my possession; available upon request.
- Vasconcelos, José. *La Raza Cosmica: Misión de la Raza Iberoamericana*. México: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925.
- Wentink, Adrew. "Pavlova, Humphrey and Page". *Dance Magazine: "A Dance Magazine Portfolio Produced by William Como and Richard Philp"*, January, 1976: 50-55.
- Verbitzty, Sonia. "'La Coronela' de Silvestre Revueltas". *El Universal*, Suplemento Dominical: *Magazine Para Todos*, Diciembre 8, 1940: 2.
- Warren, Larry. *Anna Sokolow: the Rebellious Spirit*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998.
- Wikipedia. "Pulque". <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulque>. Retrieve January 7, 2012
- Williams, Raymond. *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. London; New York: Verso, 1989.
- Wong, Yutian. "Artistic Utopias: Michio Ito and the Trope of the International". In *Worlding Dance*. Ed. Susan L. Foster. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009: 144-162.
- Zárate Toscano, Verónica. "Los Pobres en el Centenario" *Proceso*, Bi-Centenario: La Fiesta Interrumpida, Fasciculos Coleccionables 6. Septiembre de 2009: 4-19.
- Zybin, Hipólito. "Proyecto para la Formación de la Escuela de Plástica Dinámica" en *Cuadernos del CID DANZA No. 2*. INBA, México: Centro de la Información y Documentación de la Danza (CID-Danza), 1985.