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Bodily Renderings of the Jarabe Tapatío in Early Twentieth-Century Mexico and the
Millennial United States: Race, Nation, Class, and Gender

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Critical Dance Studies

by

Gabriela Mendoza-Garcia

June 2013

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2013

The Dissertation of Gabriela Mendoza-Garcia has been approved:

Committee Chairperson

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Jose Flavio Garcia, who shared my dream of earning a doctoral degree. With his help, we began this marvelous adventure which involved moving from Texas to California and back, raising two young girls with the addition of a baby boy, as well as experiencing family tragedies and triumphs along the way. I would like to also dedicate this work to my mother, Sara Alicia Mendoza, who when I was a young girl shared her passion for reading and her talent for writing with me. My aunt Sanjuanita Martinez-Hunter showed me though example that anything is possible. Lastly, this work is dedicated to my children Sally, Alejandra, and Javier who inspire me every day.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Bodily Renderings of the Jarabe Tapatío in Early Twentieth-Century Mexico and the Millennial United States: Race, Nation, Class, and Gender

by

Gabriela Mendoza-Garcia

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Critical Dance Studies
University of California, Riverside, June 2013
Dr. Linda J. Tomko, Chairperson

My dissertation project examines past and current understandings of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, which has come to be widely recognized as the national dance of Mexico. To conduct this investigation, I have utilized textual sources and oral accounts from personal interviews. I have also drawn on bodily renderings of the *Jarabe Tapatío* - some from my own practice of the dance, others that I observed in performance, and still others that I taught students to embody as imparted by Alura Flores de Angeles' "the God Mother of Mexican Dance." First, I investigate how the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in 1920s and 1930s Mexico was sanctioned by the state to operate alongside a post-revolutionary nationalism which built up seemingly inclusionary policies that were in fact designed to eradicate the indigenous population, promote *mestizaje* as the ideal race for a homogeneous nation, re-affirm class positioning, and consolidate traditional gender roles. I examine the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at events organized by the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) in rural schools, Cultural Missions programs, festivals, and weekly concerts. I unpack the love narrative as articulated by Flores de

Angeles to examine the intersectionality of nation, race, gender, and class and how these constructs were incorporated within the costume, music, and dance movements of the dance. I also analyze the many ways in which several public presentations of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, by SEP school girls and by Nellie and Gloria Campobello- bodily consolidated and also contested post-revolutionary ideas as espoused by the SEP in the 1920s and 1930s. Secondly, I explore the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first century to ask whether the dance has changed over time with immigration. I interviewed five twenty-first century United States practitioners and a number of dancers from California, Illinois, New Mexico, and Texas. In my interviews I found that contemporary performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* ignited internal discussions concerning gender, race, class, and nation. Nonetheless, preservation of Mexican heritage assumed greater importance. Thus, a 1920s post-revolutionary ideology continues to be reinforced by these twenty-first century United States practitioners.

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INTRODUCTION

The brightly lit room held a captive audience who was leaning forward in their chairs, standing against the wall, and listening intently while seated on the floor. The commanding presence of Alura Flores de Angeles, the “God Mother of Mexican Dance” was felt by every single person. She was seventy-seven years old and wore a brightly woven Mexican huipil to complement her indigenous skirt.¹ Her black, long hair was loosely pulled up in a high bun. She had brought her famous collection of Mexican costumes to the University of Texas at Austin in 1982 (Martinez-Hunter; “Folk Dancer to Speak;” “Memo to the University of Texas at Austin Faculty and Staff”). As the student models walked before the audience and posed, Flores de Angeles, who spoke in English, gave a dynamic presentation on the historical and cultural significance of each costume in her collection. These costumes represented her life’s work. As a physical education teacher employed by the Secretaría de Educación Pública [Secretary of Public Education] or the SEP, Flores de Angeles was part of the cultural nationalist movement in which she taught and collected the dances of Mexico. Every costume represented knowledge earned from her many years of work as a Mexican folkloric dance teacher at Mexico’s National Autonomous University. Her gestures, speech, and attire showcased her desire to share Mexico’s dance heritage with the world. With a dramatic effect, Flores de Angeles during her presentation at the

University of Texas at Austin recited a poem on the Mexican rebozo or indigenous shawl using every ounce of feeling and emotion to inspire patriotic love of the country of Mexico. Yes, this was one presentation that was remembered by all in attendance.

I have heard many inspiring stories about Flores de Angeles from my dance teachers, her colleagues, and her friends. Yet, I did not have the opportunity to meet her. Flores de Angeles was not of my generation. This dissertation invokes the legends of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, called by nearly everyone the national dance of Mexico, as articulated through the spoken word and bodily memories of Flores de Angeles, through archival sources, as well as oral histories, to situate the socio-political significance of this dance in early twentieth-century Mexico and in the twenty-first-century United States. To begin my analysis, I interweave the historical narratives of the *jarabes* and the *Jarabe Tapatío* to demonstrate the manner in which this dance has been continuously re-created and re-invented to legitimize the efforts of those seeking or possessing political powers. Throughout my writings, I utilize the theories of Benedict Anderson as a framework for understanding the nationalistic underpinning behind the *Jarabe Tapatío*. For Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (2006), nationalism is as an “imagined political community. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in their minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). Furthermore, he argues that an imagined community is limited in size and sovereign in rule. These factors make it possible for people to “think” the nation (6-7, 36). I also utilize the writings of Paul Connerton, Eric

J. Hobsbawn among others to enable me to consider how and why the *Jarabe Tapatío* was utilized by the nation as a method of imagining the country of Mexico. In order to situate the *Jarabe Tapatío* and its twentieth century agency, I will provide a brief account of the discursive constructions of this dances throughout Mexican history. However, I would like to note that there is no one adequate account of the history of the *jarabes*. My intention is not to write one “true” account of history but to show the manner in which the performance of the *jarabes* has been intertwined with political narratives.

DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE JARABE TAPATIO

Several writers’ names will reoccur in the up-coming paragraphs concerning their discussions of the origins and etymology of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Their works have become standard in twentieth-century historiography. Frances Toor (1890-1956) was a folklorist from the United States who is best known for her ethnographic writings on Mexican culture (Schuessler n.p.). Gabriel Saldívar (1909-1980) was a well-known Mexican musicologist and historian (Pill, Gabriel Saldívar 5-6). Roberto Franco Fernández is a Mexican historian who is best known for his writings on the folklore and arts of the state of Jalisco published during the 1960s to 1980s. Ronald “Ron” Houston, Ph.D., is a United States Folklorist who founded the Society of Folk Dance Historians that maintains an archive of thousands of books, magazines, and recordings, including a collection on Alura Flores de Angeles. Houston was a friend and colleague of Alura Flores de Angeles who collaborated with her in conducting workshops, organizing festivals, and writing manuscripts on the folkloric dances of Mexico. Josefina Lavalle

(1924-2009) was a dancer, choreographer, and scholar who co-founded the National Ballet of Mexico which she directed from 1959 to 1969 and 1972 to 1978, as well as the National Fund for the Development of Mexican Folk Dance (FONADAN) (“Pérdida Para la Danza Mexicana, Josefina Lavalle”). Marta Heredia Casanova is an Anthropologist who has written on many different aspects of Mexican culture. She also founded and directed the Mexican folkloric group known as *Tecoloxúchitl* at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara from 1972 to 2000 (“Martha Heredia Casanova”).

To begin this analysis, I delve into the meanings of the words *jarabe* and *tapatío*. Frances Toor in “El Jarabe Antiguo y Moderno” (1930) gives the dictionary definition of *jarabe* as a type of sweet syrup or drink (30). However, the term *jarabe* in the twentieth century is described as a potpourri of different melodies of *sones* from a particular state of Mexico or from a variety of regions (Robledo n.p.) *Sones* are musical melodies rooted in Mexico that have a highly rhythmic metric sequence (Malmsröm 55). Roberto Franco Fernández in *El Folklore de Jalisco [The Folklore of Jalisco]* (1972) notes that some scholars indicate that the word *jarabe* comes from the Arabic word *xarab* meaning beverage and the word *tapatío* is derived from the Aztec word *thapatíotl*. Fernández states that yet another scholar argues that the word *tlapatíotl* was used by the *Coca* people to describe a type of currency; *tlapatíotl* was a net with ten grams of cocoa inside. The *Coca* word *thapatíotl* also meant to barter or the price of something (169, 79). In the historical narrative written by Ron Houston about her dance lectures, Flores de Angeles noted that the word *tapatío* referred to *Los Tapatíos*, the name used to describe the people from Guadalajara, Jalisco (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28). Thus, these different

ways of seeing the meanings of the words *jarabe* and *tapatío* refer to Arabic, indigenous, and regional influences. These many different meanings of the words point to is the possibility of racial mixture, which became very important in Mexican history with the arrival of the Spanish.

It is clear that trying to pinpoint the beginning of anything is highly contentious. However, Mexican history does note that before the arrival of European explorers, the Americas were home to a diverse array of ethnicities and cultures. Hundreds of peoples spoke different languages, utilized advanced writing methods, and studied mathematics, astronomy, as well as architectural techniques. In 1492, Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas. This event began the conquest of the Americas by the Europeans. Spanish *conquistador* Hernando Cortés arrived in Mexico in 1519. Two years later Cortés masterminded the takeover of the *Mexica* (Aztec) people in *Tenochtitlan* known today as Mexico City. Three hundred years of Spanish colonization would soon follow (Hellier-Tinoco53-54).

Many scholars point to the indigenous roots of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Early twentieth-century scholar Gabriel Saldívar in the *Historia de la Música [History of Music]* (1934) argues that the figures danced in the *Jarabe Tapatío* resembled a dance performed by the indigenous *Huicholes* which referenced a turkey (333-334). In addition, early twentieth-century dance practitioner Flores de Angeles wrote that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was danced in an indigenous village in the state of Jalisco, Mexico (Flores Barnes 39).² Others such as Roberto Franco Fernández in *El Folklore de Jalisco [The Folklore of Jalisco]* (1972) acknowledge that many scholars have debated the era when the *jarabes* were first

performed. Yet, all agree that this is a dance from *Jalisco*, Mexico with many scholars inclining to argue that it was derived from the indigenous *Coca* people. Fernández cites the writings of Rafael Méndez Moreno who declares that this dance was first performed among the *Coca* people. The *Cocas* are an indigenous population who live in the area known today as *Cocula*, Mexico, located in the state of *Jalisco* (169-170, 125). Not all scholars are in agreement that the *Jarabe Tapatío* retains indigenous elements. Famed early twentieth-century dance teachers, choreographers, and writers Nellie and Gloria Campobello in *Ritmos Indígenas de México [Indigenous Rhythms of Mexico]* (1940) argued that the *jarabes* do not have indigenous elements but are *mestizo* dances with Spanish influences that make them uniquely Mexican (9). Throughout my research on the *Jarabe Tapatío*, I have noticed that this idea expressed by the Campobello's aligns with the historical discourse of the *jarabes* in which indigeneity is subsumed within the discourses of *mestizaje*. In this usage, scholars position the *jarabes* as having begun during the colonial era in Mexican history among the *mestizo*, peasant communities.

During the Spanish colonial era in Mexican history (1521-1810), when the Viceroyalty of New Spain was created, the Spanish politically controlled and subdued the indigenous population. They developed a complex racial classification system. This caste system hierarchically categorized almost every type of blood union that was formed. For example, *criolles* were people of Spanish descent who were born in New Spain while *indios* were the peoples who first inhabited the Americas. The intermingling of Spanish and indigenous blood was termed *mestizo*. This system was quite detailed (Hellier-Tinoco 54). Gabriel Saldívar in *El Jarabe Baile Popular Mexicano [The Jarabe:*

Popular Dance of Mexico] (1937) argues that the *jarabes* began with the influences of the Spanish *zapateado* dances, especially the *Seguidilla* and *Fandango* which were popular in the sixteenth century, as well as the *Zambra*, a Moorish dance from Spain.³ The colonists brought these *zapateado* dances with them to New Spain. In his telling, dances such as the *Seguidilla* were transformed overtime as a result of the influences of people who lived in Mexico (9). Saldívar also mentions the possibility that the *jarabes* could have been derived from the *Sarao*. He quotes a colonial writer who described the *Sarao* as being danced by mulattos with lightness of feet. Saldívar also speculates that the word *jarabe* could have been derived from the word *Sarao*. (*Jarabe* 10-11).

In the texts *Historia de la Musica* and *El Jarabe: Baile Popular Mexicano*, Saldívar notes that in 1752 the Spanish Inquisition forbade many *jarabes* from being performed because of their profane lyrics and sensual movements (208; 12-14). Flores de Angeles recounted to Ron Houston that in 1802 the Spanish Viceroy of New Spain, Felix Berenger de Marquina, outlawed one of the most famous *jarabes* known as the *Jarabe Gatuno*. Dancers and observers who performed this dance henceforth would be jailed (Houston 28). Fernández argues that the *Jarabe Gatuno* was the precursor of the *Jarabe Tapatío* (169). The *Jarabe Gatuno* along with other dances such as *El Cimixtlán*, *El Jarro*, *Petrita*, *Pan de Jarabe*, *Pan de Manteca*, *Las Bendiciones*, *El Jarabe del Charro*, *La Lloviznita* possessed a satirical double meaning in their lyrics (Fernández 169). Through music and dance it was easy to satirize the government. These dance movements were also described as depicting lewd, lascivious caricatures. Thus, the inquisition was concerned about their performance (Fernández 169). Saldívar argues that according to

inquisition documents, the *Jarabe Gatuno* was prohibited because its bodily movements resembled dances that were derived from Africa (*El Jarabe* 14). In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the *jarabes* were not yet associated with the nation, although their potential for critique had emerged.

Jarabes in the Battlefields

In the eighteenth century, some elements in Mexico began to think in terms of a nation, when the *criollos* wanted to differentiate themselves from the Spanish and indigenous people (Villegas 390). In “El Proyecto Educativo de José Vasconcelos Como Programa Politico” [“The Educational Project of José Vasconcelos as a Political Program”] (1982), José Joaquín Blanco writes that during this time period a nation was thought as sharing a common language, religion, custom, and geography (84). The *criollos* defined national culture as *mestizo* because they thought that this was the only way to achieve unity among the different ethnic groups (Pacheco 14). Blanco writes that the *criollo* ideas of nation in the eighteenth century were politically motivated. The *criollos* thought of the country as a collective even when dominated by Spain, and later France, and also, when they fought the United States during the Mexican-American War. The term “we” was used to describe the country as united geographically, linguistically, religiously, and in custom (84-85). The term “we” meant that only included the *peninsulares* were positioned within nationalistic discourse while the indigenous people were located outside of this discourse. Later on, during the Reform War “we” would come to represent the mestizo population (Eder 75).⁴ *Criollo* nationalism was based upon

principle themes of the exaltation of an indigenous past, denunciation of the Conquest, resentment against the Spaniards, and devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe (Brading 13).

⁵ Ironically, this tenet of *criollo* nationalism--glorification of an indigenous past while simultaneously negating the present plight of the indigenous people--would serve as the foundation for twentieth-century cultural nationalism (Hellier-Tinoco 54).

Albert Pill clarifies how the *jarabes* were musically composed during the late eighteenth century (*Gabriel Saldívar: Mexican Musicologist and Historian* 1960). He writes that Saldívar had conducted additional research after the publication of his book *El Jarabe* in 1937. According to Pill:

the *Jarabe* was originally composed of just one *son* (dance tune)...Saldívar believes (as do most other Mexican dance experts) that from the end of the eighteenth century until 1913, the people of Mexico danced to one *son* which was given the name *Jarabe*. Some of the best known of these singular *sones* which were called *Jarabes* are *El Durazno* (the peach), *El Palomo* (the dove), *El Cojito* (the cripple), *Los Enanos* (the midgets), and many others (5-6).

Thus, all the *jarabes* performed during this time in history consisted of one *son* and not a potpourri of melodies as would be commonplace at the turn of the century. In addition, the *jarabes* were first published in an opera in 1814 called *Los Gemelos* [*The Twins*] (5-6).

Anderson suggests that poetry, music, and the plastic arts instill patriotic self-sacrificing love for the country. He argues that histories of the nation as performed unite a nation around a feeling of an imagined community (141-143). Although Anderson does not specifically mention dance, scholars have noted how the intermingling of music and dance accompanied Mexican politics throughout its history. For instance, the singing and dancing of *jarabes* and *sones* accompanied the men and women who served in the

battlefield throughout Mexico's many wars. Saldívar in *El Jarabe: Baile Popular Mexicano* (1937) notes that during the ten year period of Mexico's Independence from Spain from 1810 to 1821 the insurgents used *jarabes* as a battle cry. Throughout the Mexican American War from 1846 to 1848 the *jarabes* rejuvenated weary soldiers against United States invasion (9, 14). Juárez used a *son* called *La China* as a battle hymn during the Reform Wars from 1868-1861 (Pill, *The Jarabe* 13). This scholarly work suggests that throughout all these wars the *jarabes* and *sones* as sung and performed by participants legitimized the political ideals of those in battle while promoting a patriotic love of country. I suggest that the utilization of the *jarabes* by military troops was so effective in imagining nation that as Casanova acknowledges in *El Jarabe: Baile Tradicional en México* [The *Jarabe*: A Traditional Dance of Mexico] (1999), by the conclusion of the war against Spain in 1821 the *jarabes* were no longer considered obscene but were thought of as part of the "national soul" (20). It was during this time period that many of the *jarabes* became known as *aires nacionales* by the public (Casanova 17).⁶

I will now intertwine the political history of Mexico with the musical and bodily performances of the *jarabes* to show how each influenced the other. After Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the country grappled politically with determining what system of government would best suit the nation. Thus, the nation experimented with monarchy, dictatorships, and democratic forms of government, but all were politically unstable. In addition, from 1846 to 1848 the Mexican-American War took place, whereby a defeated Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding to the

United States land known today as California, Nevada, Utah, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Wyoming, and Colorado. In the aftermath of this war, two political factions were philosophically deeply divided. The liberal faction included members of the middle class ranchers, miners, artisans, junior officers and teachers. They believed that that the country should be run by an electoral government, supported an increased participation in the economy, the separation of church and state, and the removal of church land holdings. On the other hand, the conservative faction sought a centralized government that could take the form of a monarchy or a republic. They advocated for the unification of the church and the state. The conservatives also supported the return of the previous land holding status quo that accompanied the colonial regime (Cabello-Aragandona 47-48)

A civil war known as the Reform War took place from 1857 to 1861 in which the liberals fought against the conservatives. The liberals were victorious and their President Benito Juárez, a full blooded Zapotec Indian, led the country. Juárez, who was confronted with a bankrupt treasury, called for a two-year postponement of payment on Mexico's foreign debt. The creditor nations of France, England, and Spain were livid. Each country signed an agreement in October of 1861 to partially invade Mexico (Duncan 30). In 1862 Spain and England sent troops to invade Mexico. Yet, the Mexican government was able to negotiate with these countries so that war did not develop. However, Napoleon III had even more ambitious plans, of which England and Spain did not know. His plans included the creation of a French-controlled Latin empire with Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian as ruler. French troops invaded Mexico in 1862 (Cabello-Argandona 51-55).

Houston's *Folk Dance Problem Solver* (1996) described Flores de Angeles' account of an invasion related story wherein Mexican soldiers danced and sang many *jarabes*, particularly the *Jarabe Largo Ranchero* and the *Jarabe Jalisciense*. Inspired by these dances, the Mexican soldiers defeated the French in the famous Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, which the holiday *Cinco de Mayo* commemorates (28). However, French troops once again invaded Mexico in June of 1863 and succeeded in overthrowing the liberal government. Now, the conservative elites created and led a caretaker government. The conservative elites proposed to France that the country of Mexico be governed by a Catholic monarch who would hold the title of emperor. Thus, a delegation of conservative Mexicans was sent to Italy to present the crown of Mexico to Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian Von Hapsburg. Maximilian accepted the throne and arrived in Mexico with his wife Carlotta in 1864. Meanwhile, Juárez and his forces continued to battle the French in key cities in Mexico throughout his reign (Duncan 20-32).

Historians have noted that Emperor Maximilian sought to be more than a simple figurehead. In fact, he desired to lead a unified nation according to the nineteenth century theories of nation that were circulating (Duncan 60-61).⁷ I suggest that Emperor Maximilian, an aristocrat from Austria, sought to culturally identify himself with the people of Mexico in order to legitimize his own imperialistic ruling.

In the decades during Mexico's Independence from Spain (1810-1821), popular music and dances including the *jarabes* had begun to be notated to be performed on piano (Mayer-Serra 123). Once notated for piano, they were incorporated into the balls held by the elites (Paraíso 157). By 1841, J.A. Gomez had arranged a composition which he

titled *El Jarabe Mexicano*. This composition resembled the music of the *Jarabe Tapatío* performed in 2013 because its prelude includes a contrasting *son* with a different melody (Mayer-Serra 124). Yet, Saldívar argues that it was during the reign of Emperor Maximilian that the collection of music from the *pueblo* to be arranged for piano gained importance (*El Jarabe* 14). Jose Gonzalez Rubio, a Mexican composer and teacher, is credited with arranging a piano version of the *Jarabe Nacional* in approximately in 1841. Twenty years later, Tomas Leon further refined the *Jarabe Nacional* by changing the composition and harmony of the song. The *Jarabe Nacional* is known today as the *Jarabe Tapatío* (Casanova 19-24). Both composers arranged the various melodies of the *jarabes* so that they could be played on a piano or with an orchestra (“Music Nineteenth and Twentieth Century,” *Concise Encyclopedia of Mexico*). It was during the 1860s that the *Jarabe Nacional* became very popular among the aristocracy and was danced in the balls of Emperor and Empress. On July 26, 1864 Emperor Maximilian wrote a letter from Mexico to his brother the Archduke Karl Ludwig about his experiences:

Balls are also rare, but when they do take place they are very fine and animated, and the elegant and rich society of this place is passionately fond of the national dance, which is the most fascinating one could see, and which the Countess Melanie Zichy says she wants to introduce into Vienna (Corti 432).

I suggest that one way of culturally identifying with a group is to dance as they would. I argue that one way of culturally identifying with a particular group of people is to participate in the performance of their music and traditions, as well as wearing the regional attire.

Eric Hobsbawn, in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) coins the term invented tradition to describe “traditions actually invented, constructed, and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner with a brief datable period” (1). Hobsbawn explains that invented traditions consist of a series of fixed practices directed by normalized rules and symbolic rituals that through repetition address perceived values and norms of behavior that are governed by an implicit permanence with a historical past. He argues that many of what we consider ancient traditions are in actuality very recent and invented (1). I suggest this version of the *Jarabe Nacional* as performed in the aristocratic balls of Emperor Maximilian was an invented tradition. Composers modified the music of the *Jarabe Nacional* to be performed on piano. More research is needed to determine whether composers changed the melody, tone, sequence, and other musical elements to appeal to the upper classes. At this point in time I speculate that the legitimization of the *Jarabe Nacional* within the ballroom by the court of the Emperor and the aristocracy may well have run parallel with the modification of movement styles. Here, the recontextualization of the *jarabes* and the *Jarabe Nacional* accompanied the political policies of cultural identification espoused by Emperor Maximilian.

Robert Duncan in “Political Legitimization and Maximilian’s Second Empire in Mexico, 1864-1867” (1996) argues that in order to have a lasting impact upon Mexican society, Maximilian knew that he needed to establish close contact with his subjects. Consequently, he began a public relations campaign which sought to establish and strengthen alliances among the people of Mexico outside of elite circles (60-61). Emperor Maximilian was known to have worn a Mexican hat or sombrero at bullfights and would

shout enthusiastically with the crowd (Smith *Maximilian* 171). As was the custom in Mexico, Maximilian and Carlotta went riding on their horses every morning. On January 6, 1865, Maximilian wrote a letter to his brother the Archduke Karl Ludwig, in which he described this custom:

My only free moment is from eight to nine in the morning, when I generally ride out with Charlotte to enjoy the glorious morning air, like everybody here, with one of those admirable Mexican saddles, in a Mexican riding-costume, with the broad-brimmed hat, the light jacket, the trousers adorned with silver buttons, and the admirable and picturesque cloak (Corti 464).

Most importantly, Maximilian also posed for a royal portrait seated upon a horse wearing the Mexican riding-attire known today as the *Charro* costume. In her memoirs published in 1867, Countess Paula Kollonitz, a lady in waiting to the Empress Carlotta, described Emperor Maximilian's first impression wearing the Mexican riding costume. "He laughingly assured us that he did not know how to pass insufficiently unnoticed out of his room into the open air, and that he did not lose the feeling of being in disguise until he was seated on his horse" (221) In addition, scholars have suggested that not everyone agreed and understood Maximilian's reasons for dressing in this manner. Some conservatives reacted in horror and dismay, explaining that they did not understand why the Emperor would want to dress to resemble a bandit ("Ferdinand Maximilian Von Hapsburg," *Concise Encyclopedia of Mexico*). I argue that Maximilian dressed in a *charro* costume to show his commitment to identifying with the people of Mexico and in so doing fashion a unified nation under imperial rule.

Seen from an Andersonian perspective, the *jarabes* as danced by the Mexican people aroused patriotic sentiment based upon a shared history of colonization and war. I

surmise that the *Jarabe Nacional* as danced in the ballroom by aristocrats, as well as his use of the *Charro* costume, enabled Emperor Maximilian to associate feelings of love for country with the governance of the imperial monarchy. Adoption of the dance, music, and costuming by Maximilian intricately linked nationalistic sentiments with the Emperor's identity and served to legitimize his own rule. Ironically, while Emperor Maximilian used the *Jarabe Nacional* to culturally identify with the Mexican population, opposition forces led by Benito Juárez utilized these very same melodies to inspire soldiers to perform heroic feats against the French intervention (Saldívar, *El Jarabe* 9).

In 1867, Juárez with the aid of the United States defeated the French Empire. He then became president, from 1867 to 1872. The liberals once again held political power in Mexico. They were responsible for greatly reducing the land holdings of the Catholic Church and its economic might. Juárez was succeeded by his Prime Minister Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada who served as President of Mexico from 1872 to 1876. Porfirio Díaz, a general who fought in the Reform Wars and against the French Intervention, made two unsuccessful bids for the presidency. However, he organized an effective revolt against the Lerdo government so that he was elected as president of Mexico in 1876 and 1877. He had campaigned using the motto "effective suffrage, no re-election" so that he did not run for president in 1880 but allowed a candidate of his choosing to run and become president. Then, in 1884 Díaz was elected as president and served in that capacity until 1910, using fraudulent electoral practices to remain in power (Hamilton 28-29).

Not only were *jarabes* danced in battles and balls but during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and in peasant villages, they were performed in theatres that

appealed to all classes of people. The *jarabes* were danced within operas, performed by clowns and comics on stage, at the conclusion of parties, and as part of homages. These dances which were derived from the lower classes gradually were considered to be the most cherished of all dances and accepted by all of Mexican society (Lavallo 47-57, 79). Thus, it is clear the *jarabes* were continuously re-invented and recontextualized to appear before Mexican society on stage. I suggest that the *jarabes* had different meanings depending on when, where, and who was performing them.

Porfirian Ideas of Nationalism

The *jarabes* accompanied the unifying efforts of nationalism as espoused by the Porfirian government. According to historian Ricardo Pérez Montefort, the governments of Porfirio Díaz 1877 to 1880 and 1884 to 1911 ascribed to the same view of nationalism as was popular in the nineteenth century that saw the nation as culturally homogeneous and geographically limited. Díaz wanted to unite the country of Mexico by modernizing it so that the people shared one language, religion, culture, and geography (*Avatares* 37). This philosophy was reflected in policies that promoted the elimination of peasant landholding and cultural repression. During this time period, the elites considered the peasants and indigenous people as one and the same. The Porfirian government promoted foreign immigration as a key for modernization while indigenous people were seen as obstructions to achieving progress (Knight 237). It must be noted that Mexico's Independence from Spain (1810-1821) had not produced a unified nation. Instead, the Porfirian intellectuals complained that many in Mexico still identified themselves along

regional lines, feeling loyalty to their *pueblo* instead of the nation. Some people did not have any kind of ideas of nation. The elite described peasants as “idle, ignorant, sottish, and thieving” (Knight 237).

Pérez Montefort argues that the Porfirian government endeavored to unite the country culturally by promoting an interpretation of “Mexicanness” based on folk traditions, an approach evident in Mexico’s participation in World’s Fairs and international expositions. He cites scholars who indicate that the Porfirian government sent folkloric music and dance representatives to perform at the World’s Fair held in Paris in 1889 and in Buffalo in 1901. The Porfirian government participated in these events to legitimize the country in the eyes of Europe and the United States so that Mexico could be seen as “civilized” and modern (*Avatares* 37). Further in this vein, Jesús Jáuregui in *El Mariachi: Símbolo Musical de México [The Mariachi: Musical Symbol of Mexico]* (2007) cites a newspaper article from 1907 which chronicles the fact that Díaz hosted a garden party at Chapultepec Park in honor of United States Ambassador Elihu Root. On that occasion, *La Orchesta Mariachi* [Mariachi Orchestra] dressed in the attire of the *Charro* played folkloric music of Mexico. The orchestra was accompanied by two couples who were known as the best dancers of the *jarabe* in *Cocula*, Jalisco. Jáuregui argues that in early twentieth-century Mexico, the image of the Charro began to accompany the music as played by Mariachi Orchestras to signify the nation (51-55).⁸

Marco Velásquez and Mary Kay Vaughn in “*Mestizaje* and Musical Nationalism in Mexico” (2006) note that to honor Mexico’s centennial victory of Independence from Spain, Díaz organized a celebration in Mexico City in September of 1910. Part of this

celebration involved a performance at the *Teatro Principal* by María Conesa, a famed soprano singer, who was also known as “*La Gatita Blanca*” [The White Kitten]. Conesa embroidered the Mexican coat of arms upon her skirt-- an eagle sitting upon a cactus eating a snake. Thereafter, this symbol would be re-invented and embroidered on the skirts of the *China Poblanas* who perform the *Jarabe Tapatío* (99.). Saldívar notes in *El Jarabe: Baile Popular Mexicano* (1937) that at the turn of the century even more renditions of the *jarabes* were arranged as guitar and piano scores. In addition, he argues that in 1905 Manuel Castro Padilla arranged the nine *aires* of the “official” *Jarabe* (*Jarabe* 14-15).⁹ In 1910, Felipa López, a dance teacher from Guadalajara, choreographed dance steps of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and taught them in Mexico City. Toor suggests that López “selected the steps that we now use” (Toor 32: Saldívar 15). These examples illustrate ways in which the Porfirian government, as well as artists, re-invented the *Jarabe Tapatío* to appeal to nationalistic discourse.

The Porfirian government could not prevent the revolt that took place against his regime. Throughout his terms in office, he promoted the development of Mexico into an industrial nation. He gave land, oil, and mineral concessions to European and United States businesses so that they could modernize Mexico. It is true that railroads were built, and that agricultural, oil, and mineral production increased, yet these gains occurred at a great cost to the peasant and indigenous communities. The loss of communal land, substandard pay and working conditions alongside abject poverty created an unbearable situation (Hamilton 29-32). In 1908 Díaz announced in a U.S. magazine that he believed that Mexico was prepared for democracy. This unintentionally encouraged Francisco

Madero to run for election against Díaz in 1910. Madero rallied across the country seeking support. However, he lost the election against Díaz by a large margin. Undeterred, Madero tried to lead a military revolt against the government but was unsuccessful. He did however inspire the countrymen led by Emiliano Zapata in the south, Pancho Villa and Pascual Orozco in the north, to rebel against the Porfirian government. In February of 1911 Madero had earned sufficient power to declare himself the leader of the Mexican revolution. Díaz's forces were unable to withstand the military attacks led by Madero, Villa, Zapata, and Orozco. Díaz was militarily defeated and in 1911 signed the Treaty of Ciudad Juárez which stipulated that he must resign as President. Díaz was exiled and lived the rest of his life in France. (Cavendish 8).

Historian Alan Knight in "The Revolutionary Project, Recalcitrant People: Mexico, 1910-1940" states that the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) was marked by an overthrow of the government of Porfirio Díaz by the middle classes and peasant people. In his views the revolution derived from cultural and class conflicts. Proponents of the revolution sought agrarian reform. They opposed the social and cultural abuses of the state (Knight 227-239; Hamilton 32). Some of the middle and upper classes wanted to end the domination of the political party by one individual and desired the incorporation of democratic ideals as stipulated in the liberal constitution of 1857 (Hamilton 32). As was the case in previous wars, singing and dancing of the *jarabes* accompanied the battles of the Mexican Revolution. Saldívar maintains that here too, the sounds of this music lifted the enthusiasm and the spirit of the rebels (Saldívar, *El Jarabe* 9). Throughout the Mexican Revolution, political power shifted many times depending on

the military might of the opposing faction. For example, Francisco Madero's term as president was cut short in 1913 by assassination by Victoriano Huerta. Huerta set up a military dictatorship and served as president from 1913 to 1914 until forced to resign (Hamilton xv-xvi). The military forces of Pancho Villa, Pascual Orozco, Victoriano Huerta, Venustiano Carranza, Emiliano Zapata, and Alvaro Obregón were key players in the political upheavals that took place throughout the unstable revolutionary period (Mitchell 4-6).

***Jarabe Tapatío* in Twentieth-Century Mexico**

During the presidency of Victoriano Carranza from 1914 to 1920, famous Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova decided to pay tribute to the country of Mexico by staging a ballet based on the country's national dances (Saldívar, *El Jarabe* 23). In 1918 she toured the country and the world with her ballet, entitled *Fantasía Mexicana* [*Mexican Fantasy*], to great acclaim. Manuel Castro Padilla is credited with having arranged the music for Pavlova's performance. However, the date as to when this composition took place is under question. Saldívar pinpoints the date as 1905 as when Manuel Castro Padilla first selected nine *aires* which would later become the "official" *jarabe* (Saldívar, *El Jarabe* 23). Josefina Lavallo contests this date of 1905 because the composer would have been eight years old at the time of publication. Lavallo argues that the date of his arrangement of the *Jarabe Tapatío* for Pavlova must have been in 1919. This would be after José de Jesús Martínez published *El Verdadero Jarabe Tapatío* [*The True Jarabe Tapatío*] in 1913. According to Lavallo, both renditions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by Castro Padilla and

Martinez included the same *sones* but in a different sequence (83-84). To further complicate matters, Albert S. Pill in *Gabriel Saldívar Mexican Musicologist and Historian* (1960) interviewed Saldívar after he published *El Jarabe* in 1937. Pill wrote that Saldívar determined that 1913 was the year in which a musical arrangement of *jarabes* as a potpourri of many *sones* was first composed for Pavlova. However, in this same account he gives the date as 1918. Either way, Saldívar argues that this musical composition that was created for Pavlova and was called the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Saldívar contends that this musical version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* is similar to how this dance is performed “today” which was in the 1950s and 1960s (5-6).

Within this homage Pavlova re-invented the *Jarabe Tapatío* using ballet choreography (Lavalle 74-77). Pavolova was the first ballerina to perform the *Jarabe Tapatío* dancing on pointe. Josefina Lavalle in *El Jarabe: El Jarabe Ranchero o Jarabe de Jalisco* (1988) argues that Eva Pérez Caro taught the *Jarabe Tapatío* to Pavlova (92-93). During her performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, Pavlova danced around the brim of the *charro* hat. With her influence it became the newly invented custom in the cities for the *China Poblana* to perform a turn with one foot stepping inside and the other outside the brim of the *charro* hat (Saldívar, *El Jarabe* 23)

At the turn of the century, the *Jarabe Tapatío* was also performed for the lower classes. “The *Jarabe* was introduced into the cheaper theatres like the María Guerrero, into *carpas* or tent shows and was danced at rough dances of Santa Anita known as the *bailes de rompe y rasga*” (Toor 32). Tent shows were a form of entertainment that featured comedic sketches, dances, and all types of acts. Olga Nájera Ramirez in “Social

and Emergent Folklorico: the Binational Dialect of Residual and Emergent Culture” (1989) cites research by Miguel Covarrubias who indicates that folkloric dances were performed in dances, sketches, and ballets very often having a political commentary (20-21). Marian Smith in *Opera in the Age of Giselle* (2000) wrote about the many different ways that composers of ballet-pantomine music for the French opera during the 1800s “used *airs parlant* (short snippets of melodies from folk songs or opera arias, which could introduce actual explanation into the viewers’ mind)” (8). Here, in Mexican tent shows, familiar folk melodies were used to make integral associations to the plot of the story. I suggest that hearing the music and listening to the lyrics of the *sones* within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* triggered different meanings. These meanings could be used to make any type of political commentary desired. Thus, a close reading of the music and body movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* makes available different kinds of associations. Whether danced in the opera, on stage by Pavolva, or in tent shows, it is clear that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was continuously re-invented by people at several different levels in throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and in early twentieth-century Mexico.

At the conclusion of the Mexican Revolution, the government was controlled by a combination of Porfirian supporters and the liberal middle class (Knight 230). In 1917 congress ratified a new constitution that is utilized to this day (Hamilton xvi). Although historians cite 1920 as the date for the conclusion of the Mexican Revolution, it must be noted that political upheavals, assassinations, military coups, and puppet presidents continued until the early 1930s (Hamilton xv-xvi). Historian James D. Cockcroft in *Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State* (1983) states that

from 1920 to 1940 the triumphant segments of the bourgeoisie extended their political project of reconsolidating the capitalist state along new lines and at the same time fought off rivals within their class and within the church who were seeking to restore the old oligarchic order; they also faced challenges from peasant, workers, and intermediate-class radicals who were demanding implementation of reforms promised by the Revolution (115).

Alvaro Obregón was elected President from (1920-1924) after he militarily joined forces with Adolfo de la Huerta and Plutarco Elías Calles to overthrow the government of Victoriano Carranza (Mitchell 5).

Throughout Obregón's term as president there were a series of class struggles. From 1920 to 1924 a total of 1,289 strikes took place between workers and owners. These strikes ended when an agreement was made by President Obregon and workers union. By 1925 the strikes had decreased to a total of 71 and 28 strikes were held in 1928. In addition, Obregón struggled with American investors who had oil interests in Mexico. To guarantee government recognition by the United States Obregón agreed to allow foreign investors to continue expropriating the oil on land already owned. He also settled Mexico's external debt. Constitutional law prohibited Obregón from seeking re-election. In 1924, Plutarco Elías Calles, backed by Obregón, ran for president. Adolfo De la Huerta denounced this automatic succession and organized a rebellion. He was aided by conservatives, land owners, and Catholic leaders who feared that Calles was too liberal. De la Huerta was militarily defeated thanks in part to the assistance of the United States government. Plutarco Elías Calles served as President from 1924 to 1928 (Cockcroft 115-118). Calles is known for having established the *Partido Nacional de la Revolución* (PNR) political party whose presidents presided over Mexico until 2000, and gained political power again in 2012. He is also remembered for his drive to enforce articles in

the constitution of 1917 that dealt with restricting the influence of the Catholic Church. In so doing, the *Cristiada* rebellion began between the government and Catholic supporters. Obregon was elected in 1928 to succeed Calles upon the completion of his term as president but was assassinated before he could take office. Thus, Calles set up a series of three puppet presidents who each served two year terms to complete what would have been Obregon's six-year term (Mitchell 5).

Ricardo Pérez Montfort argues that after the Revolution the government sought to curb years of political and economic instability by re-defining the nation. He postulates that the post-revolutionary nationalistic sentiments of Presidents Obregón and Calles were not much different from those during the Porfirian era. Yet, the post-revolutionary government sought to differentiate itself from the Porfirian regime in order to legitimize the economic policies of the state. The state used revolutionary ideals to invoke imaginings of the rural or *pueblo* to justify political and economic policies (Pérez Montfort, *Avatares* 38-39; Pérez Montfort, *Estampas* 139-140). In addition, the Secretary of Public Education (SEP), José Vasconcelos, created a cultural nationalist movement which was promoted via the public school system.

I have noticed a discrepancy surrounding the historical discourse of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in 1920s Mexico. Lavalle credits Pavlova's performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in 1918 with having boosted its impact so that it eventually came to be known as the "official *Jarabe*" that was incorporated in the public school system (97). However, Flores de Angeles indicated that a Federal Proclamation in 1920 named the *Jarabe Tapatío* as the national dance of Mexico (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28; Houston, *El Jarabe*

Tapatío n.p.). Period scholar Gabriel Saldívar credited Vasconcelos and his development of the Department of Aesthetic Culture for incorporating the *Jarabe Tapatío* into the public school system (*El Jarabe* 16). Period scholar Frances Toor in “The Old and the New Jarabe” (1930) adds that the SEP “adopted the staged form of the *Jarabe* and taught that together with other folk dances in the Federal public schools. Since that time it is called the ‘official *Jarabe*’”(33). Both these scholars credit the incorporation of the *Jarabe Tapatío* within the public school system as having exerting influence on its designation as the national dance. To date, I have not discovered a formal record of a Federal proclamation designating the *Jarabe Tapatío* as the national dance of Mexico. Nonetheless, the Mexican people and the folkloric dance community consider it to be the national dance of Mexico.

Another discursive discrepancy concerns the manner in which the music and dance movement of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that is performed today was derived. Flores de Angeles indicated to folklorist Ron Houston that in 1924 the SEP established a committee to standardize the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The committee chose the steps and the music of the *Jarabe Tapatío* which would be taught to school children. Houston disclosed that Flores de Angeles had served on this committee, but he stated that he might have “misunderstood” her because she would have been only 19 years of age at that time (*Problem Solver* 1993 38-39; Houston). Furthermore, in her accounts of the history of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, Flores de Angeles stated that in 1924 the Mexican government commissioned the SEP to synthesize the much shorter 2 ½ minute *Jarabe Tapatío* from the six minute version of the *Jarabe Largo Ranchero* (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996

28; Houston *El Jarabe Tapatío* n.d., n.p). On the other hand, Frances Toor and Lavallo argue that the staged version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as performed in theatres, tent shows, and commercial venues throughout Mexico was the version that was incorporated in the public school system. Lavallo does acknowledge that this rendition was frowned upon because it was performed on stage by chorus girls, but that it was the most readily accessible to educators (Toor 33; Lavallo 96-97). Clearly, these writers do not agree on the manner in which the *Jarabe Tapatío* was incorporated into the public school curriculum. What I wish to emphasize is that, according to Flores de Angeles, the SEP standardized the *Jarabe Tapatío* for instruction within the public school system. The SEP in 1920s Mexico thus played an important role in the re-contextualization, codification and transformation of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. So that, through a performance of this dance, the country's children were taught to imagine Mexicanness.

In the late twentieth century, the *Jarabe Tapatío* was often performed by *mariachi* groups. Early in the same century, musicians played using only wooden instruments, usually one or two violins, a harp and a five string guitar called a *golpe*. Casanova argues that as musicians began to travel to Mexico City in the 1930s to perform, the types of instruments that they played changed. Musicians began to incorporate three or more violins, two trumpets, a *guitarrón*, and one or two *vihuelas*.¹⁰ They could also be accompanied by one or two *guitarras sextas*, a five- stringed guitar called a *golpe*, and a harp (40). Trumpets were said to be introduced in the 1930s to better amplify the sound as performed on radio ("Mariachi," *Grove Online Music Dictionary*). Thus, commercialization of music in early twentieth-century Mexico did exert pressure to

change instrumentation. As with the dance, musically the *Jarabe Tapatío* has been re-invented over time.

Carlos G. Robledo was a music teacher who traveled in the Cultural Missions in 1930 with Flores de Angeles. He wrote in *Colección de Danzas y Bailes Regionales Mexicanos* [*Collection of Mexican Indigenous Dances and Folk Dances*] (1948) that the *Jarabe Tapatío* is comprised of six *sones* from different regions in *bajío* [lowlands] Mexico. This is the musical version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that is performed in 2010s. He also provides a sample of the lyrics for a few of the *sones*. He describes the six *sones* as follows. The first *son* played in the *Jarabe Tapatío* is derived from the state of Jalisco. This *son* is marked by distinctive Spanish dance *zapateado* movements that are musically accompanied by what resembles a *Walona* from Belgium.¹¹ Here, the lyrics talk about the singer having an angry mother-in-law who wants to hit the singer with a stick. The singer calls his mother-in-law a name and says that he will not let her hit him.¹² *El Tapatío* is the name of the second son. It is characterized by a *zapateado* that is performed in triple rhythm with the essence of a *son* from Jalisco. In one refrain, the singer remarks that he wants to show his love his affection for her. He asks if she will let him go and promises to return quickly. The third son is called *El Atole*; its lyrics are quite humorous.¹³ It also is marked with *zapateado* footwork movements. Here, the lyrics beckon all those passersby to drink the delicious *atole*. The cook is becoming sour. *Son* number four is also characterized by comical lyrics. Robledo argues that this one is from the state of Guanajuato which is located in the central area of the *El Bajío* region. This son resembles the *habanera* in rhythm.¹⁴ In these lyrics the singer states that he asked his love for a kiss

and her mother became angry. Yet, he would become angry if she asked him for a kiss. *Son* number five vaguely resembles the rhythm of a *pasa-calle* (n.p.).¹⁵ I suggest that this *son* is entitled *El Palomo* due to the lyrics that Robledo has documented and the nature of the dance sequence within the *Jarabe Tapatío*. In one verse, the singer asks the *palomita* [female dove] what she is doing. She responds that she is waiting for her *palomito* [male dove] to bring her the morning. The sixth and last *son* is called *La Diana*, a very popular melody used to end celebratory parties for actor and actresses. This melody ends on an upbeat, elated note. Robledo lists some of the lyrics for all the *sones* in the *Jarabe Tapatío* except *La Diana* (n.p.; Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996). However, when I taught folkloric dance the musical rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that I used had lyrics that accompanied *La Diana*.

Frances Toor in *Mexican Folkways* (1930) published Miguel Toledano's 1895 compilation of the lyrics and music scores of thirty *jarabes* entitled *Una Coleccion Authentica de Trienta Jarabes: Sones Principales y Mas Populares Aries Nacionales de la Republica Mexicana* [A Collection of Thirty Authentic Jarabes: The Foremost Sones and the Most Popular Aires Nacionales of the Mexican Republic]. Toor's reprint of Toledano included the "Music of the Official *Jarabe* and Versos" as collected in the state of Hidalgo. Accompanying Toledano's score are the lyrics of the "modern" *Jarabe* of Jalisco, Mexico, written by Hignio Vásquez Santa Ana. I have noticed that the lyrics and the music have undergone many transformations. In the twenty-first century, many versions of the danced *Jarabe Tapatío* do not include any lyrics.

Furthermore, Pill recounts Saldívar's observation that within the 1940s and 1950s many *sones* were arranged together as a potpourri and given the title of *jarabe*. He states that the *Jarabe de Valle*, *Jarabe Mixteco*, and *Jarabe de la Botella* are examples of this. Both Pill and Saldívar argue that these *jarabes* were arranged by dance teachers and staged for theatre. As evidence, Saldívar points to Mexican villages wherein the people (sometime between 1937 and 1960) still perform the *jarabes* as one or two *sones* instead of a potpourri of eight to fifteen *sones* as performed on stage (*Saldívar* 5-6). This offers some support to my contention that throughout its history, the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a dance and music has not remained static, but constantly changed alongside political, social, and cultural transformations.

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

In chapter one, I utilize archival sources to investigate the manner in which the *Jarabe Tapatío* was bodily transformed, and standardized, in early twentieth-century Mexico by educators working within the SEP. I suggest that the teaching and performance of *Jarabe Tapatío* within Mexico's public school system was deliberately linked with governmental policies designed to culturally unify a diverse nation by creating a united image of Mexicanness. In chapter two I reconstruct textually, and also discuss my corporeal re-creation, of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as taught by Flores de Angeles at a dance workshop held at the University of Texas at Austin in 1976. My embodiment of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first century helps me to better understand how Mexicanness was bodily portrayed in early twentieth-century Mexico. In chapter two, I

also examine the love narrative behind the *Jarabe Tapatío* as told by Flores de Angeles to demonstrate how this dance bodily re-affirms and collides with early twentieth-century conceptions of Mexicanness as expressed through nation and race. Chapter three continues by examining the manner in which early twentieth-century views of traditional gender role depictions and class positions are confirmed and contested within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. In chapter four I analyze the *Jarabe Tapatío* as taught and performed by several Chicana/os directors and their students in the twenty-first-century United States.¹⁶ Using my own ethnographic field work, I analyze imaginings of Mexicanness as verbally expressed through oral history accounts and bodily- articulated through performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by these practitioners. Here, I locate the manner in which early twentieth-century Mexican ideas of nation, race, gender, and class continue to bodily influence and contest the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first-century United States. My conclusion draws together large themes from the preceding chapters, emphasizing debates in Dance Studies to which this dissertation contributes, and offers suggestions for further research.

End Notes

¹ A *huipile* is an indigenous blouse that is woven and intricately decorated. The colors, textures, details, and pattern of the *huipile* vary depending on the region of Mexico from which it is derived.

²De Angeles used the name Alura Flores Barnes in the *Real Mexico* publication. As is the custom in Mexico, her mother's maiden name –Barnes-- is included in her last name. Later on, she would utilize her married name of De Angeles but I have seen many combinations of her name in writing. Most people knew her as simply Alura.

³*Zapateado* is a type of dancing marked by clear, percussive footwork.

⁴ *Peninsulares* is a term used to describe the people who were born in Spain but lived in the New World during the Colonial era in Mexican history.

⁵ *Gachupines* was the common name used to describe people who were born in Spain and immigrated to the America. I chose to use the term Spaniard.

⁶ The literal definition of *aires nacionales* is national airs but this translation does adequately explain the meaning of the word. *Aires nacionales* are a collection of songs that are thought to express the spirit of the country of Mexico through music and dance. Otto Mayer-Serra in *Panorama de la Música Mexicana* (1941) notes that the *aires nacionales* are a musical genre that included many regional musical styles such as the *sones* and *jarabes* that was popular all over the country (123-129).

⁷ H. Hearder in *Europe in the Nineteenth Century 1830-1880* (1966) offers a broad strokes account of nineteenth century "nationalism." "...an awakening of a sense of a national identity. The idea of belonging to a tribe, a very large family, with its own individual customs and ways of life, and to a region or *pays*, had always been present among the people of Europe. Another concept, that of the independent, integrated state with fixed geographical limits, had emerged with the growth of a strong monarchy in the late medieval and Renaissance periods. It was for the nineteenth century to identify the two concepts—to demand that a single tribe or nation should correspond to an independent and united state in a limited geographical area (42).

⁸ A *Mariachi* is a group of musicians that that perform the folk songs of Mexico. They are known for wearing a *charro* costume that includes a wide, brimmed hat and performing with a variety of instruments such as a guitar, trumpet, flute, *guitarrón*, *bajo sexto*, and harp, among others.

⁹ At the turn of the century, the *Jarabe Tapatío* began to known as the “official” dance of Mexico.

¹⁰ According to the Grove Online Music Dictionary, a guitarrón is a “bass guitar with five or six strings and wide convex back .” A vihuela is a type of “five-string guitar with convex back” (“Guitarrón,” *Grove Music Online*)

¹¹ Wallonia is a region located in southern Belgium where the people speak the French language. Here, Robledo is referring to a specific type of musical style that is derived from this area (“Wallonia,” *Grove Music Online*).

¹²Robledo comments that he did not include the lyrics for the first son that was composed by Higinio S. Vásquez because he did not consider them to be a “traditional artistic manifestation.”

¹³ *Atole* is word derived from the *Nahuatl* language used by the Aztecs and many other indigenous people. It is a hot drink made of corn meal and other ingredients.

¹⁴ A habanera is a “Havana-style contredanse... Black musicians transformed the regular rhythms of the contredanse into the dotted and syncopated rhythms of the *contradanza* habanera or simply habanera. Its slow tempo, in duple metre with a suave and lilting rhythmic ostinato became popular in all strata of society. The dance, performed by couples, features stately steps in which the feet are hardly lifted from the ground, accompanied by sensual movements of the arms, hips, head and eyes. Its influence can be seen in the evolution of the Cuban *danzón* and the Argentine tango, and it was influenced in turn by developments in the latter genre. In Spain it was also absorbed into the zarzuela” (“Habanera,” *Grove Music Online*).

¹⁵ In seventeenth-century Spain, musicians played an improvised melody between two songs. This was called a *pasacalle* and was performed outside in a procession. In Latin America, the *pasacalle* refers to any number of couple dances that are performed musically utilizing a slow tempo “ (Pasacalle,” *Grove Music Online*).

¹⁶ I use the term Chicana/o to refer to people of Mexican descent residing in the United States.

CHAPTER 1:

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY MEXICO (1920-1931): THE JARABE TAPATIO AS A TOOL FOR CULTURAL NATIONALISM

“Alright class, Remember the footwork in the Jarabe Tapatío called el borracho [drunken man]? What happened? I do not see you moving your body slightly from side to side as if you are drunk. Let me show you.”

Then, Alura Flores de Angeles stood before the class of rural school teachers in San Cristóbal de las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico, and demonstrated the footwork. “It is a step on the right foot, step on the ball of your foot with the right, and step with the right while you move your torso swaying from side to side. We will do this first to the right side and to the left side.” Flores de Angeles drilled her students doing this step for about twenty minutes. She had the students practice the footwork in place and traveling in many different directions until she was positively certain that each could perform the sequence with clarity and exactly as demonstrated. “Remember to sway your torso slightly from side to side.”

Once she felt that her students had mastered this footwork sequence she asked Maestro Robledo, the pianist, to play the Jarabe Tapatío again. At the end of the dance Flores de Angeles yelled “Viva México!” [Long, live Mexico!] This cued her students to respond, “Viva!” “Wait!” Flores de Angeles admonished her students. “You need to shout Viva quickly not Viv-a-a-a! Remember, this is the closing dance number. We will perform it

right before the singing of the Mexican anthem so it must be just right.

Maestro Robledo, please play the song again from the beginning.”

Throughout its history, the *Jarabe Tapatío* has long been stylized, theatricalized, and re-invented to represent the nation. But, how did the *Jarabe Tapatío* come to symbolize a nation in 1920s Mexico? In this chapter, I begin by defining the terminology used in early twentieth-century Mexico and in the twenty-first century to describe folkloric dance. I draw on twentieth-century ideas of nation linked to Mexican educator José Vasconcelos, to analyze competing ideas of nation, to describe the cultural nationalist movement, and to illustrate ideas of modernity fashionable in the decade here. To situate the incorporation of the *Jarabe Tapatío* within the discourses of early twentieth-century Mexican public education, I analyze competing views among which the cultural nationalist movement circulated, the early twentieth-century Western scientific system, and the development of Mexico's public education system. In this regard, I utilize the life story of Alura Flores de Angeles to personalize Mexico's public education system while I describe the collection and dissemination of folkloric dance. Finally, I review the collection and dissemination process of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and other folkloric dances to illustrate the manner in which educators use dance to articulate and define the nation. In so doing, I demonstrate that educators purposely taught the *Jarabe Tapatío*, with many other folkloric dances to culturally unify the nation along race, culture, and class lines.

Rhetoric of Folkloric Dance

Many different terms are used to describe the folkloric dances performed in Mexico. A literal Spanish translation of the term dance yields two words: *danza* and *baile*. Folkloric dance practitioners commonly use the word *danza* to refer to indigenous ritual and ceremonial dances while the word *baile* makes reference to social dance as performed at parties, festivals, and ballrooms (Nájera-Ramírez, Cantú, and Romero xiv). The word folklore comes from the England. Within this term the word folk references the people of the *pueblo* or village and lore means to know (Reuter 17).¹ The first to coin the term *ballet folklorico* in the early 1950s was Amalia Hernandez of the *Ballet Folklorico de México*. This was a descriptive word to describe her own choreography that utilized a type of ballet, modern, and Mexican folkloric dance fusion (Nájera-Ramírez, *Dancing Across Borders* 279-280). Due to Hernandez's influence, in the twenty-first century many dance groups in the United States and Mexico use this word to title their group. In the United States, *ballet folklorico* does not necessarily indicate the fusion of modern and ballet within folkloric dance but rather it indicates. Rather, the term operates as a general descriptor of Mexican folkloric dance. *Grupo folklorico* and *ballet folklorico* are terms used to describe twenty-first-century dance groups that perform the folkloric music and dances of Mexico and which perform both *danzas* and *bailes* in their repertoire.² In my dissertation, I use the term folkloric dance to refer to both indigenous and social dances of Mexico. However, when referring specifically to an indigenous dance, I use the term indigenous dance. In early twentieth-century Mexico, José Vasconcelos, Secretary of Public Education, used several terms to identify the types of Mexican dances taught in

public schools. He used the term *danzas* to mean indigenous dances; *bailables* to mean social dances of the past; and *bailes populares* for dances created by a group of people living in a *pueblo* and performed at dances, festivals, weddings.³ The term folkloric dance is synonymous with the word *bailables*. These terms are still used in the same manner in the twenty-first century to describe Mexican dance in general.

Cultural Nationalist Movement

José Vasconcelos, who was appointed Secretary of Public Education from 1920 to 1924, initiated a cultural nationalist movement throughout Mexico. Historian, Ricardo Pérez Montfort in *Estampas de Nacionalismo Popular Mexicano: Ensayos Sobre Cultura Nacional y Nacionalismo [Images of Popular Mexican Nationalism: Lessons About the National Culture and Nationalism]* (1994) argues that this cultural nationalist movement continued the work of President Porfirio Díaz, who encouraged the unification of the country along racial lines in an attempt to modernize it. However, Vasconcelos continued this movement on a grander scale. He and members of the government used Cultural nationalism with regards to education, art, and cultural spaces in 1920s Mexico to justify the social, economic, and educational policies of a post-revolutionary government. These policies included land re-distribution and educational reform. Proponents of the national culture defined “Mexicanness” as coming from the *pueblo*. In the 1920s the elites thought of the *pueblo* as being rural, provincial, poor, marginalized, yet, experienced by the majority. Proponents deemed education as the key to modernize the *pueblo* and thus the nation itself. In addition, historian Pérez Montfort suggests, the image of the *pueblo*

became synonymous with a stereotyped image of “Mexicanness,” which political leaders of Mexico invoked to legitimize public policy (*Avatares* 35-45; *Estampas* 113). Rural Mexico was invoked in the music of the *Mariachi* band, as well as the popular songs such as *huapangos*, *corridos*, and *sones*, that are accompanied by indigenous and folkloric dances (Sáenz, *México Integro* 20-23).⁴ Thus, the two central figures in the *Jarabe Tapatío*, the *Charro* and the *China Poblana*, in their depiction of the dress, dance, and music embodied “Mexicanness.”

Educational Theory and José Vasconcelos

In the late nineteenth century, the scientific philosophy of Auguste Comte known as Positivism influenced Mexico’s educational system because the intellectuals thought it could help stabilize the political unrest and turmoil of the country. Positivism advocated the adherence to a set of truths that could be proved with scientific experimentation. Schools were laboratories where ideas could be tested. Educators promoted Darwin’s Theory of Natural Selection alongside the positivist approach to justify the social class status of the wealthy as genetically fit to occupy this class position. These theories were utilized by Mexican President Porfirio Díaz who was in office from (1877-1880) to (1884-1911) and intellectuals to protect the interests of the wealthy. The Díaz regime and the influence of positivism would be challenged during Mexico’s Revolutionary War (de Beer 2, 12-í).

José Vasconcelos (1882-1959) was born in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. In 1905 he graduated from law school in Mexico City. Vasconcelos founded the *Ateneo de la*

Juventud in 1909. This was a group of intellectuals who studied the Greco-Latin classics and philosophy in the pursuit of a spiritual substitute for Positivism (Marentes 1-2). Vasconcelos and the members of the *Ateneo de la Juventud* were strongly against the positivistic philosophy that was part of the educational systems of Mexico beginning in the late nineteenth century (de Beer 2, 12-1).⁵ From 1910 to 1920 Vasconcelos became involved in Mexico's political battles of the Revolutionary War. He did not fight any physical battles but participated in the intellectual power struggles within the government. During this period, he left and returned to Mexico various times. He lived in exile whenever his particular political candidate was defeated.⁶ In 1920, Vasconcelos returned to Mexico. President de la Huerta appointed him as rector of the National University of Mexico located in Mexico City (Marentes xi-9).⁷

In his autobiography entitled *El Desastre [The Disaster]* (1938) Vasconcelos recounted how he served as rector of the National University of Mexico and successfully navigated Mexico's political climate to ensure that a constitutional reform was adopted authorizing the creation of the Secretary of Public Education (SEP). President Alvaro Obregón, in office from 1920 to 1924, offered Vasconcelos the job of Secretary of State, but he declined, preferring the job of Secretary of Public Education (*Obras Completas 2: 1228*). On October 11, 1921, President Alvaro Obregón appointed Vasconcelos as Mexico's Secretary of Public Education (SEP) (Marin 16).

Vasconcelos recounted his fight to combat illiteracy. He had set up the SEP based upon three branches that were to encompass all aspects of national culture: Department of Schools, Department of Libraries and Archives, and Department of Fine Arts. The

Department of Schools consisted of vocational and scientific teaching methods related in theory and practice. Vasconcelos created the Library and Archives Department in response to a great need for books throughout Mexico. Vasconcelos proposed that each school would have its own library for use by both children and adults. The Fine Arts Department was fashioned to teach song, art, and Physical Education in the schools. In addition, this department oversaw all aspects of what Vasconcelos described as “high culture,” including the Academy of Fine Arts, the National Museum, and the conservatories of music. All these departments worked together in the school system. Therefore, students received academic instruction from the elementary school teachers. They also were taught drawing, singing, and Physical Education by specialized teachers. Teachers, students, and parents were encouraged by the SEP to utilize library resources (*El Desastre Manuscript 9*). Although Vasconcelos mentioned the three branches of the SEP, in reality there were a total of six departments. The SEP created the Department of Indigenous Culture and Education, much to the dismay of Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos believed that the indigenous people should be integrated, not separated, within the public school system and therefore had not required a specific department. However, he lost the political battle and a separate department was specifically created for the indigenous population (Bonfil 157-159). In his later writings, Vasconcelos remarked that he envisioned this department as temporary, to be dissolved upon completion of its purpose (Marentes 131). The purpose of the Department of Indigenous Culture and Education was to instruct and integrate the indigenous people into modern society. The two remaining departments--the National University of Mexico and the Direction of Elementary

Education and Teacher Training were part of the responsibilities of the Secretary of the SEP in 1921 (Marin 16).

Vasconcelos detailed the achievements that he accomplished during his brief-three year tenure as Mexico's Secretary of Public Education. In his autobiography, Vasconcelos chronicled how he noticed a shortage of books so he supported the establishment of national and local libraries. He utilized the SEP printing presses to distribute inexpensive copies of classic literature such as *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Fausto*, as well as textbooks for elementary school children. Vasconcelos created a monthly periodical called *El Maestro: Revista de la Cultura Nacional [The Teacher: Magazine of National Culture]* which was free to school teachers in Mexico and Latin America. This publication featured articles about literature, hygiene, history, geography, and other topics (*El Desastre Manuscript* 41-43; *Obras Completas* 2: 870). He also established a free breakfast program and a vaccination regimen for children as part of the school system (1:1260). Vasconcelos believed that people outside Mexico should learn the national customs of his country. Thus, he set up a program at the National University of Mexico whereby educators from around the world could take summer school courses in Mexico. In this program, international students registered for Spanish-language courses, toured historic monuments, visited museums, and immersed themselves in Mexican culture (2:1656-1657). Within the Fine Arts Department of the SEP, Vasconcelos supported the re-organization of the National Conservatory of Music and the National Symphony. (2: 1268, 1260-1261). Vasconcelos

commissioned murals to be painted by Diego Rivera and other prominent artists upon the government buildings, depicting Mexico's historical and cultural heritage.

Throughout his life, Vasconcelos wrote many books, articles, and lectured at universities in the United States, Mexico, and abroad. His most famous works include: *La Raza Cósmica* [The Cosmic Race] (1925), *Indología* [Indology] (1926), and his autobiography, which was in four parts *Ulises Criollo* [Creole Ulysses] (1935), *La Tormenta* [The Storm] (1936), *El Desastre* [The Disaster] (1938), and *El Proconsulado* [The Proconsulship] and *La Flama* [The Flame] (1959). In 1935, Vasconcelos published *De Robinsón a Odiseo* [Robinson to Odysseus] in which he reflected on his own educational philosophy. According to Luis A Marentes in *José Vasconcelos* (2000) Robinson referred to *Robinson Crusoe*, a novel by Englishman Daniel Defoe wherein a castaway learns to survive on a deserted island using a combination of practical skills and ancient wisdom. This parallels American John Dewey's action approach to education, "learning by doing," where students are taught to learn independently with minimal instruction. For Vasconcelos, Dewey's educational approach represented the United States' influence over Mexico. In addition, Vasconcelos traced Dewey's educational approach as referencing a United States mentality that was deficient in spirituality and represented "mechanized efficiency" (xi-xii, 108-111). Although Vasconcelos stated that he was against an action oriented approach towards education as advocated by Dewey, scholars such as Augusto Santiago Sierra, Hubert J. Miller, David L. Raby, Luis Marentes, and Mary Kay Vaughn note that teachers within the school system did implement many of Dewey's teaching principles. In addition, Moisés Sáenz, who served

as Secretary of the SEP in 1928 and held many upper level administrative positions, recounted implementing Dewey's action oriented approach in the school system in his 1926 lecture at the University of Chicago for the Harris Foundation (79).⁸

During his three-year term, Vasconcelos' influence reached so far that his successors continued to implement his vision of using education to unify the country of Mexico along cultural lines. One example is visible in an article in the *Boletín de la Secretaria de Ecuación Pública* [Bulletin of the SEP] from July 1926, written by Chilean Poet Gabriela Mistral. She responded to criticism by Vasconcelos himself concerning the abandonment of distinctive educational services, such as his emphasis on cultural aesthetic and the development of choral groups. In defense of Vasconcelos' successor, José Manuel Puig Casauranc, Secretary of the SEP from 1924 to 1928, Mistral wrote that Casauranc continued to carry out the best of Vasconcelos' educational reforms ("Boletín" 43).

In 1924, Vasconcelos resigned as Secretary of the SEP to run for governor in the state of Oaxaca. Following his political defeat, Vasconcelos left Mexico and lived in exile for four years. From 1924 to 1928 Plutarco Elías Calles was elected as president of Mexico. In 1928, Alvaro Obregón campaigned to run for a second presidential term but was assassinated. At this time, Vasconcelos returned to Mexico to run for president. The election was marred with irregularities and electoral fraud. Vasconcelos left Mexico after he was defeated in the election. On September 21, 1938, Vasconcelos ended his United States exile and returned to Mexico. He served as the president of Sonora University in Sonora, Mexico, for a short time but soon returned to Mexico City to practice law.

President Manuel Avila Camacho served his term from 1940 to 1946 and appointed Vasconcelos as the head of the National Library. In 1946 he served as the director of the Mexico Library. He died at the age of 77 in 1959 and was buried with honors in Mexico City (Marentes173-176, xiii).

Early Twentieth-Century Viewpoints on Scientific Thought

In early twentieth-century Mexico a dominant sense of scientific thought was comprised of Western theories of evolution that professed that both societies and humans crossed through a series of developmental stages. These theories generally defined the first stage of a society as being “primitive.” Here, “primitive” people and societies are characterized by invasions and warfare among tribes. Eventually, societies and people would become “civilized” when the races and nation are united by sharing a shared religion, custom, language, and history. Mexican educators who subscribed to such scientific thought viewed the modernization of industry as essential to the building of a “civilized” nation (Blanco, *Se Llamaba Vasconcelos* 80). In my view, Mexican educator in the 1920s used the term “civilize” in much the same way that German sociologist Norbert Elias would articulate it in 1939. In *The Civilizing Process* German sociologist, Elias wrote:

the concept of ‘civilization’ refers to a wide variety of facts: to the level of technology, to the type of manners, to the development of scientific knowledge, to religious ideas and customs. It can refer to the type of dwelling or the manner in which men and women live together, to the form of judicial punishment, or to the way in which food is prepared. Strictly speaking, there is almost nothing which cannot be done in a ‘civilized’ or an ‘uncivilized’ way (5).

Elias continues by indicating that:

this concept expresses the self-consciousness of the West. One could even say: the national consciousness. It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or 'more primitive' contemporary ones. By this term Western Society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of *its* technology, the nature of *its* manners, the development of *its* scientific knowledge or view of the world and much more (5).

Intellectuals in 1920s Mexico had to fight against scientific reasoning that positioned the country as "backward" or "uncivilized" due to the racial inferiority of the *mestizo* and indigenous populations. For instance, in an address at Columbia University in New York City in 1926, Dr. J. M. Puig Casauranc, Secretary of the SEP of Mexico, spoke about the educational philosophy of his nation. He agreed with the fact that many people may have thought of Mexico as "backward." Yet, he argued that this "backwardness" was not due to Mexico's racial inferiority, because the *mestizo* and indigenous population were not racially inferior ethnic groups.⁹ He cited a French psychologist who performed a study on Mexican children. The psychologist concluded that the people of Mexico have the intellectual, physical, and artistic capabilities equal to populations in any "civilized" nation. With that, Casauranc declared that the *mestizo* and indigenous populations were not an inferior race but an abandoned social group who had not had access to medical and educational services (3-6). Although Mexican educators did not see the *mestizo* and indigenous communities as racially inferior, they viewed these communities as culturally and socially inferior. Thus, educational reform was promoted to "redeem" the masses so that they can better contribute to the life of the nation as productive citizens.

Cultural Nationalist Movement in Mexico's Public Education System

Historian, Josefina Vásquez de Knauth in *Nacionalismo y Educación in México* (1970) argues that throughout history education has been used to create feelings of nationalism. Governments use education to influence and develop a collective consciousness while awakening loyalties to the nation state (7-9). Journalist, critic, writer, and political activist Carlos Monsiváis in *Mexican Postcards* (1997) suggests that the Mexican education system was used by the “post-revolutionary hegemonic bloc” to instruct the entire public on the myths, images, and rendering of the newly configured nation (xvi). As the Secretary of Public Education, one of Vasconcelos’ goals was to promote a Mexican cultural movement along nationalistic lines. In his writings, Vasconcelos described his educational approach as utilizing Mexican culture as a foundation to “civilize” the lower classes (2:1515). For Vasconcelos, to “civilize” meant that the role of education was to raise the cultural level of every citizen. According to Vasconcelos, the world no longer characterized people along intellectual lines, but cultural ones. So, to him it was very important that primary school children be taught a basic set of ideas that could be used to ensure that they belonged to a specific culture (de Beers 320, 327). As with many intellectuals during this time period, Vasconcelos considered a nation to be united by a common language, religion, and race (2: 873-874). Thus, Vasconcelos utilized cultural nationalism to help bridge the racial, cultural, socio-economic, and geographic differences among the Mexican people (Encinas 3). Vasconcelos envisioned education as vital to preparing individuals to serve a social purpose.

In Mexico, artistic works, objects, and symbols were transformed to represent an educational ideology and an official history of the nation (Monsiváis, *Notas Sobre la Cultura* 1381). To unify the country culturally, Vasconcelos stressed the importance of looking for inspiration from the cultures of Europe and Latin America instead of those derived from North America for inspiration. The promotion of Fine Art performances that had European influences was one method of doing this. He developed Mexico's educational program so that Physical Education was taught parallel with Art and Music. Mexican educators developed an academy to produce men and women who would serve as Physical Education teachers. These specialized teachers shouldered a variety of teaching responsibilities including the instruction of Dance (2: 857, 783-784, 1684, 1268). Vasconcelos not only incorporated Dance but for the first time ever the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* was included in the public school curriculum. He once boasted that because of his work, "*Y en las escuelas entró no sólo el canto popular, también el baile nacional*"["Not only popular songs permeated public schools but the teaching and performance of the National dance"] (2:1261). I suggest that for Vasconcelos the *Jarabe Tapatío*, which he described as the national dance of Mexico, was one of the most important folkloric dances taught. What better way to foster the bodily performance of "Mexicanness" than requiring school children to learn and perform the national dance (2: 1268)?

Even Vasconcelos' successors within the SEP in the 1920s followed the tenets of the cultural nationalist movement. For example, in 1926, the SEP created the Department of Cultural Missions.¹⁰ It was directed by Professor Rafael Ramírez who wrote in in the

SEP Published Report called *Memoria*, in 1927 that the purpose of education was to extend and popularize fundamental aspects of culture to the peasants and indigenous people who made up the majority of the population in the country (243). In 1920s Mexico, the peasant and indigenous population was considered one and the same by the elite. This outlook was best described by French writer and journalist Marc Chadourne in *Anahuac: Tales of a Mexican Journey* (1954):

Who then are the indios? Everybody else, more than two-thirds of Mexico's sixteen million inhabitants. For its current meaning the name covers not only pure blood Indians-Aztecs, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, Huastecs, Mayas, Otomis, Coras, Totonacs, Yaquis, Triquis, Papagas, etc.—but also the enormous, confused section of hybrids who dress and live like them, do the same work and eat the same food: members, like them, of the great under-privileged fraternity (135).

Since Mexican educators thought that the indigenous and peasant people were not racially inferior but were socially and culturally inferior, they designed educational programs to elevate this population culturally. The terms “civilize” and “redeem” were used by Mexican educators to describe this process of cultural incorporation of the indigenous and peasant communities. In so doing, cultural nationalism was a type of “civilizing” tactic designed to racially and culturally unite the nation. This point is corroborated by Moisés Sáenz in 1928 when he wrote *La Educación Rural en Mexico* [*Rural Education in Mexico*]. He stated that the state used education as one method of “civilizing” the peasant and indigenous peoples. Educational programs in rural schools not only sought to teach the subjects of reading and writing but to instill the fundamental aspects of “civilization,” which included good health and hygiene, farming practices, and homemaking. These topics were thought to promote recreational and spiritual awareness.

(24-25). Eleven years later, however, Sáenz took a much less neutral and critical view of this “civilizing tactic. He wrote in *Mexico Integro* [*Complete Mexico*] (1939) about Mexico’s educational system saying that that education was against culture because the purpose of the school system is to “civilize.” This is accomplished because education is aligned with Mexican cultural values. In Sáenz’s 1939 view, education is a universalizing process that destroys some races because it encouraged obedience to a particular tradition and loyalty to popular thought (116). In the 1920s Mexican educators viewed race and culture as two distinct concepts. Yet, by 1939 Sáenz gives an indication that racial and cultural distinctions are not so easily accomplished after all. In this way, Sáenz notes that culture is part of what makes race an ethnic group what it is. In the 1939 text, Sáenz is acknowledging that it is difficult to educate without changing culture. Perhaps he is realizing the downside of the state’s adaptation of *mestizaje* project.

In his writings, Sáenz noted that educators taught the symbols of the nation such as recognition of the pictures of the presidents, celebration of national heroes, and singing of the national hymn with the presentation of the flag (*Educación Rural* 24-25). I have seen newspaper photos of children dressed as *China Poblanas* for rural school activities and of children performing the *Jarabe Tapatío* at SEP organized events in Mexico City in the 1920s (“Homenaje Que Rendieron a Sus Madres, Alumnas de la Escuela ‘Ignacio L. Vallarta;” “El Sistema de Escuelas Rurales en México”). Therefore, the SEP taught school children to dance and perform the *Jarabe Tapatío*, the national dance of Mexico. Once they were culturally and racially assimilated the indigenous and peasant people would identify themselves as *mestizo*. I argue that dance in public schools operated

alongside the cultural nationalism movement because it was intended to “civilize” and “redeem” the peasant and indigenous communities.

In her doctoral dissertation Sanjuanita Martinez-Hunter paraphrased the remarks of Flores de Angeles who spoke about the *Jarabe Tapatío* in her 1979 lecture entitled “Mexican Dance,” delivered at the University of Texas at Austin. “The adoption of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as Mexico’s national dance was significant,” Martinez-Hunter paraphrased, “for it symbolized the acceptance of the blend of the Spanish and Indian, and the acceptance of the true Mexican, the *mestizo*” (179). I argue the *Jarabe Tapatío* bodily demonstrated to the country that the *mestizo* ethnicity was best suited to represent the nation. “True Mexicans” were those who abandoned their distinct ethnic identities and recognized themselves as *mestizo*. By the early twentieth century, all elements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* including the history, costuming, music, central figures, and body movements represented “Mexicanness.” From a twenty-first-century perspective, it is clear that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was taught and performed in the public school system to culturally and racially incorporate the indigenous and peasant people into the nation.

Competing Ideas of Nation

The Díaz regime, Vasconcelos, Sáenz and other intellectuals of this period bemoaned the fact that many in Mexico identified with the local community rather than the nation. Indeed, American anthropologist and period scholar Robert Redfield in 1935 described how many Mexican communities did not identify with the nation:

The local world is, then, separate, complete, distinct. And to it the loyalties of the individual tend to be attached....Even when the authority

and claim of the republic receives some recognition; the local community is the homeland, and the fatherland. For it the Mexican has a name-la *patria chica*. The villagers beyond the hills are not *paisanos*; they are, to a degree, aliens, men to be met, if at all, in the market, not in the home or the brotherhood that tends the *santo*. And the villages one hundred miles away are not known at all (“Folkways and City Ways” 40).¹¹

Furthermore, Sáenz wrote in a related vein in *La Educación Rural en Mexico [Rural Education in Mexico]* (1928) that regarding patriotism, educators wanted to bridge the gap between peasant and indigenous communities and the “outside world.” Mexico was seen as the “outside world” by many in the peasant and indigenous communities (24-25).

Reports presented by Mexican educators while Casauranc was the Secretary of the SEP, under the presidential administration of Plutarco Elias Calles (1924-1928), specifically indicated the government efforts made to unite the country of Mexico geographically so that its inhabitants would think the nation along national instead of regional lines. The SEP assigned rural schools the task of culturally uniting the indigenous and peasant communities to forge a nation (121). Educators and the elites thought that the peasants and indigenous communities were the two groups that did not have definite ideas of what constituted a nation. They stated that there was a high rate of illiteracy amongst the indigenous and peasant people. The educators remarked that many did not even share the language of Spanish with the nation. These people were described as having an inferior culture, being disconnected from the past and present history of the nation, and having a “primitive” standard of living. Educators were most concerned, because they feared that a country in these conditions could not construct a nation, especially a nation based on democratic ideals (“Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico” 2:121-122). Educators used Revolutionary ideals to justify their positions regarding cultural

unification (Monsiváis, *Notas Sobre la Cultura* 1377-1381). In 1921, the SEP under Vasconcelos initiated the creation and development of rural schools throughout the country. In so doing, SEP educators sought to cultivate a common culture representative of all the inhabitants of the nation (“Esfuerzo Educactivo en Mexico” 2: 120-122).

I suggest that retaining a regional identification instead of a national one persisted as a form of resistance by the indigenous and peasant communities against the nationalization of the state. Here, affiliation with a particular *pueblo* marked allegiance to the customs, traditions, and political structure of the region. In addition, as Irene Vásquez Valle argues in “*La Cultura Popular Vista por los Elites en el México Postrevolutionario*” [“*Popular Culture as Seen through the Eyes of the Elites in Post-revolutionary Mexico*”] (1989), many of the works disseminated by the elites under the cultural national movement were located outside nationalistic discourse (5-6). That is, many of the songs and dances collected by the elites were created by indigenous and peasant people, who had their own unique customs, traditions, and practices that were not commonly accepted by the nation. Vasquez postulates that these *mestizo*, peasant, urban, and indigenous expressions continued to remain as regional discourses that were not subsumed by the nation. Here, these regional expressions were changeable, vehicles of expressions that responded to the social and economic injustices of the era (5-6). Since the performance of regional music and dances embraced a local culture instead of a national one, I argue that this very action was as a method of resisting cultural unification by the government. In fact, the maintenance of a regional identity versus a national one is still evident today in the music and dance traditions of the people.

The state could not exert total control of nationalistic discourse for yet another reason; it operated against the influence of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was an impediment to the educational system and the spread of nationalistic ideals. Historian David Raby *Educación y Revolución Social en Mexico (1921-1940)* (1974) argues that educational reform in Mexico was held back by the Catholic Church and the hacienda system. Schools thrived in areas where the influence of the Catholic Church was weak, where peasants owned land, and where the political leaders were progressive. Most importantly, success depended on the ability of the teacher to win the confidence and cooperation of the local people (17). During his presidential term Plutarco Elías Calles established a number of laws which were considered by many to be directed against the Catholic Church. In the late 1930s President Lázaro Cárdenas earned the wrath of the Catholic Church by enforcing the Mexican Constitution which stipulated that elementary schooling could not be taught by priests or nuns (Boletín 19). *Cristioneros*, groups of people who were against the state's methods of limiting the power of the Catholic Church, threatened and killed public school teachers in retaliation against this law. In addition, as Mary Kay Vaughn notes, the SEP school calendar was created in 1925 and published to replace the calendar of the Catholic Church (*The State, Education, and Social Class* 175).

Avenues of Negotiation

The indigenous and peasant communities did not merely comply with “civilizing” projects that tried to incorporate them into the nation. There were intense negotiations on both sides. Mary Kay Vaughn in *Cultural Politics in the Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico 1930-1940* (1997) urges scholars to depart from analyzing nation building using a top-down approach. She critiques the arguments of Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983) in that it depicted the transmission of symbols, myths, history, and legends, all important to nation building, as solely determined by the elites, without input from the peasants and lower classes. She argues that since the peasant classes had mobilized to begin the Revolution in Mexico, they had earned a space in nation building. In Mexico, post-revolutionary nation building by the state was characterized by negotiations between players within national, regional, and local sites, where they developed power structures. That is, as Vaughn asserts, nation building in Mexico was characterized by a constant negotiation by people at all levels about the manner in which the state carried out its ideas of modernization (9). Vaughn notes the methods used by these communities to fight nationalism. In one example, educators noted that oftentimes parents withdrew their children from school when they disagreed with the school’s political policies. In addition, oftentimes communities negotiated with the SEP over the teachers assigned to their school (18, 61). These instances reveal how the indigenous and peasant communities negotiated with the SEP concerning their “civilizing” tactics.¹²

Industrialization of Mexico

In early twentieth-century Mexico the *Jarabe Tapatío* operated alongside educational policies and nationalistic discourse to aid in the cultural unification of the country. Cultural nationalism in 1920s Mexico operated as a way to unite the social classes. Modernization of industry was used by the government to define the cultural politics of the state. It is important to sort out what proponents meant by modernization in this context. Michael E. Latham notes in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Cold War* (2003) that in the 1930s, American social scientists began formulating new theories which no longer positioned humanity along racial hierarchies. Racial hierarchies which positioned societies as developing from “primitive” to “civilized” were beginning to be replaced by theories that positioned societies along hierarchies from “traditional” to “modern” (4-5). Michael Adas in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Cold War* (2003) argues that American social scientists after World War I began to formulate theories in which:

industrial, democratic America was seen to be the ideal that less fortunate societies ought to emulate. America’s path to political stability and prosperity through the rational management of its resources, through the application of science and technology to mass production, and through efforts to adapt the principles of scientific investigation to the study of human behavior was increasingly held up as the route that ‘underdeveloped’ and unstable societies were destined to travel as they ‘entered the modern age’ (26).

However, he notes that the term “modernization” was not used to describe these theories until after World War II. (26)

In the 1920s, a number of Mexican intellectuals advocated the acceleration of industry to an economy that had long been predominately agricultural. Such advocacy

was part of what Vásquez Valle terms in *La Cultura Nacional Vista por los Elites* (1989) a post-revolutionary discourse, one that promoted the advanced of advancement of industrialization or “progress” of Mexico to ensure prosperity. Paradoxically, the post-revolutionary discourse also sought social justice as demanded by the proponents of the Mexican Revolution. The intellectual elites imagined society as hierarchical in nature. Along this hierarchy, industrialized societies were valued more than the “backward” peasant societies, many of which were denied social and economic mobility. In another paradox, the intellectual elites were fascinated with all aspects of peasant culture even though the peasants themselves were opposed to industrialization. As Vásquez Valle puts it the peasants were seen as “others” by the intellectual elites (1-2. 5-6).

Competing Ideas of Cultural Nationalist Movement

The cultural nationalist movement as initiated by Vasconcelos did not meet with unanimous approval by Mexican artists. According to Anne T. Doremus in *Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Mexican Literature and Film (1929-1952)* (2001), artists were divided along two competing philosophies. The Cultural Nationalists agreed with Vasconcelos in the use of art as a nationalistic vehicle of expression. These artists valorized the peasants and lower class and portrayed them as national heroes. In contrast, the Universalists thought that art should not be used as a nationalistic tool nor be a part of the formation of the national identity. They believed that art produced in this manner was mediocre and produced a false idea of nation. They took this view because they thought that it was essential for Mexico to compete with Europe. To do this Mexico must develop

an artistic approach that appealed to all mankind not merely to those living in Mexico. Doremus argues that although each group had its philosophical differences, neither one opposed nationalism as a state project. They disagreed on whether nationalism was to be a part of “high” art (20-21).

FLORES DE ANGELES IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY MEXICO

Flores de Angeles attended high school and college in the 1920s while Mexico was undergoing educational, cultural, and nationalistic movements. Historians Gabriela Cano and Verena Radkau in *Grandes espacios: Historias de Vida: Guadalupe Zúñiga , Alura Flores, y Josefina Vincens, 1920-1940* [*Great Spaces: Life Stories of Guadalupe Zúñiga , Alura Flores, y Josefina Vincens, 1920-1940*] (1989) interviewed Flores de Angeles and published a brief biography on her life. They recount that Flores attended the elite National Preparatory School in San Ildelfonso as a high school student from 1920 to 1924. Flores de Angeles described this period as one of the happiest times of her life especially because she discovered sports as a profession and as a passion. She was a member of one of Mexico’s first all-women’s swim teams, volleyball teams, and basketball teams. She described herself as a star athlete who led her basketball team to victory by securing a national championship in 1924. She spoke proudly of her graduating class, indicating that many became very successful in Mexico’s politics, educational system, business, and the arts. In high school, Flores de Angeles also developed an interest in literature and a passion for poetic recitation. Flores began reciting poetry in 1923 and, in 1924, enrolled in an academy for poetic recitation led by

Manuel Bernal, who was one of her high school classmates (58-59).¹³ According to the printed dance program entitled “*50 Veranos, Alura Flores de Angeles*” [*50 Summers, Alura Flores de Angeles*] she earned the title Professor of Declamation from the Academy of Manuel Bernal. Flores de Angeles went on to recite poetry, as she put it, “in all theatres in Mexico” and teach this art form to upper class students whom she would help coach to earn national championships (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1993 38-39).¹⁴ Flores de Angeles met her first husband, Alfonso Canales, while a student in high school. He was two years older than she and also was studying to be a professor of Physical Education. They married when they entered the SEP’s School of Physical Education. Later on, Canales graduated from medical school. The directors of the school developed a new program for Physical Education teacher sand encouraged Physical Education students to enroll in the University School of Physical Education before finishing high school. Flores de Angeles met Vasconcelos because he worked closely with this department. It was at this time that Vasconcelos, who was the Secretary of Public Education (Cano and Radkau 63-64).

Flores de Angeles and the Mexican Educational System

Flores de Angeles enrolled as a university student at the National University of Mexico majoring in Physical Education. For three years, Flores de Angeles took courses in rhythmic gymnastics, calisthenics, sports, and everything related to the Physical Education discipline. Flores de Angeles stated that as part of her Physical Education training she learned Mexican folkloric dances (Cano and Radkau 64-65, 70).

An article in the *St. Albans Daily Messenger* [Vermont] dated 1943 chronicles the accomplishments of Flores de Angeles, stating that her mother and aunt were local residents of the city. The article also mentions that an accidental gunshot killed Flores de Angeles' husband three years after their wedding ("Of Local Interest"). At the time of her husband's death she had a young boy named Jorge Canales Flores. Thus, in 1927, Flores de Angeles found herself in quite a predicament as a single mother and a student. In addition, Flores de Angeles' father had also recently died. Flores de Angeles credited the help of her mother for surviving this difficult time (Canu and Radkau 64: Houston). Her mother cared for her little boy while Flores de Angeles worked (Cano and Radkau 63-65). According to the printed dance program entitled *50 Veranos Alura Flores de Angeles*. Flores de Angeles earned the title of Professor of Physical Education from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and *Profesora Normalista* from the national School of Teachers.¹⁵

In 1928 or in the early 1930's, while a teacher within the SEP's Department of Physical Education, Flores de Angeles was hired as a Physical Education teacher to teach in Mexico's Cultural Missions (Flores de Angeles and Houston 201; Canu and Radkau 69).¹⁶ Vasconcelos conceived of the Cultural Missions program as a method of promoting cultural nationalism. The purpose of the Cultural Missions was to train rural teachers and socially integrate the peasant and indigenous peoples into a national culture. To create a nation, educators thought it was imperative to teach these people about the country of Mexico ("Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico" 1:120-123). The Cultural Missions consisted of a team of educators who traveled to rural areas populated mostly by indigenous

peoples (Vasconcelos 1: 1328-1331). In the 1927 SEP publication entitled *Memoria*, reports presented to the Mexican Congress describe the Cultural Missions as follows. Each Cultural Mission had a Director of the Mission who was in charge of educational classes, administration and organization; a Physical Education teacher whose responsibilities included teaching gymnastics and sports, an Agriculture teacher who also helped raise domesticated animals; Trades Teacher; and a Social Worker who was responsible for teaching dietary and hygiene practices, and childcare, as well as giving suggestions on how to resolve social issues (“Memoria” 244). Mission teachers worked alongside rural teachers to augment classroom instruction. Spanish was the official language used in instruction. The SEP made efforts to target illiteracy and hygiene practices as well as to increase agricultural and technical abilities. The June 1926 SEP publication entitled *Boletín de la Secretaria de Educacion Publica* [Bulletin of the SEP] referenced the fact that Sports, Music, Art, and Dance were important cultural components (“Boletín”). Flores de Angeles left her young son in the care of her mother while she traveled as a Physical Education teacher in the Cultural Missions to rural areas such as *Tuxtla Gutiérrez* and *San Cristóbal de las Casas* in *Chiapas*, Mexico (Cano and Radkau 69; Drury).¹⁷

PERFORMANCES OF THE JARABE TAPATIO WITHIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The life story of Flores de Angeles shows that folkloric dance was taught as part of the Physical Education curriculum (Cano and Radkau 70). In 1920s Mexico, documents and writings indicate that Dance was not categorized as its own distinct

discipline, whereas Music, Art, and Poetry were. Here, dance was as part of the Physical Education program which included athletic sports and Gymnastics (Vasconcelos 2:1268). Furthermore, in the 1921 Mexican census, Music teachers were given their own category as a type of profession. However, Dance teachers were lumped together with Gymnastics and Fencing Teachers (97). This is not a surprising phenomenon because as mirrored in the United States census categories in the early twentieth-century, dance was not recognized as a stand-alone subject matter. In fact, U.S. census data from the early twentieth century reveal that a category for Dance teacher did not exist. Instead, those who taught Dance were classified as teachers of athletics, dancing. No stipulation was made as to whether teachers of athletics were also teachers of dancing and vice versa (Tomko 156-157). I note that while Vasconcelos may have followed period practice in subsuming dance under other disciplines, he certainly emphasized its value as a practice. During this time in Mexico, institutions designed to advance the study of Dance did not exist. Theatrical and popular dance forms were unrecognized as deserving scholarly scrutiny (Marin 18).

During the 1920s, the collection of Mexican folkloric dances from indigenous and a peasant community was in its infancy. Yet by this time period, the *Jarabe Tapatío* had been collected, disseminated, and re-invented to represent “Mexicanness” via the public school system. As Frances Toor described it, the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* was already considered a staple during Mexican festivals held in villages, cities, theatres, outdoors, rodeos, and other similar venues (26). An analysis of the collection process and dissemination process of folkloric dance as administered by the SEP indicates how the

bodily renderings of the *Jarabe Tapatío* were deliberately modified to symbolize the nation.

Although Vasconcelos envisioned dance as a bodily method of reaching spiritual understanding, he decided that only certain dance forms would be taught in Mexico's educational system (2:1548). Vasconcelos chose dance forms that aligned or lent themselves with his educational philosophy of promoting the cultural and racial unification of the country. Thus, jazz was forbidden to be taught in the school system due to its "vulgarity" and United States source (1:1744, Crawford17). Vasconcelos was wary of United States political, educational, technological, and artistic influences on Mexico. He sought to create a new Mexican nationalism that was independent of the threat of United States dominance. Instead of jazz, Mexican folkloric dances, and classical ballet were taught, as well as dance from Spain and South America (1: 1324). Although classical ballet, Spanish and South American dances are not Mexican per se, these dance forms supported his philosophy of looking at European and Latin traditions for inspiration. "Mexicanness" was espoused through bodily instruction and performance. Students performed their "Mexicanness" when they dressed up in *Charro* and *China Poblana* costumes and danced the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

First Performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at an Elementary School

The *Jarabe Tapatío* was an essential part of educational program in rural and urban schools in the 1920s. Three significant performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* were organized by the SEP in that decade. Although he does not give the date, Vasconcelos

gave himself credit for encouraging the first public performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by school children. In his writings, he described the manner in which the performance of European dances had been preferred over Mexican folkloric dance traditions. He remembered watching a school festival where the children of indigenous descent performed the minuet wearing wigs of the Louis XV era. He felt this to be a ridiculous injustice. Instead, he resolved as Secretary of the SEP to encourage the use of the “most beautiful” traditional costumes of Mexico, such as the *China Poblana*, within the public school system. Vasconcelos related the very first time that two children from the *Escuela de Comercio Lerdo de Tejada* performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* in public.¹⁸ He did not specify the date yet he disclosed that this performance was held at the University auditorium where in the past only classical ballet had been performed. Vasconcelos noted that some of his colleagues hoped and even expected this performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* to fail. Yet, this was not the case. Vasconcelos described the reaction of the audience as enthusiastic. Poetically, he detailed how every musical melody sung and every unfolded bodily movement raised a clamor throughout the room. This first presentation of the *Jarabe Tapatío* met with such success, he claimed, that it was to be accepted by the SEP as a “natural” implementation in the school system. Vasconcelos noted that the *Jarabe Tapatío* won over the public because it was not a dance of the upper classes but of the “humble” lower class people

(2:1261-1262)

Performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at Chapultepec Park

The second important performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* occurred on September 16, 1921 in the woodlands of *Chapultepec* Park in Mexico City. The bodily performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* was to be a big part of the patriotic celebration commemorating Mexico's 100 years of independence from Spain. This event honored of President Alvaro Obregón and SEP Secretary José Vasconcelos (Pérez Montfort 121). Early twentieth-century Mexican music scholar Gabriel Saldívar described the scene wherein 300 couples performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* beside the edge of the lake and beneath the foliage. Thousands of people who wanted to celebrate this patriotic event attended from all over the country (16). Edgar Ilinás in *Revolución, Educación y Mexicanidad* [*Revolution, Education, and Mexicaness*] (1978) cites a newspaper article printed in 1920 which indicated that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was performed by children from the *Colegio Mexicano*.¹⁶ It followed the singing of Mexico's national anthem. Here, the *Jarabe Tapatío* was the final number of the program (141). Frances Toor noted that this was the first time a folkloric dance had been performed at what she described as the "aristocratic" *Chapultepec* Park. Most importantly, the "people from the streets" were allowed to watch this performance (33).

Performance of the Jarabe Tapatío as Part of the Inauguration of the National Stadium

I argue that, by the third performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, this dance was rapidly becoming a central component to the state's drive to culturally and racially unify the nation. In 1923, the SEP held an inauguration ceremony for the newly built national stadium in Mexico City (Vaughn, *The State, Education, and Social Class* 253).

Vasconcelos explained that this inauguration highlighted the accomplishments of the departments of Physical Education and Fine Arts within the SEP. He recounted that at the inauguration that children played sports and exercised to music. Twelve thousand children sang as part of a choral group and 1,000 couples in the national costume performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* (1:1452-1445). To be specific, one thousand girls from Teacher Training Schools and Vocational and Industrial schools performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* dressed in the *China Poblana* costume ("Mil Parejas Bailaron el Jarabe Tapatío," *La Brillante Inauguración del Estadio Nacional*"). At this inauguration, Vasconcelos allowed only the performance of Spanish and Mexican dances, because these dances were most representative of the type of work accomplished by the SEP. Here, the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* was a fundamental component of a program sponsored by the SEP, a program that featured the synthesis of Music, Dance, Art, and Physical Education (1:1452-1445, Crawford 188).

During the early 1920's, the SEP closely linked the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* with Mexican patriotic festivities. Records from 1924 to 1928 list eight patriotic festivals that the SEP sponsored and held in the national stadium after its inauguration.

The SEP organized these festivals to celebrate Mexico's Independence from Spain (Sept. 16th) and the Battle of Puebla, also known as *Cinco de Mayo* (May 5th). SEP records report that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was listed as the most prominent number performed at the national stadium ("Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico" 2: 408).¹⁹ Historian Josefina Lavallo in *El Jarabe: El Jarabe Ranchero o Jarabe de Jalisco: Versión Recopilada Por Francisco Sánchez Flores* [*The Jarabe Ranchero or the Jarabe of Jalisco: Version Compiled by Francisco Sánchez Flores*] (1988) argues that by late 1930s the *Jarabe Tapatío* had become a fixture within the public education system of Mexico (44).

Jane Desmond in "Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies" (1997) states that the dancing body is an ever changing marker for gender race, ethnic, class, and national identities. She argues that dance can be a performance of cultural identity whose meanings change as dance styles are transmitted from one group to another (31-32). Desmond asserts that bodily renderings are closely linked with "the social construction and negotiation of race, gender, class and nationality and their hierarchical arrangements" (34). She argues that many improvised dances are codified so that they can better travel across racial and class lines, especially when transmitted by dance teachers. Such dance styles "are commodified and sold through special brokers, or dance teachers" (34). In addition, many dances that are created and performed by the lower classes or minority groups are presented by dance teacher as "upwardly mobile" (34). Dance teachers describe these dances as having been "refined," "polished," and "desexualized" in order to climb the racial and social class hierarchy (34-35).

Desmond's optic helps illuminate and theorize some of the changes that occurred with the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the 1920s. By the 1923 performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at the national stadium, this dance had undergone a metamorphosis because it had successfully crossed ethnic, class, and gender lines. After the surprising successful performance at the university, the *Jarabe Tapatío* was implemented in the school system. Also, it is telling that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was the first Mexican folkloric dance chosen to cross social and racial lines through a performance at the university auditorium and *Chapultepec* Park. I argue that with performances there was no longer any anxiety surrounding its reception. Although the *Jarabe Tapatío* was considered to be a courtship dance normatively performed by a man and a woman, it is clear that the performance by female-female couples for the inauguration of the national stadium crossed defined gender lines. This will be discussed in depth in chapter 3. Over the course of a few years, the SEP utilized the public performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at patriotic festivities and together with the singing of the national anthem to situate it as the national dance and not the dance of the people from the state of Jalisco.

Performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at Weekly Cultural Concerts

The cultural nationalist movement played a part in the "civilizing" project of the state as advocated by Vasconcelos and fellow proponents. Soon after the undated performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at the university auditorium by public school children, Vasconcelos developed the Department of Aesthetic Culture, which was comprised of musicians, choral teachers, two Spanish dancers who were employed as teachers, and two

or three teachers of Mexican dance. The SEP designed this department to give specialized teaching of Music, Dance, Gymnastics, and Sports. The SEP charged the Department of Aesthetic Culture with the responsibility of showcasing Mexican music and dance traditions by staging weekly outdoor Sunday concerts, performed by school children, in theatres, parks, and bull fighting rings. Even though Vasconcelos did not specifically mention the secularization of religion as an objective of the programs devised by the Department of Aesthetic Culture, the fact that the concerts were held on Sunday gives a clue as to the motive. Scholar, Huber J. Miller cites a complaint by one Catholic priest who disagreed with festivals and Cultural Mission activities being held on Sundays. Vasconcelos is said to have responded that any decline in Church attendance is the fault of the church since it was not meeting the needs of the people. Vasconcelos also didn't see any need for people to attend a boring Church service when interesting Cultural Mission activities were happening instead (28). At the Sunday concerts, children performed songs accompanied by Mexican folkloric dances. These dances were musically accompanied by an orchestra and choral groups. Vasconcelos indicated that the teachers were so talented that they improvised ballets of Mexican folkloric, dance adding their own touches to the performances. There was one stipulation: all choral groups were required to sing in the Spanish language the national songs of Mexico, songs from Spain and from any Latin American country. Music that accompanied the dancing had to meet the same requirement (2:1261-1263, 1685).

For Vasconcelos, this method of uniting the country culturally depended upon school children performing in the Castilian Spanish language. Cultural Studies Scholar Angie

Chabram in “Racial Formation in Contemporary American National Identity” (1995) writes on the relationship between language and racism. Chabram notes the power of language to create a social identity and maintain social structures and how concepts of language are central to “hegemonic notions of national identity” (Chabram 177). She advocates analyzing the terminology of languages and the manner in which they privilege the ethnicities and histories of European people (Chabram 176-177, 180). I suggest that the SEP used Mexican folkloric dance to promote “Mexicanness.” Furthermore, the required use of the Spanish language for the closely-sequenced national anthem contributed crucially to the whitening of Mexico because once the indigenous people lost the use of their own language, they could be then classified as *mestizos* and neatly fit into the national discourse of *mestizaje*.

Although Castilian Spanish language in performance at its weekly cultural concerts mirrored the official language of instruction used in daily classroom work, indigenous dance was not prohibited.²⁰ The 1925 edition of the newspaper *El Globo*, published in Federal District of Mexico, announced one of the many music and dance festivals conceived by Vasconcelos. This article announced an up-coming Spring Festival that was held every Sunday in March and performed by elementary school children in San Juan Teotihuacán, Mexico, by the zone of the pyramids. The article stated that students would sing as part of a choir, children in Physical Education classes would fight gladiator style, “native” songs--meaning songs native to Mexico--were to be sung, and dancers would perform “Indian” dances. It further stated that school children and teachers would perform regional dances as well as the dances “of our ancestors” from Jalisco and

Michoacán. The program for every Sunday performance was then listed, each had an indigenous theme. For example, music from European gladiator fights was performed by children in the Physical Education curriculum, which was accompanied by music from the School of Popular Music and was set to represent the combat by “ancient” Mexicans. Physical Education teachers performed all the folkloric dances from regions outside of the local area. These dances included: *Danza de los Viejitos* [*Dance of the Little Old Men*], *Danza de los Moros* [*Dance of the Moors*], and *Danza de los Arqueros* [*Dance of the Archers*] which were all listed as indigenous (“En Marzo Se Inauguran las Fiestas de Primavera en S. Juan Teotihuacán”). Interestingly, the dances listed as derived from the local area of Teotihuacán were slated for performances by indigenous children. The dance entitled “*Danza Pastoril* [*Pastoral Dance*] was listed for performance by indigenous Teotihuacán girls and the “*Danza de los Achileos*” was to be performed by the indigenous people of Teotihuacán.²¹

Even though only Castilian Spanish could be used in these programs, I argue that the performance of indigenous dances undermined the SEP’s “civilizing” project. I argue that in this case, dance was bodily contesting and reinforcing nationalistic discourse. The bodily performance of indigeneity as danced by the Physical Education teachers and Teotihuacán children disputed subtle forms of racial incorporation. At the same time, these performances of indigeneity also served as a method of reinforcing national discourse. National discourse as articulated by the SEP educators, intellectuals, and artists utilized the accomplishments of the indigenous people to define *mestizos*. In this way, the

performed dances glorified the artistic feats of indigeneity, while ascribing these accomplishments to the *mestizo* people.

In addition, the Sunday concerts as published in *El Globo* offers an example of the manner in which discourses of indigeneity circulated during the 1920s. Using Desmonds' optic, I argue that indigenous dances had to bridge divides between racial, class, and gender lines to be suitable for performance at these weekly concerts. The *El Globo* article immediately positioned the Gladiator style fighting of "ancient" Mexicans performed by school boys as coming from the past, while leaving the constant contemporary battles between indigenous peoples and the federal government unacknowledged. This article also differentiated between the dances of the indigenous people of Teotihuacán and those from the states of Jalisco and Michoacán. It reported the dances of "our ancestors" from Jalisco and Michoacán required more complicated steps, while implying that those of the local area used simple ones. Here, Physical Education teachers of the SEP performed the indigenous dances from Jalisco and Michoacán. These were the very same dances that were collected and disseminated by the SEP via the educational system. In contrast, the local indigenous dances performed by Teotihuacán girls and people were dances that were currently being taught from parent to child, in a time honored manner. Here, discourses of indigeneity mirrored nationalistic sentiment which positioned the contributions of indigenous people as located in the past while their contemporary accomplishments were negated.

The *Jarabe Tapatío* was not specifically listed as one of the dances performed during these series of concerts in San Juan Teotihuacán. I suggest that this would have been a

perfect moment to perform the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a way of encouraging the unification of the country along cultural lines. Even though the *Jarabe Tapatío* had been included into the public school system, the fact that this dance was not even mentioned as having been performed in this program may provide indication that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was used interchangeably with many folkloric and indigenous dances to represent the nation. The *Jarabe Tapatío* likely was not the sole dance used to culturally unify, whiten, and “civilize” the nation.²²

COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF FOLKLORIC DANCES IN MEXICO

In early twentieth-century Mexico, the SEP supported the collection and dissemination of folkloric music and dance. SEP teachers who were part of the Cultural Missions and the Department of Fine Arts were assigned the task of collecting and disseminating folkloric music and dance traditions. Dance collection and dissemination was intricately tied to the philosophy surrounding the development of rural schools and Cultural Missions. Vasconcelos and President Obregon’s Cultural nationalist aspirations, as well as the national education system worked together to incorporate indigenous and peasant communities into a unified Mexico.

To abide by constitutional reforms of 1922, which made elementary education mandatory for children, a surge of schools were built in rural areas (Sáenz, *La Educación Rural en México* 13-16). In the July 1926 issue of the *Boletín*, SEP Secretary J.M. Puig Casauranc reported the difficulty in requiring an elementary education for all children in Mexico with insufficient schools. He cited the fact that, six of every ten Mexican children

were not attending school simply because there was no school in their area (6). The rural schools that were built were named House of the *Pueblo*; as implied by its name, education was deemed an integral aspect of community life (Raby 15). By 1925, the SEP renamed the House of the *Pueblo* as Rural Schools (Sáenz, *La Educación Rural en México* 14).

Training of Rural and Cultural Mission Teachers

When Vasconcelos began his educational reforms, the SEP had great difficulty in finding teachers with much formal training in education. Vasconcelos described the first teachers in *El Maestro* in 1922:

Enviamos profesores viajeros por todo México para inaugurar pequeñas escuelas. Uno de éstos va al pueblo y busca a alguien que quieria propagar nociones elementales y que desea abandonar sus ocupaciones y enseñar. Frecuentemente se trata de una mujer, y abre una pequeña escuela en su casa, y le pagamos el mismo sueldo que estaba ganando. A menudo con un gasto de poco dinero estamos en posibilidad de iniciar la educación en un pueblo (27). [We sent traveling teachers all over Mexico to recruit people to inaugurate small schools. One of these would go to the town and recruit people who wished to promote basic skills and who were willing to give up their jobs to teach. Frequently, it is a woman that opens up a small school in her house and we pay her the same salary that she was making before. Without spending too much money we are exploring the possibility of starting education in a town. This is what we are doing in the meantime until we have enough money and time to establish regular schools in all the country (27).]

Oftentimes, the SEP recruited a volunteer from the *pueblo* who had studied for a few years to teach at a nearby city (Raby 14). This person was usually someone who had the most education in that area and was enthusiastic about collaborating with the government in educational reform (Miñano Garcia 193). Even using these measures, there was great difficulty in securing qualified teachers for rural areas. Educators noticed

that the teachers employed by the SEP to work in rural schools had good intentions, but many were from the middle class and peasant “inferior” classes. Since many of these rural teachers did not have formal training, the educators thought that cultural and professional improvement of the teachers themselves was urgent. Consequently, teacher training became a priority for the SEP, which began its first teacher training programs in 1923. The state established the Cultural Missions in 1926 as a method of training rural teachers and culturally incorporating the indigenous and peasant communities (“Esfuerzo Educactivo en Mexico” 1: 120). Thus, the indigenous and peasant people, as well as the SEP teachers themselves who were of “inferior” or middle classes were targets of the SEP’s cultural incorporation methods.

The SEP-sponsored teacher training courses for Cultural Mission teachers taught a repertoire of dances that increased over the years through addition of information that subsequent missions gathered about regional music and dances (Marin 107). In SEP reports on training courses for Cultural Mission teachers published in 1928, a chart outlined the manner in which teachers were trained according to specialties. They were trained at the Summer School building and other specialized schools presumably in Mexico City. Professor Luis Villarreal taught Physical Education teachers regional dances for two hours a week, for four weeks. This training curriculum allocated regional dances allotted the same amount of time as baseball, swimming, basketball, and other sports. Only tennis and *frontón* were allotted three hours a week²³ (“Las Misiones Culturales en 1927” 13-14).

Cultural Mission teachers taught their students and rural teachers the folkloric dances at in-service trainings held as part of the Cultural Missions. The SEP closed rural schools for a short period of time so that rural teachers from the outlying areas could attend six-week trainings held from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (Miller 26). In his 1927 report on the Cultural Missions held in the state of Mexico, Fortino López wrote that the rural teachers of Texcoco, Cahuacán, Atlacomulco, Tenango del Valle, and Valle de Bravo learned classical and regional dances from Cultural Mission teachers. He listed the following as the most important dances learned: Gavota, Greek dance, Scottish dancing, Classic Waltz, folkloric dances from the state of Michoacan, *Jarabe Tapatío*, and "Sones Costenos" [*sones* from the coastal regions] (104). Flores de Angeles credited learning her rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* from the SEP (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). It is not clear whether she learned this dance as part of her training by the SEP beforehand or while participating in the Cultural Missions. Since the main purpose of the Cultural Missions was to culturally unify the indigenous and peasant communities, the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* fit neatly with this goal. The teaching of the *Jarabe Tapatío* alongside European dances coincided with Vasconcelos' vision to culturally integrate the nation based on artistic inspiration drawn from Europe, Latin America, and Mexico. While the *Jarabe Tapatío* might have been the most important dance taught and performed by the SEP, it was not the only dance.

Folkloric Dance Collection by Cultural Mission Teachers

The SEP supported folkloric dance and music collection as an important part of the duties of the Cultural Mission teachers. The *Memoria* of 1929 indicated that within the first week of arrival of a Cultural Mission in a rural area, teachers were instructed to investigate the general conditions of the *pueblo*, economic necessities, customs, way of life, and to devise an educational plan with the data collected (263). Cultural Mission teachers were not specifically trained in anthropology nor in the collection of music and dance traditions (Nájera-Ramírez, *Social and Political* 19). In the 1929 *Memoria*, the SEP specifically instructed music educators to teach the national anthem to the students as an effective method of teaching the Spanish language, to study with the rural teachers the music and folk dances of the regions of Mexico, and to collect in the community the most important regional songs, music, and dances to distribute to the neighboring populations. The art teacher's duties also included the study of the local folklore of the region and the collection of local art for exposition in an art show (268-270). The SEP specifically relegated the study and collection of regional dance to the music and art educators. Reports in the *Boletín* and *Memoria* from the SEP in early twentieth-century Mexico do not list Dance as an academic discipline, nor is Dance mentioned specifically in the duties of the Physical Education teachers who participated in the Cultural Missions. Yet, because the educational structure had been created by the SEP such that Physical Education, Art, and Music teachers worked together, in actuality the teaching and collection of dances was a shared responsibility (Marin 108).

When describing her experiences as a Physical Education teacher in the Cultural Missions to scholars Gabriela Cano and Verena Radkau , Flores de Angeles mentioned collaborating with two prominent musicians, Luis Felipe Obregón and Carlos Robledo. She taught ball games, gymnastics, and fundamental recreational games. She stated that as part of her Physical Education training she learned Mexican folkloric dances. Flores de Angeles declared that she was instructed to watch and collect the customs, traditions, attire, and dances of the rural and indigenous people. She accomplished this task by observing the people as they celebrated their community festivals. In Mexico, a largely Catholic country in the early twentieth century, each community typically celebrated a patron saint with a festival of music, song, and dance. Flores de Angeles would wait until the community celebrated the feast day of the Saint to observe the music, dances, attire, and customs of the people. She indicated that she had to memorize the dances observed, since she could not take notes or photographs. If the people caught her they would become reluctant to share their knowledge (70). Both Folklorist Ron Houston and Dance Educator Nelda Drury Guerrero concur that Flores de Angeles was famous for having collected and staged many folkloric dances, most especially the dance called *El Bolonchón* which she learned as a Cultural Mission teacher when stationed in *Chiapas*, Mexico in late 1920s or early 1930s (Houston, Drury Guerrero).

Social Status and Folkloric Dance Collection and Performance

I concur with Mary Kay Vaughn in *Cultural Politics in the Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico 1930-1940* (1997) that scholars must utilize both a top-down approach, as well as its antithesis, to fully comprehend the transmission of folkloric music and dance by the teachers of the SEP. In 1920s Mexico several educators influenced the collection and dissemination of folkloric music and dance from the peasant classes, but the peasant classes simultaneously employed some forms of artistic negotiation. Flores de Angeles was one Cultural Mission teacher described by her colleagues as well connected, possessing the social standing well above that of a teacher (Drury Guerrero). Flores de Angeles had attended an elite high school in Mexico City alongside Frida Kahlo and the children of politically influential families. She graduated from college in Mexico at a time when few people even received an elementary education, much less women. As seen by the experiences of Flores de Angeles, the books written by teachers of the Cultural Missions, musical arrangements created by music teachers, and concerts derived from folkloric traditions, a great number of teachers were from the middle and upper classes. Yet, it is difficult to ignore the fact that due to a severe shortage of teachers, many teachers were recruited from the lower and peasant classes. The SEP gave teachers a great deal of leeway in deciding which dances were to be collected and performed at school festivities. Oftentimes, teachers who organized school events were in the same or slightly higher social standing as the peasants themselves so that the teachers could negotiate which dances were selected to represent the nation.

Thinking about Flores de Angeles' experiences as a Cultural Mission teacher, I suspect that the indigenous and peasant people knew that others were present to observe the saints day festivals. The knowledge of such scrutiny could well have shaped their decisions about which dances and musical traditions to perform at the saint's days festival. Flores de Angeles' account shows that they enforced rules of behavior governing the observation by others of their music and dance traditions -- they prohibited the taking of written notes and photographs. This is one example in early twentieth-century Mexico in which the indigenous and peasant peoples determined which types of music and dance traditions were to be visibly recognized.

Yes, it is true that the elites held the bulk of the political and economic power in Mexico. Yet, utilization of both a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach recognizes that the peasant and indigenous communities were not simply passive recipients of national culture. There was a degree of negotiation between the two groups. Ultimately, the elites determined which songs were to be disseminated and how. However, the peasants were active agents in this process. Thus, the propagation of folkloric materials by the SEP was not strictly a top down approach but a more multi-faced one whereby articulations of nation via folkloric dance were negotiated at multiple levels.

THE JARABE TAPATIO, THE CULTURAL MISSIONS, AND SCHOOL FESTIVALS

Throughout the 1920s *Jarabe Tapatio* was closely involved with the Cultural Missions' strategies to culturally and racially unify the country. As they neared the end of their six week residencies, each Cultural Mission produced closing festivities, during which local participants performed music, poetry, sporting events, gymnastics, and dances.

Cultural Missions

The *Jarabe Tapatio* was one important dance showcased in the closing festivities of the Cultural Missions. Confirmation of this is provided in the publication *Las Misiones Culturales en 1927*, where an article from the newspaper *La Prensa* described the closing festivities in San Cristóbal Las Casas in the state of Chiapas, on October 12, 1927. The Cultural Missions held a music and dance program Missions to honor *El Dia de la Raza* [Columbus Day]. The program included a few piano pieces, rhythmic gymnastics, recitations of an essay about the life and work of Christopher Columbus, a contest of regional costumes accompanied by piano music, and a number of songs. The last two numbers on the program were a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatio* followed by the singing of the national anthem of Mexico by all present (429-430). Here, the Cultural Missions closing program deliberately linked the *Jarabe Tapatio* as a bodily movement with the nation since it was performed immediately before the Mexican national anthem ("Las Misiones Culturales"). In a later chapter, I will detail how Flores de Angeles, a

product of this time period, incorporated the bodily performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* with the Mexican national anthem with the presentation of the Mexican flag in her folkloric dance concerts.

School Festivals

The SEP encouraged teachers to present an annual program called a *Ferias Escolares*.²⁴ In these, school children presented all of their work learned throughout the year, and teachers organized open houses where parents could see children learning (“Boletín” 58-59). In *Los Maestros y la Cultura Nacional 1920-1952*, Mexican school teachers recalled their experiences in early twentieth-century Mexico. Adela Huizar Curiel recounted her experiences as a rural teacher in Mexico during the 1930s. She described the association of School Fairs with patriotic holidays. School children presented songs, games, poetic recitation, and simple dances. The children made Mexican flags and participated in a parade. After the conclusion of the parade, the children played games, sang, and performed dances on the school grounds. Curiel stated that a “young lady” from the *ejido* helped the teacher teach folkloric dances, including *El Jarabe Tapatío* and *La Danza de los Viejitos* (2: 95-97).²⁵ Gilberto Almaguer was another rural teacher who described organizing what he called *Fiestas Escolares*. In 1929, Almaguer organized a School Festival to commemorate the anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. He remembered that a young woman visited his school one afternoon. She mentioned that she had just finished middle school and that she could help teach the children a few folkloric dances, poetic recitations, and other things she had

learned. He accepted her offer. For the first School Festival that he had ever organized, Almaguer also invited a few local youths to present an artistic number. They had in their repertoire the *Jarabe Tapatío* and performed it on that day (1: 89-123). Thus, by the 1930s a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at the School Festivals had become linked with the discourse surrounding the history of the Mexican nation. From a twenty-first-century perspective, rural teachers utilized this dance at patriotic festivals as a method of bodily invoking the Mexican nation.

These examples demonstrate that the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* was developing as one avenue for embodying “Mexicanness” in early twentieth-century Mexico. From 1920 to 1930, the *Jarabe Tapatío* and other Mexican folkloric dances bodily invoked “Mexicanness” in SEP published documents, newspapers, events, and cultural programs. The *Jarabe Tapatío* was one of many dances that signified the nation, yet it gained prominence when it was intricately connected by the SEP to the “civilizing” philosophy surrounding the cultural unification of the nation, as in the case of the Cultural Missions and rural schools. The *Jarabe Tapatío* was taught, performed, and linked to closing ceremonies and School Festivals that sought to incorporate the indigenous and peasant communities into the nation.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE JARABE TAPATIO IN 1920S AND 1930S MEXICO

The historic discourse surrounding the *Jarabe Tapatio* recounts centuries of deliberate transformations in bodily movement, music, and costuming. However, bodily transformations of the *Jarabe Tapatio* from 1920 to 1930 were conceived, promoted and disseminated by the SEP to culturally unite the people along race and class lines. The *Jarabe Tapatio* fits very neatly with Eric Hobsbawn's definition of an invented tradition because through movement, music and costuming it conjures up images of Mexico's history. The *Jarabe Tapatio* circulated as a continued part of Mexico's educational system through repeated teaching within the school curriculum and performances at patriotic festivals.

Educators and scholars throughout the early twentieth century commented on the many changes being made to this dance. Some encouraged the changes, while others lamented them. Vasconcelos himself promoted transformations to the folkloric music and dance traditions. He viewed the "cultivation" of Mexican folkloric music and dance as essential to the "rehabilitation" of popular music. In his autobiography, Vasconcelos wrote that within the Fine Arts Department he assigned Julián Carrillo and Don Joaquín Beristain the task of "cultivating" Mexican music. He stated that Julián Carrillo was the composer and director of the national orchestra. Don Joaquín Beristain was described as a Music educator who developed choral groups and constructed Mexican folkloric dances that were disseminated throughout the country. Vasconcelos even specifically credited Beristain with the "creation" of Mexican folklore. He stated that Beristain and his

colleagues developed folkloric music and dance traditions that were performed “in good taste.” I suggest that Vasconcelos promoted specific changes to folkloric music and dance traditions that best mirrored the ideas of many upper and middle class *mestizo* people. Vasconcelos encouraged folkloric music and dance traditions to be re-classed so that they no longer had to have undesirable characteristics of the peasant and lower class people.

Gabriel Saldívar in *El Jarabe: Baile Popular Mexicano* (1937) criticized the fact that Vasconcelos, through the Department of Aesthetic Culture, had the opportunity to pick from so many beautiful *sones* that he thought best adhered to tradition, but instead chose the steps and the *sones* of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that is known today. Not only did Saldívar criticize the choice of the music and dance steps of the official *Jarabe Tapatío*, but he disagreed with the collective manner in which dancers in early twentieth-century Mexico performed this dance. Saldívar argued that, since the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at Chapultepec Park in 1921, it has become the custom for this dance to be performed by a large number of couples instead of one couple at a time. He stated that when the *Jarabe Tapatío* was performed by many couples instead of one, the dancers did not elicit the same kind of enthusiastic response from the audience that is produced by a sole couple. He lamented the fact that a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* did not adhere to tradition since it was becoming more and more rigid, cold, and mechanized. Saldívar contended that this resulted from the fact that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was performed by couples who had no idea of the intentions and feelings that lay behind the dance, as did the “true” dancers of the *Jarabe Tapatío* (16).

Frances Toor in *El Jarabe Antiguo y Moderno* [*The Old and New Jarabe*] (1930) argued that the *Jarabe Tapatío* and the *jarabes* were danced differently in the cities than in the villages. She related, however, that even in the village “it has changed with the times and those who remember how it used to be danced about fifty years ago, say with a sad shake of the head, ‘it is not like it used to be’” (28). Toor argued that the costumes of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* have undergone many changes so that they could be adapted to the stage. She did note two specific changes in particular, “The city *Chinas*, especially stage dancers either make their skirts short or put hoops in them, so as to show their legs as they dance, and both the *Charros* and the *Chinas* embroider their suits with eagles and designs that are selected to attract attention rather than to express good taste” (28).²⁶ Such changes in costumes were made to “suit the tastes of urban wearers, thus losing much of their old character and elegance” (26).

Desmond refers to the act of “polishing” and “refining” a dance as whitening. By the 1920s and 1930s the *Jarabe Tapatío* was scrubbed free by the SEP of seemingly vulgar, offense movements so that it no longer represented a specific cultural group, ethnicity, race, or social class, but instead the entire country. As Saldívar and Toor suggested, the standardization of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, along with its transition from a regional dance to one representing the nation, clearly came with some bodily consequences or movement changes. In order to re-class, whiten, and polish this dance, specific music and dance elements were codified by the SEP. Once standardized the *Jarabe Tapatío* was no longer only transmitted from parent to child, but had become institutionalized and taught by teachers to children within the public school system.

According to Saldívar, the lack of enthusiasm and rigid, cold movements performed by early twentieth-century Mexican dancers hallmarked this mode of transmission.²⁷

Although it is difficult today to recover specific changes, perhaps, as Vasconcelos remarked of folkloric dances, the repetitive nature of the music and dances were eliminated within the *Jarabe Tapatío* so that it no longer appear “monotonous.” The *Jarabe Tapatío* as performed in 2013 is not “monotonous” because the music and dance movements vary in sequence, tempo, and choreography.

Most importantly, the SEP re-invented and codified the *Jarabe Tapatío* so that it could become synonymous with Mexican identity. The *Jarabe Tapatío* follows a sequence of carefully choreographed movements that are taught from teacher to student. I argue that these choreographic movements are rules of normalized bodily practices designed to define and alter the historical past through dance. Following Hobsbawn and the notion of invented traditions I suggest the *Jarabe Tapatío* operates as a select piece of evidence that is preserved, institutionalized, and popularized by the Mexican government to render specific bodily remembrances of Mexican history (1). The *Jarabe Tapatío* operates in this manner through its fossilized, choreographic renderings on stage; its transmission of Mexican cultural identity through the education system; and its status as the national dance of Mexico. In this way, the *Jarabe Tapatío* has come to be an integral part of bodily remembrances of annual patriotic celebrations such as *Diez y Seis de Septiembre* [Sept. 16] and *Cinco de Mayo* [May 5th] which commemorates Mexico’s achievements in overthrowing the colonial domination of Spain and France.

End Notes

¹ The word *pueblo* has a direct translation of village, town, or people. I use the word *pueblo* to denote the people, culture, and lifestyles of those living in the rural countryside of Mexico.

² Many folkloric groups purposely title their name using the words *grupo folklórico* instead of *ballet folklórico*. For many, the use of the word *grupo folklórico* in the title of a dance company indicates that the group does not fuse ballet and modern dance techniques in their repertoire.

³ Since music and dance accompanied each other, I borrowed my definition for *bailes populares* from Reuter to define *musica popular* (15).

⁴ A *huapango* is a distinctive music and dance style from derived from the *Huasteca* region of Mexico. A *corrido* is a ballad popularized during the Revolutionary period in Mexican history. The *corridos* sing stories of love lost and won, revolutionary heroes, and other related themes.

⁵ *Ateneo de la Juventud* was a group comprised of intellectuals who debated and discussed philosophy and literary works. Vasconcelos along with many notable intellectuals were members of this group.

⁶ During this time period in Mexico, those who were on the losing side of opposing political factions had to seek refuge out of the country for fear of assassination. Vasconcelos who had narrowly escaped assassination attempts against him during the revolution, fled Mexico to live in exile.

⁷ The National Autonomous University of Mexico was given this name in 1929. Before this it was known as the National University of Mexico. In this case, I have chosen to refer to this university using its title as designated before 1929.

⁸ It must be noted that during the early twentieth-century in Mexico, the educational philosophy had begun slowly to develop a more socialist perspective. David L Raby in *Educación y Revolución Social en México* argues that the SEP had created the rural schools to serve as the center of the community living. In so doing, by the late 1920s and early 1930s rural schools were changing so that they were no longer an instrument of service but essential factors in community transformation. Thus, rural schools adopted a socialist educational approach which aligned itself with the peasants and indigenous people in defense against the landowners. In fact, in 1931 an intellectual Marxist named Narciso Bassols was appointed as the Secretary of Education. However, it would later be recognized that it was very difficult for schools to improve rural lives when the economic

and social conditions remained unchanged (30-33). Nonetheless, Vasconcelos' cultural nationalist approach which encompassed the philosophy of promoting fine arts works to encourage nationalistic sentiment continued to be implemented for years to come.

⁹Here, the term “backwards” was used to describe the culture of the indigenous and peasant communities. Educators at this time did not consider the indigenous and peasant people to be racially inferior but they were thought of as culturally inferior.

¹⁰ Although the department of Cultural Missions was founded in 1926, the Cultural Missions program was started by José Vasconcelos much earlier during his term as the Secretary of the SEP from 1920 to 1923.

¹¹ *La patria chica* literally means small homeland. This refers to the perspective whereby the people identified with their locality instead of the nation. The word *Paisanos* means countrymen and *santo* means saint. Here, the author is referring to the custom whereby each individual community had a patron saint that protected it.

¹² The peasant and indigenous communities were not the only groups that disagreed with the liberal middle class ideologies espoused by Vasconcelos. There was also a small, competing vision of nation held by the radical elites (Spenser 1-2). The radical elite were intellectuals who did not form an autonomous grouping but operated as individuals. The radical elites thought that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia contained ideals that could be adopted by the Mexican government. The radical elites wanted the Mexican government to give more control to the masses by redistributing power and land as was done in Russia. These proponents believed that the principles espoused by the Bolshevik revolution could be utilized to facilitate agrarian reorganization, worker rights, educational reform, and to improve international ties (Spenser 55-56; 1-2). This communist perspective on what constituted the Mexican nation is represented in the murals as painted by Diego Rivera upon the walls of governmental buildings (Marentes 144).

¹³ One area of further research could be to investigate the type of recitation style used by Flores de Angeles and Mexicans during the early twentieth century to determine whether it involved Delsartean recitation techniques.

¹⁴ The archive from the Society of Folk Dance Historians in Austin, Texas has a copy of a printed program honoring the 50th Anniversary of Flores de Angeles' teaching career at the National Autonomous University in Mexico.

¹⁵ The title *Profesora Normalista* refers to the fact that Flores de Angeles graduated from a college that specialized in the training of teachers.

¹⁶ There is a discrepancy as to the exact date that Flores de Angeles taught in the Cultural Missions. Flores de Angeles collaborated with Ron Houston for articles published in *International Folk Dancing U.S.A.* by Betty Casey (2000). Here, she cites the year as 1928 in which she began work in the Cultural Missions, while in her interview with Mexican scholars Gabriela Cano and Verena Radkau she states that it was in the early 1930's.

¹⁷ For an undated period of time, Flores de Angeles was in responsible for the Department of Dance of Temporary Courses Division at UNAM. She also directed and organized a folk dance camp held biannually in *Oaxtepec, Morelos, Mexico*, known as *Festivales Folklóricos Internacionales*. Flores de Angeles started the *Yolo Xochitl* dance group comprised of university students from UNAM in Mexico City. In 1977 the National Federation of *Charros* in Mexico commissioned her to present a folkloric dance program in Spain before the King and Queen. She has taught Mexican folkloric dances in the European cities of Stuttgart, Hamburg, Berlin, Zurich, and Vienna. According to Folklorist Ron Houston, Flores de Angeles was also an accomplished athlete and coach. She coached women's volleyball and basketball teams. Her volleyball team to competed in six national championships. In twenty five years, her volleyball teams never placed lower than third place at these events. In 1979, Representative Gonzalo Barrientos declared March 9, 1979 as "Alura Flores Day" to commemorate all her achievements. This is taken from my own personal interview with Sanjuanita Martinez-Hunter, Ron Houston, the *Folk Dance Problem Solver* as written by Houston in 1993, and "Mexican Folk Dancing."

¹⁸ A direct translation of the name of this school would indicate that it is a business school. Yet, in Mexico schools with this name were vocational schools. Here, students would have learned to type, the duties of a secretary, how to work in a ban, and other subjects related to this vocation.

¹⁹ These documents simply use the word *Jarabe* to refer to the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Many scholars and even practitioners today refer to the *Jarabe Tapatío* by calling it the *Jarabe*.

²⁰ In some areas such as in the state of Yucatan, Mexico where indigenous and peasant communities held some political power, indigenous languages were used in instruction in the public school system. In addition, Luis Marentes in *José Vasconcelos and the Writing of the Mexican Revolution* (2000) notes that "at the most fundamental level, even if Vasconcelos wanted everyone to speak Spanish, some teachers had to know Indian languages to begin teaching monolingual students. For this reason, despite what the minister would later write, teachers who spoke Indian languages were preferred for the position of traveling missionary (135)."

²¹ The article does not stipulate whether children performed the *Danza de los Achileos*.

²² For types of folkloric dances taught in public schools, please see José Vasconcelos' *Obras Completas*, Noemi Marin in *La Importancia De La Danza Tradicional Mexicana En El Sistema Educativo Nacional (1921-1938): Otra Perspectiva De Las Misiones Culturales, Los Maestros y la Cultura Nacional 1920-1952* as published by the Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares, the SEP reports printed in *El Boletín* and *La Memoria* from the 1920s.

²³ *Frontón* is a sport similar to racquetball where there is a court with one or two walls off of which to bounce the balls.

²⁴ *Ferias Escolares* or *Fiestas Escolares* are translated as School Fairs or Festivals but in reality it is an annual program organized by public school teachers.

²⁵ An *ejido* is communal land farmed by people as a collective. Oftentimes, people built a small town on an *ejido*.

²⁶ These two changes described by Toor in the costuming of the *Jarabe Tapatío* are considered standard in the twenty-first century.

²⁷ While Saldívar writes from the perspective of a music scholar, Toor's expertise is on the folk art forms of Mexico. However, in their writings these two scholars show concern about the transformation of the *Jarabe Tapatío* over time. They both seem to agree with the idea that dance should not change but should remain static. Perhaps through written text, these two scholars hope to preserve the colonial *Jarabe Tapatío*.

CHAPTER 2:

THE *JARABE TAPATIO* AS A FORM OF BODILY REMEMBRANCE OF EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY MEXICO

Beads of sweat trickled down my forehead as my legs kept up with the quick paced tempo of the Jarabe Tapatío. I danced in the middle of my living room floor with the recorded sounds of the Jarabe Tapatío coming from my boom box. Wait a second; I thought to myself this is not quite right. I consulted the wrinkled worn pages of Alura Flores de Angeles' version of the Jarabe Tapatío as taught in Austin, Texas in 1976. It seemed to me that my bodily movements did not correspond with the written notes. Could she have meant to start on the right foot and turn while stomping with the left or was it the other way around? I slowly read the notes out loud once more while practicing my footwork movements. This sounds about right I thought to myself. Let me try this with the music one more time. So, my quest to re-embody and re-create the Jarabe Tapatío as taught by Flores de Angeles continued.

In this chapter, I begin by undertaking a choreographic analysis of the *Jarabe Tapatío* using bodily evidence. In other words, I utilize the underlying love narrative in the *Jarabe Tapatío* as told by Alura Flores de Angeles, historic accounts, scholarly theories, as well as the bodily movements of the dance itself, in order to illuminate how nation, race, gender and class are invoked. In so doing, I delve into my own intersectional reading of the *Jarabe Tapatío* to demonstrate the manner in which the movements performed by the dancing body suggest a great deal about the socio-political climate of early twentieth-century Mexico. In 1920s Mexico, the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) embarked on dance research and recovery as a matter of state policy. However, no single person is credited with creation of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, nor has a state-authorized

script of the dance been uncovered. In this chapter, my analysis of the dance, its music, and its costuming draw on theoretical considerations to propose ways in which the *Jarabe Tapatío* made meanings and circulated those meanings in the early decades of the twentieth-century in Mexico.

Dance as Bodily Evidence

I utilize the writings of Jane Desmond, Barbara Browning, Paul Connerton, and Diana Taylor to inform my analysis of the bodily movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as evidence. Jane Desmond in “Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies” from *Meaning in Motion* (1997) uses the body as a central site of theoretical examination. Desmond advocates scholarly attention to “the body” as a primary social text, asserting that analysis of social dance, theatrical performance, and ritualized movement practices increase our understandings of “how social identities are signaled, formed, and enacted thru bodily movement” (29). To accomplish this task Desmond asserts that scholars must perform a close analysis of dance forms as is done with literary texts (49-51). Barbara Browning in *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (1995) exemplifies this argument by asking the following question: “what does it mean to speak with the body” (1)? She compares dance to a form of bodily dialogue in which multifaceted bodily meanings are spoken simultaneously and in different languages (2). To continue this line of thought, Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (1989) argues that memories are gathered and stored in the body, articulated through movement, and conserved through performance (4, 103). He argues that most think of memory as “an individual faculty”

(1). However, he asserts that it is very important to understand how “the memory of groups [is] conveyed and sustained” (1). Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2007) argues that written texts have been valued over embodied movements. She states that oftentimes an archive is solely considered along textual lines while movements are understood as a bodily repertoire. Taylor states that bodily movements act as historical records and vice versa. Therefore, the archive and the repertoire operate in tandem. She insists that neither the archive nor the repertoire should be privileged over the other (16-22).

The body is a central focus of my research on the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Following Desmond’s model, I closely analyze the movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, as I would a literary text. I dissect the footwork patterns, gestures, and expressions as Brown recommends, discovering the bodily dialogue which is embedded within a performance of this dance. I employ Connerton’s ideas of cultural memory to better understand how discourses of nation, race, gender, and class are subtly intertwined within the bodily movements. Finally, utilizing Taylor’s conceptualization of the archive and the repertoire, I strive to show that bodily movements in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* act as both an archive and a repertoire with regard to an ideology of nation formation.

Methods of Choreographic Analysis

Michael Carmona was my dance teacher and served as Coach of *El Grupo de Danza y Arte Folklórico de la Universidad de Tejas en Austin*, the University of Texas Ballet Folklórico. He shared the underlying love story surrounding the *Jarabe Tapatío* with me

when I was a dance practitioner. I was a member of this dance group during my first two years of undergraduate work at the University of Texas at Austin. However, I first learned to dance and perform the *Jarabe Tapatío* from Roy Lozano and performed it as a company member of Roy Lozano's Ballet Folklórico de Tejas in Austin, Texas. I danced with that group while a junior and senior at the University of Texas at Austin and throughout my Masters' degree work at the same institution. Unbeknown to me at the time, Michael Carmona knew a version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as taught to him by Flores de Angeles. Flores de Angeles taught him the legend and the dance at a workshop held in Austin, Texas in 1976. Folklorist Ron Houston documented the love story and notated the rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as communicated at the 1976 workshop. After my undergraduate and graduate education, I directed my own Mexican folkloric dance group for eleven years in Laredo, Texas. Throughout many years of dance training, teaching, and performance I learned three different versions of this dance.

For this choreographic analysis of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, I continue my narrative of a typical performance of the dance. The many years I spent as a folkloric dance practitioner has given me knowledge of the *Jarabe Tapatío*'s bodily movements. I also utilize the love narrative surrounding the *Jarabe Tapatío* that Flores de Angeles wrote and that was published in the journal *Real Mexico* in 1934. Within this analysis I interweave the love narrative as described by Flores de Angeles to members of the University of Texas Ballet Folklórico in 1976 and documented by Houston. Using Houston's notes for the dance taught in 1976, I re-created the *Jarabe Tapatío* in 2012 and taught it to members of the Laredo Community College Ballet Folklórico. I constructed this re-creation to guide my

theoretical understandings of *Jarabe Tapatío*, and I use it to inform me of how bodily movements define, resist, and re-inscribe early twentieth-century perspectives on nation, race, gender, and class.

Choreographic Analysis

The stage is set. The curtain is rising. On with the show....There she stands. The *China Poblana*, a symbol of the ideal, virtuous Mexican woman. She gently pinches either side of her skirt with her thumb and forefingers to hold it in place. Her partner smiles at her as he stands dressed as the Mexican cowboy, the *Charro*, who is the symbol of the ideal Mexican man. He holds his hands behind his back, his left palm covering his right fist. They stand facing each other on either side of the stage posed and in character, waiting for their cue to perform. The stage lights turn on and the audience begins to applaud enthusiastically as they hear the familiar sounds of a slow, rising violin line signaling the beginning of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The couple begins dancing.

The sound of the opening refrain is the musical cue to bow towards one another. The *Charro* bows his torso forward, takes his hat off of his head and raises it in front of him. With this gesture, he bodily asks her to dance. In one final swoop, he stands straight while quickly putting his hat back on his head. In the meantime, the *China Poblana* slowly turns to the left and bends her torso forward to indicate her acceptance of this invitation to dance with the *Charro*. The couple moves towards each other across the stage using loud footwork movements that they perform in unison. The *Charro's* torso is bent slightly forward with his hands held behind his back. Although they perform the

same footwork movements throughout the dance, the Charro's are much louder and more exaggerated than those of the *China Poblana*. As they dance, their footwork patterns resemble the sounds of a galloping horse. They tap their feet together in unison, as the couple meet face to face and glance at each other's eyes. The *China Poblana* demurely looks at the *Charro* who flirts boldly with her by smiling broadly and using his eyes to wink and stare lovingly at her face. The *Charro* releases a loud *grito* or shout of joy as he accompanies the *China Poblana* in the movement. With the beat of the music, their footwork changes to resemble the sounds of a sharp knock at the door. It is the rapping of the *Charro* knocking on the *China Poblana's* front door wanting to call on her. Unfortunately, no one is home.

The couple slowly circles around each other allowing their footwork movements to imitate the sounds of horses' hooves. It is the *Charro* taking his horse to the stable. Still, no one is home. Along the way, the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* happen to meet each other. They kick their legs one at a time in the air in front of their bodies and quickly turn to the left and right. Traveling with these kicks and turns they make a path. The two briefly dance closer to each other, then pull away flirting with each other. Brazenly, the *Charro* sets out to conquer the *China Poblana*. The *China Poblana* remains aloof. Something is awry. A close analysis of the footwork movements reveals that something is not quite right. The couple now dances moving towards each other, their torsos rock gently side to side accompanied by footwork movements which are designed to depict the slow meanderings of a drunken man. In fact, this footwork movement is called *el borracho* or the drunkard. Is it true? Yes, the *China Poblana* has refused the *Charro's*

advances. The *Charro* is deeply distressed at this rejection, so much so that his response is to drink a bottle of tequila to drown his sorrows. The couple performs the *mecedora* or rocking chair footwork. Here, the couple places one foot forward bent at the ankle, while the body weight remains on the opposing foot. Then, they alternate feet. They perform the rocking chair step as the couple moves away from each other.¹

It is evident that the virtuous *China Poblana* will not allow herself to be so easily conquered by the *Charro*. On stage, it appears that nothing is amiss since their playful flirting conceals the *Charro*'s drunken state. Taking pity on the *Charro*, the *China Poblana* makes an effort to sober him up by giving him some tea. The acoustic footwork movements called the *hojas de tea* or tea leaves conjure up the sights and sounds of tea being served. Then, the animated music called *El Palomo* or The Dove begins. Here the couple simulates a dove in flight. Next, the *China Poblana* gently holds her skirt in place on either side while the *Charro* with an ever increasing confidence briefly chases after her. He runs after her in a circle but the *China Poblana* successfully eludes captivity as they return to their starting place on stage and turn in unison.

The *Charro* wonders if he has won her affections. Wanting an answer, the *Charro* offers his hat to the *China Poblana* by placing it on the floor. This signals that the *Charro* is asking if the *China Poblana* will accept his love. She modestly smiles. The two dance around either side of the hat using the same footwork movements as they travel in opposite directions. She carefully bends her knees and briefly assumes a squatting position. She then reaches to grasp the top of the hat lying on the floor. The *Charro* notices that the *China Poblana* has picked up his hat. The *Charro* recognizes that this

means that he has succeeded in winning her affections. Joyfully, the *Charro* kicks his right leg over the kneeling *China Poblana* and then spins in a circle in place.²

The *Charro* offers the *China Poblana* his right hand to help her up off the floor. Holding the sombrero, she positions it so that it is touching the right side of her head as if ready to wear it. The couple turns to face the audience for the first time. The audience claps enthusiastically, recognizing the famous military tune entitled *La Diana* which signifies the *Charro*'s successful conquest of the *China Poblana*.³ They walk forwards and backwards together, the *China Poblana*'s left hand holds his right as they move in a precise military formation. Their legs travel in perfect unison as the couple points, stomps, and kicks their feet followed by a pushing of heels outward. The *Jarabe Tapatío* ends with a final embrace in which the *China Poblana* turns and hides her face behind the *Charro*'s sombrero; their last kiss symbolizes their engagement to marry. The dance teacher yells, “*Viva México!*” [Long live Mexico!] from backstage. In turn the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* respond in unison “*Viva!*”

Re-creation of the *Jarabe Tapatío*

Practitioners of Mexican folkloric dance recognize no single or standardized dance notation system. Before the use of video, many scholars devised their own written notation systems. Yet, even with my own knowledge and experience in folkloric dance I found that re-creating a dance from a notated score is quite challenging because it is difficult to describe the intricate footwork movements using notation. Today, the

memory-based versions are the most common method of transmitting the dance from teacher to student.

Although Flores de Angeles herself did not notate the score of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, Houston took great care to document the footwork movements and the choreography of this dance.⁴ He titled sections of the dance according to the sequence of events as related in Flores de Angeles' love narrative. He included drawings of the directions and theatrical spacing indicating the movements of the male and female dancer. The footwork movements follow the specific love narrative as described by Flores de Angeles. He even gave quick summaries of the narrative as the dance unfolds on paper. In addition, along the side of the notated pages, Houston listed the musical counts and number of musical bars that accompanied the footwork sequences. He also gave me a copy of the music that Flores de Angeles would often use in her teachings of the *Jarabe Tapatío* (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). I had no trouble following the storyline with the footwork movements and the music.

However, there were a few discrepancies between Flores de Angeles' version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and my own bodily knowledge of this dance. Right away, I noticed that Houston's notated score does not describe the personification of the character of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana*. The score does indicate that the couple flirts with each other while the *China Poblana* remains reserved. Yet, the score does not describe exactly how this is portrayed in the dance (*Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). I found myself having to fill in these gaps with my own bodily knowledge of other versions of the

Jarabe Tapatío. I instructed the students on how the *Charro* and *China Poblana* should be portrayed in the dance itself, using my experiences as a teacher and performer.

In a related issue, that is not particularly a discrepancy the *Jarabe Tapatío* can be performed as a dance from the state of *Jalisco*, Mexico, or as the national dance of Mexico. Vidal Calvario Tepox delivered a lecture directed to Mexican folkloric dance participants at the 2005 *Asociación Nacional de Grupos Folklóricos Conference* [National Association of Folkloric Groups]. A folkloric dance teacher from *Puebla*, Mexico, he stated that the *China Poblana* does not wear the attire of the people of *Jalisco* from where the *Jarabe Tapatío* is said to have been developed. Instead, she wears a costume from the state of *Puebla*, Mexico, named after her.

Afterwards, this information became part of my bodily knowledge that I put into practice.

In addition, I noticed a few discrepancies in the skirt work movements of the *China Poblana* and the body positioning of the *Charro* as shown in the Houston notated score. The *China Poblana* wears a skirt decorated with many sequins; sewn from a single circle of fabric. Whereas, its construction it does not allow for much skirt movement. As a result of its construction, in a typical performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, as the national dance, the *China Poblana* slightly lifts her skirt, one hand on either side, and holds her arms in a rounded position. However, when the *Jarabe Tapatío* is performed representing the state of Jalisco the women wear the *ranchera* costumes which are brightly colored dresses with ribbon and lace sewn from two circles of fabric. The skirt on the *ranchera* dresses has ample volume to allow the dancer to make many types of skirt work movements in contrast or in sync with the footwork sequences. In the

Houston-notated score, I noticed that the skirt patterns described are not of the *China Poblana* because when dressed in the national costume, her costume does not have enough volume to execute the flourishes of the skirt movements. The skirt movements described in the notated score can only be performed by dancers wearing the *ranchera* costume of *Jalisco*, Mexico (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). This leads me to believe that Flores de Angeles taught the skirt work of this dance so that participants could perform it as either a dance from *Jalisco*, Mexico, or as the national dance. The practitioners would simply need to modify the skirt work and costuming of the female dancer based on their own previous folkloric experience. Further, the *Charro's* torso position--which I describe as angled slightly forward and low to the ground--is not written in the notated score. Nor is the *Charro's* positioning of his hands behind his back with the right hand in a fist and the left covering it (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). In addition, the men wear the same costume in any performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.⁵ I hypothesize that the character personifications, skirt work movements of the *China Poblana* and the body positioning of the *Charro* were not described in the notated score because they are thought to be understood by practitioners.

Furthermore, in Houston's notated score of Flores de Angeles' interpretation of the *Jarabe Tapatío* there were two places where the practitioner could choose alternative movements. Practitioners were instructed that they could choose for the *China Poblana* to accept the *Charro's* love in one of two ways: both couples could dance around the hat, or the woman could dance on the brim of the hat. In addition, Flores de Angeles also accounts for an alternative ending. Practitioners could chose to end the performance of

the *Jarabe Tapatío* with the *Charro* kneeling as if proposing while the *China Poblana* poses by placing her foot on the *Charro*'s other knee. She holds the *Charro*'s hand while her left hand displays his hat over her head. Or, the *Jarabe Tapatío* could end with both couples hiding behind the hat and kissing to symbolize their engagement to marry (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35).

PERFORMING THE JARABE TAPATIO, ENVISIONING MEXICO

Tracing the historical discourse of the *Jarabe Tapatío* reads like a bodily lesson on the history of the Mexican nation. However, many scholars do not include or address the indigenous influences of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as part of its historic discourse. Others merely re-tell legends that subsume indigeneity with *mestizaje*. For instance, Frances Toor writes “the Mexicans were so impressed by the horses introduced into their country, by the Conquerors that the dance grew out of an imitation of their canter, their pawing, and the very special rhythm of their steps... (30).” Here, Toor explains that the dance was created by Mexicans not indigenous people. By absencing the contributions of indigeneity, the *Jarabe Tapatío* in its historic discourse is given an entirely *mestizo* connotation. Furthermore, when indigeneity is portrayed it is fictionalized. Toor describes a legend in which “a princess, a descendant of the Indian Queen of *Tonala*, danced the *Jarabe* in the early part of the 18th century, and that it was a family tradition to learn the dance (30).” In this discourse, the Spanish influence during the colonial period is given primary importance in the development of the *jarabes* that would later make up the *Jarabe Tapatío*. In addition, the historic discourse does not mention any kind of

African influence, which is a topic that is under contention by Mexican scholars. I suggest that these negations show that there are parts of Mexican history that scholars would prefer to ignore. In addition, noticeably absent from this discourse is the presidency of Porfirio Díaz from 1877 to 1880 and 1884 to 1911 even though the *Jarabe Tapatío* was performed at diplomatic functions and sent to represent Mexico in many world's fairs (Jáuregui 52-55). When scholars like Toor do mention the *Jarabe Tapatío* in connection with Díaz's presidency, they minimize the mention of dance and other arts (31-32). I suggest that when the *Jarabe Tapatío* gained the stature of the national dance of Mexico in the 1920s became intertwined with the post-revolutionary imaginings of the nation, its associations with Díaz were erased. Instead, the historical discourse describes the *Jarabe Tapatío* as connected with post-revolutionary ideals.

The *Jarabe Tapatío* offers a way for social groups to maintain and express their memories. Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (1989) argues that in memory, experiences of the past are understood through present-day realities. He defines social memory as those past images that "legitimize a present social order" (3).

Commemorative ceremonies create in words, images, and bodily movements memories of past events which preserve them. According to Connerton, these renderings re-enact history in our minds through their depictions of the past (3, 72). Joseph Roach in *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (1996) writes in a similar vein by stating that bodily movements preserve and transmit social memories through performance (4-5). Performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* are closely tied to annual celebrations of Mexico's Independence Day, September 16, 1810, and the French Intervention with the Battle of

Puebla, May 5, 1862. At these events the bodily performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* imagines the nation's historic past as defined by the victors of war.

Furthermore, I argue that the *Jarabe Tapatío* itself a commemorative ceremony. Bodily performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* indicate one way in which society embodies historical, cultural, and social memories. In fact, the close examination of the *Jarabe Tapatío* reveals the bodily memories of Mexican history of Spanish colonization. Here, Spanish colonial dance etiquette dictated that couples bow before beginning to dance with each other. In addition, scholars explain the percussive footwork sequences as adaptations of the dances that the Spaniards brought from Spain during the colonial period in Mexican history. In this dance, footwork resembling the galloping of horses hooves is evidence of a time in Mexican history when horses and horsemanship were an integral part of life. Also, throughout the courting of the *China Poblana* by the *Charro*, the couple keeps a bit of distance from each other when dancing, and they only kiss when they are engaged. These signal social customs of historic Mexico. Thus, performing the *Jarabe Tapatío* is a bodily remembrance of Mexico's history. The *Jarabe Tapatío* as a commemorative ceremony enables people to imagine themselves as a nation. I will now expand upon Benedict Anderson's theories in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) to demonstrate how the music, costuming, and bodily movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* help to unite the country of Mexico as an imagined community.

Music and Nation

The music of *Jarabe Tapatío*, too serves to envision a nation. As stated earlier, this dance can best be described as a potpourri of different melodies, specifically *sones*, strung together. These *sones* are from the *el bajío* region of Mexico which includes the states of *Guanajuato*, *Michoacán*, *Jalisco*, *Aguascalientes*, and *Querétaro*. (Robledo Gonzalez; Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). The *Jarabe Tapatío* is comprised of *sones* from many different states of Mexico. Pérez Montfort in *Estampas de Nacionalismo Popular Mexicano: Ensayos Sobre Cultura Nacional y Nacionalismo* (1994) [*Images of Popular Mexican Nationalism: Lessons About the National Culture and Nationalism*] (2000) postulates that during the 1920s the culture, customs, and figures of the *bajío* [lowlands] region of Mexico was used to represent the cultural diversity of the nation. He includes in this the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The *sones* of the *bajío* region that comprise the melody of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and the iconic figures such of the *Charro* are derived from this region. Pérez Montfort argues that the music, song, and dance of the *bajío* region best exemplified the imaginings of rural *pueblo* as invoked by 1920s post-revolutionary sentiment (141). I have not yet found data on Castro Padillas' intentions when creating the musical arrangement for the *Jarabe Tapatío*. One thing that resulted from his inclusion in his arrangement of popular *sones* from many different states of *bajío* Mexico, is a sense of different elements brought together in a common project. The *sones* from different states of Mexico in effect serve to musically unite the entire country. I argue that the impact generated by the music and

dance, as well as the figures of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana*, is the creation of a feeling of imagined community.

Costume and Nation

The costuming and the figures of the *Charro* and *China Poblana* also contribute to imagining the nation. The *Charro* wears the *traje de gala* from Jalisco, Mexico. He uses a black, long sleeved jacket, vest, and tightly fitted pants. Along the front of the jacket and down the side of his pants, shiny, silver buttons connect with each other by a delicate chain. These are called *botunadura*. He wears upon his head a wide, brimmed hat or *sombrero* meant to protect him from the rays of the sun. Around his neck a red bow tie with fringe completes the ensemble. Roberto Franco Fernández in *El folklore de Jalisco* (1972) argues that the *Charro* outfit was derived from Salamanca, Spain (83). However, the costuming was adopted to suit the life in the field. (Gaviña 81). During the Spanish colonial period, the very first *Charros* were the Mexican cattler ranchers and their servants (Franco Fernández 83-85). The *Charro* costume had evolved so that variations in adornment, type of fabric, and style mirrored the regional location of which it was derived (Ballesteros 99-101). I argue that references to indigeneity are present in the costume of the *Charro* but hidden amongst layers of alterations made by indigenous and peasant people.⁶

The *China Poblana* costume is based on the colonial attire of the women from Puebla, Mexico.⁷ However, the daily dress of the women of Puebla had been standardized by the 1920s to symbolize nationalistic imaginings. The *China Poblana's*

hair is combed stiffly back in a bun, and two long braids, intertwined with colorful ribbons, encircle either side of her head. She wears a white Mexican peasant blouse embroidered with colorful flowers. On her skirt nationalistic symbols of Mexico are sewn in with sequins. Included in these symbols are the Aztec calendar and the Mexican coat of arms. The coat of arms which appears on the Mexican flag depicts an eagle sitting on top of the cactus, eating a snake. This symbol refers to the Aztec legend of the founding of *Tenochtitlán*, now known as Mexico City.⁸ The utilization of the image of the Aztec calendar and Mexican coat of arms cement and relegate to the past the contributions of indigenous people, but which have never ceased in Mexican history and continue today. Throughout her costume, the *China Poblana* wears the colors green, white, and red which are the colors on the Mexican flag. Having been featured in patriotic ceremonies, dance performances, film, literature, poetry, music, and art during the twentieth century, the costumes of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* are the most visibly recognized in Mexico. In fact, the figures of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* dressed in their costumes and dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* are iconic symbols that represent the entire nation. I argue that the costumes of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* utilize indigenous references to imagine the country as comprised entirely of *mestizos*. I postulate that the use of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* as love interests in the *Jarabe Tapatío* subtly reflects the preoccupation with *mestizaje* and its use as a nationalistic discourse to unite the people of Mexico.

Alongside the costumes of the *Jarabe Tapatío* the bodily movement and musical melody intertwine to subtly convey nationalistic messages designed to encourage love of

the country. The last portion of the dance where the *son La Diana* is played historically links Mexico's military accomplishments with bodily expressions. *La Diana* is a military tune played throughout Mexico's many wars (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). It is a very recognizable and popular *son*. It is also a congratulatory song played whenever an accomplishment is recognized, most especially at parties (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35, Robledo Gonzalez).

The bodily movements of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* as they dance *La Diana* of the *Jarabe Tapatío* show patriotism and love of nation. For instance, throughout the entire dance the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* dance facing each other until *La Diana*, when the *Charro* has successfully won the affections of the *China Poblana*. Then, the military tune begins and the couple dance facing the audience for the first time and hold each other's hands. This simple change in which the couple faces the audience while holding hands, signals that the couple is now united in love for the country of Mexico. The choreographic path in which the couple travels forwards and backwards in unison along with the bodily movements--involving pointing, kicking, and thrusting of the heel outward--resemble precise formations of military drills.

THE JARABE TAPATIO AS A BODILY STORY SIGNALING

RACE IN MEXICO

In the 2010s practitioners tend to classify the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a *mestizo* dance. Yet, period scholars such as Gabriel Saldívar and Flores de Angeles attest to the fact that this dance was derived from indigenous communities. So too does Roberto Franco

Fernández, in *El Folklore de Jalisco* [*The Folklore of Jalisco*]; (1972) he cites the work of José Guadalupe Zuno who argues that the *Jarabe Tapatío* is an example of the manner in which indigeneity is preserved through the incorporation of *mestizo* elements (169-170, 125). In partial contrast, Nellie and Gloria Campobello in the 1930s point to the uniquely *mestizo* features of the dance (Saldívar, *Historia de la Musica* 1934; Flores Barnes, *Real Mexico* 39; Nelly and Gloria Campobello 9). This contention amongst scholars marks the manner in which indigeneity has continued to operate within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

While indigenous influences are debated amongst scholars, African influences of the *Jarabe Tapatío* receive even less acknowledgement. In *La Historia de Música* (1934), Gabriel Saldívar contents that it is quite possible that African people living in Mexico after the first half of the seventeenth century greatly influenced the development of the *son* (265). Susan Cashion mentions in *The Son and the Jarabe: Mestizo Dance Forms in Jalisco, Mexico* (1967) that for many years' scholars thought that no African-derived body movements corroborated this argument (34). Past scholarship on Afro-Mexicans has pointed to their cultural influences in *Veracruz*, *Guerrero*, and other regions of Mexico, yet not in *Jalisco*.⁹ However, recently scholars such as J. Arturo Chamorro Escalante in *Mariachi Antiguo, Jarabe, y Son: Símbolos Compartidos y Tradición Musicales en las Identidades Jaliscienses* (2000) have begun to argue the contrary. Chamorro Escalante suggests that there are indeed African influences in the *sones* and *jarabes* from the state of *Jalisco*. According to Chamorro Escalante, African influenced body movements in the *sones* and *jarabes* are evident in the way in which at some points

of the dance there is a quick succession of fast paced footwork movements followed by slow meandering body movements. Here, Chamorro Escalante is describing what Brenda Dixon Gottschild terms high-affect juxtaposition.¹⁰ According to Saldívar, the *jarabes* were influenced by the *sarao* which colonial writers describe as often danced by mulattos (*Jarabe* 10-11). In addition, Carlos Robledo in *Colección de Danzas y Bailes Regionales Mexicanos* [*Collection of Mexican Indigenous Dances and Folk Dances*] (1948) wrote that one of the *sones* in the *Jarabe Tapatío* resembled the rhythm of a *habanera*, which is a music and dance style of mixed European and African influences (n.p.). Thus, these scholars pinpoint African inspired melodies and rhythms essential to the music of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. However, much more research must be done in this regard.

Double Consciousness and Double Coding

I suggest that the peasant and indigenous peoples utilized within the *jarabes* what W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) first termed double-consciousness. In this text, printed more than one hundred years ago Du Bois theorizes:

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and the Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is the sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, -a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of the others, of measuring one's soul by a tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, -an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one black body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (5)

Here, double consciousness was a method by which “negroes” coped with racism and oppression in a world which categorized people as white dominant and black subordinate.

Du Bois describes having both a “negro” and an American identity that cannot be reconciled. The “negroes” have a “second sight” because they are able to see themselves using the optic of white America. For Du Bois, double consciousness was a coping mechanism by which “negroes” survived living in a white dominated society (Moore 751-752).

Du Bois’ term double-consciousness set the ground work for scholars such as Taylor and Browning to explain why bodily movements can have a double meaning visible to one group of people and invisible to another. Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003) writes of the body and its importance in transmitting cultural memory, which is formed by ethnicity, race, and gender (86). Taylor argues that:

....we would need to think about memory, ethnicity, and gender in terms of the double-codedness of linguistic, epistemic, and embodied practices associated with *mestizaje*.....Thus, *mestizaje* (unlike hybridity) refers to the both/and rather than the neither/nor, the double-coded as opposed to the fragmentary sense of subjectivity..... The double codedness continues the tradition of hiding one system within another that characterizes indigenous resistance to colonialism (88, 96, 106).

Taylor expands on Du Bois’ ideas because she reads *mestizaje* as a bodily transmission of culture. *Mestizaje* itself is double coded with multiple meanings that remain invisible to a particular group of people and visible to others. She characterizes the double coded nature of *mestizaje* as indicative of indigenous method of surviving colonialism. In a related vein, Barbara Browning in *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (1995) asserts that dances display traces of bodily histories that she maintains cannot be fully accounted for in writing. Browning uses the term “double self-reflexive significance” to describe

seemingly similar gestures that have “accrued” different meanings at different points in time (xxiii-xxv, 9).

Du Bois, Taylor, and Browning use this notion of doubleness in ways that are not identical to each other. Du Bois writes of double consciousness as a method in which an oppressed person looks at himself using two different perspectives. Taylor argues that double coded consciousness is a twoness in which the body hides layers of cultural resistance. Browning acknowledges that the same gestures have different meanings. These theories are useful to me because they point to the possibilities of dance having more than one reading.

The writings of George Chauncey in *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of One Gay Male World 1890-1940* (1994) further support these ideas of twoness as written by Du Bois, Taylor, and Browning. Chauncey uses the term double entendre to describe how use of the word gay in the 1940s United States had different meanings when used by a straight versus a homosexual man, depending on the context of the sentence, gestures, and verbal emphasis. He quotes the typescript of a writer in 1941:

One might ask: ‘Are there any gay spots in Boston?’ And by slight accent put on the word ‘gay’ the stranger, if wise would understand that homosexual resorts were meant. The uninitiated stranger would never suspect, inasmuch as ‘gay’ is also a perfectly normal and natural word to apply to places where one has a good time... (18).

Chauncey states that in the years preceding World War I, many gay men chose to hide their homosexuality for fear of economic and political reprisals, so they developed an intricate system of communication which included specific manners of dress, verbal cues, and gestures. These codes and their meanings remained invisible to outsiders. He argues that this system of communication proves the resilience of gay men where “even those

parts of the gay world that were invisible to the dominant society were visible to gay men themselves” (4). Thus, the usage of the double entendre was a form of negotiation used by gay men to successfully navigate through United States society.

The theories of double-consciousness, double-coded consciousness, double self-reflexive, and double entendre are extremely important in interpreting the historical discourse of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. As previously stated, performances communicated through double meaning were part of the character of the *jarabes*, as performed during the colonial era in Mexican history. Double coded meanings within performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* pinpoint what I argue was a deliberate strategy of the performer in this case, the peasant people to circumvent political, economic, and cultural injustices. I suggest that they are still bodily remembered in the *Jarabe Tapatío* today.

I have noticed that the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a *mestizo* dance has retained indigenous bodily movements that others have read “primitive” or “monotonous.” In a newspaper article entitled “Standing Room Only” journalist Mabel Knight described the Thursday afternoon performances by Flores de Angeles held at the Summer School of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, in which she danced to music from the state of Guerrero, Mexico. “Señorita Alura had a gorgeously embroidered costume, and as she danced there was a color, rhythm, and a Spanish grace that lifted the Indian dances out of the sometimes monotonous dance step” (Knight n.p.). Knight emphasized thereby the connections with Spain, and she minimized the importance of indigenous elements. In *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (1947) Frances Toor remarked that “some students of the *Jarabe Tapatío* attribute to it a pre-Spanish origin” (365). However, she immediately

dismissed this hypothesis because “there is nothing primitive about the dances, particularly as performed by city people” (*A Treasury* 365). Here, Toor disregards the indigenous elements because to her indigeneity is read as “primitive.” I argue, that it can be quite difficult to visualize the indigenous elements within the *Jarabe Tapatío* most especially when indigeneity is read as “monotonous” or “primitive.”

One way in which indigeneity has bodily persisted in the *Jarabe Tapatío* throughout the years has been through use of double coded animal imagery, footwork patterns, and bodily positioning. On the one hand, these indigenous elements appear to re-tell the courtship scenario between the *Charro* and the *China Poblana*. On the other hand, they are indigenous references that remain embedded in the dance as a testament to years of negotiation with the dominant society. And of course I am taking it as a given here that different groups of viewers discern different things.

Susan Cashion describes the types of themes invoked in the dancing body of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that share the same motifs with many indigenous dances.¹¹ She lists a few as:

el Gorrión – the sparrow, in which the violin imitates the sound made by the bird; *El Burro*- the donkey, with movements that sometimes offend the public;*La Mariposa*- the butterfly, where the feet of the dancer and the skirt of the woman make the form of a butterfly. *El Palomo*-The Dove, imitates the circle turns of the male dove as he woos her mate. This is followed by the man throwing his sombrero on the ground; and *El Guajito*- the turkey is danced around the hat (Cashion103).

The love narrative as told by Flores de Angeles directly corroborates Cashion’s account since it too incorporates many of these themes including *El Borracho*, *El Palomo*, and *El Guajito* (Flores Barnes 16-17, 39; Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35).

Animal imagery is also a salient feature referenced in the acoustic footwork patterns or *zapateado* of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The footwork movements are typically associated with influences derived from Spanish flamenco dance. As a practitioner of folkloric dance, these footwork sequences were explained to me as derived from the Spanish colonial contributions to Mexican dance. Yet, within the love narrative of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as detailed by Flores de Angeles, these footwork movements are represented as depicting the sounds of horses's hooves, which I argue reference the indigenous usage of animal imagery that was an integral part of indigenous and peasant life. Period scholars Toor and Saldívar note the use of animal imagery in the courtship scenario of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Toor wrote of *La Paloma* [The Dove] sequence in the dance and the manner in which these movements resembled the courtship of birds (*Mexican Folkways* 364-365). She described the courtship element in the figure of The Dove—an imitation of the way doves, as well as other animals, follow(s) one another in their courting” (365). Saldívar wrote that when the couple dances around the hat in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* the woman imitates a turkey in courtship by displaying her plumage while circling her partner (*La Historia* 333-334). In addition, Cashion argues that the manner in which the *Charro* aggressively pursues the *China Poblana* resembles the weapon dances that the indigenous people performed. She also suggests that an indigenous people interpreted the music and dances as animated, lively (20-21). I argue that this chasing, circling movement is double coded, as well as the spirited interpretation of the dance so that it appears to reference the colonial courtship dynamics between the *Charro* and *China Poblana*, and not indigeneity.

The dance is double coded through body positioning too. One of my dance teachers corrected men who danced with their backs upright. He stated that the *Charro* must dance with his back at an angle, torso facing towards the ground. He indicated that this bodily position is an indigenous influence evident in the dance. This low to the ground bodily posture of the *Charro* is visibly recognized as a display of amorous affection whereas it also double coded as bodily evidence of indigeneity.

Such bodily movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* show how indigeneity has been negotiated throughout the centuries. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla in *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization* (1996) states that “the presence of Indian culture is, in some aspects, so commonplace and omnipresent that one rarely stops to think about its profound significance, or about the long historical process that made possible its persistence in social sectors that assume a non-Indian identity today” (41). My unpacking of the *Jarabe Tapatío* reveals the manner in which indigeneity has survived years of colonization through double coding. In chapter three, I pursue the connection between nation, gender, and class within performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

End Notes

¹ In this scenario of the *Jarabe Tapatío* both the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* perform the drunkard and rocking chair steps even though the woman does not get drunk. Thus, it takes a clear understanding of the love story to be able decipher the plot.

² *La Cócona* is the name given to the sequence in the *Jarabe Tapatío* where the man kicks his leg over the kneeling *China Poblana*. This dance sequence make reference to the people from Cócona, Jalisco, This is the location from which the *Jarabe Tapatío* is said to have derived. For more information see: *El Mariachi* by Jesús Jaugrauri, *México: Leyendas, Custumbres, Trajes, y Danzas* by Maria Elena Sodi de Pallares among others.

³ *La Diana* is a famous military tune that concludes the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

⁴ Ron Houston's notated score is based upon a workshop taught by Flores de Angeles in Austin, Texas in the 1976. It is an interpretation of her teachings.

⁵ The *traje de gala* is the name of the costume used in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Other variations of this costume are known as the *traje caporal* and *traje de media gala* each varying in style.

⁶ I acknowledge that in early 20th century Mexico, the government could not readily distinguish between *mestizo*, indigenous, and Afro-Mexican peasant populations. There were also migrations of people from Europe, China, India and many countries to Mexico throughout its history. I use the term peasant population to refer to any of these groupings or any combination of these groupings dependent on the region or community derived from.

⁷ The Spanish colonial era (1521-1810) in Mexican history spanned several centuries. No one scholar can pinpoint an exact date as to when the *China Poblana* dress became popularized.

⁸ *Tenochtitlán* was the name of the empire of the Aztec people. Legend has it that the Aztec people lived as nomads for thousands of years. They believed that they could find their homeland where they found an eagle eating a snake on top of a cactus. The Aztecs found the eagle on a cactus eating a snake but it was surrounded by a lake. They filled it up and this became the city of *Tenochtitlán*. Later on, the city was toppled when the Aztecs were defeated by the Spanish. A colonial city was built on top of the ruins of *Tenochtitlán*. Now it is known as Mexico City.

⁹ Afro-Mexicans is a term used by twenty-first century scholars to connote Mexican people of mixed African, indigenous, and European heritage. This term is not necessarily used by the people themselves.

¹⁰ Chamorro Escalante cites John Blackling who in *How Musicial is Man?* (1979) analyzes some African influences in music and dance that are characterized by a tension and release. Brenda Dixon Gottschild in *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and other Contexts* (1998) analyzed the ballet choreographies of George Balanchine to account for the Africanist presence within his Americanization of ballet. She outlined five Africanist aesthetic principles which include embracing the conflict, polycentrism/polyrhythm, high-affect juxtaposition, ephibism, and the aesthetic of the cool (xiii, 13-17).

¹¹ I use the term indigeneity to refer to the usage of animal imagery in the *Jarabe Tapatío*. I do acknowledge that the usage of animal imagery references the way of life of the peasant community.

CHAPTER 3:
NATION, CLASS, AND THE GENDERING OF MEN AND WOMEN IN
PERFORMANCES OF THE JARABE TAPATIO

I sat at a table facing Nelda Drury Guerrero, former student, colleague and friend of Alura Flores de Angeles and Sanjuanita Martinez-Hunter Ph.D., retired dance educator, reminiscing about the life of this remarkable woman.

Sanjuanita Martinez-Hunter spoke first, “For me, Alura was always ahead of her time. She lived in an eraWhere the women stayed at home...and here was Alura, married twice which was not customary for anybody, she was not a Catholic, at a time when the country itself was a Catholic country.

Nelda Drury Guerrero chimed in “She was bi-racial too, she was half American, half Mexican....but she still had all that love for Mexico” (Martinez-Hunter; Drury Guerrero).

Upon continued investigation, I learned that Flores de Angeles was also college educated, a single mother for a time, her religious faith was Baptist not Catholic, and she worked outside the home for her entire adult life. She often told her colleagues that she paid for her son’s medical degree entirely with her earnings (Houston). However, she also worked as a teacher which was an acceptable profession for women and remained married throughout most of her adult life. Why, then would Flores de Angeles in her writings, oral presentations, and dance workshops teach the love narrative of the *Jarabe Tapatio* when this storyline references the adherence to Mexican traditional gender roles by which she did not entirely abide in her own life?

Nikki Craske in “Ambiguities and Ambivalences in Making the Nation: Women and Politics in Twentieth- Century Mexico.”(2005) delves into state support of women in the nation building projects of Mexico during the early and late twentieth century. Craske postulates that women were expected to both adhere to traditional gender roles and to encourage political change (116). I argue that like many women of her era Flores de Angeles was caught in a bind. I suggest that one way in which Flores de Angeles fulfilled dual expectations that Craske identifies was to continue the bodily and oral transmission of the traditional gender roles espoused in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Meanwhile, in her own life Flores de Angeles utilized her education, social standings, and talent to advance her own career objectives.

In her writings, Craske also argues that during the early part of twentieth- century Mexico, the state was “inward looking, economically protectionist and corporatist” (116). Craske argues that the image of woman as a “self-sacrificing mother” was a nationalistic tool designed to undermine political change. During this time period, women were give paradoxical messages. They were expected to abide by traditional gender roles and to encourage political renovation (116). Vasconcelos and other intellectuals were instrumental in promoting the patriarchal underpinnings of nationalism. Unmarried, chaste Mexican women were encouraged to pursue the teaching profession although motherhood was still regarded as the ideal norm (Franco 102-103). Men had the power to define and control womanhood. After the Mexican Revolution, male leaders expected women to subscribe to traditional gender roles and be the moral guides for the nation. The education of women was promoted so that women could learn to be “wives to the

nation” (Perez 236). Although, women during this time period did not receive the right to vote, they were given a variety of rights as stipulated in the Family Relations Act of 1917. Women were given the right of equality within their homes, the right to raise their children, and to manage family possessions. They could own property and could work under contract. Divorce was also legalized. These new rights were given to guard traditional gender roles so that women could remain a central force in the domestic sphere. However, Craske argues, that “although remaining subjects of the private, the fact that they had individual rights within the home was a radical break with the past and a partial recognition of women’s socio-economic citizenship” (Craske 121-123).

Due in part to the efforts of Mexican feminists, in 1927 the government revised the civil code. This revision served to equalize the civil liberties of the sexes and to protect the rights of married women. Here, legal reforms made in the Law of Family Relations Act were implemented, which enabled women to practice law, protected single women by allowing them the right to leave their parental home at the same age as men, and steadied the marriage contract by requiring both parties before a civil ceremony to indicate whether the couple would administer their property jointly or separately (Mácias 120-121). Anna Mácias in *Against All Odds the Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940* (1982) argues that, although this was a big achievement for many women in Mexico, these reforms did little to help the lives of impoverished women throughout the country. Middle and upper class women benefitted the most from these types of reforms. In addition, women were still not afforded the right to vote or hold office (120-121).

Anne Rubenstein in “The War on the *Pelonas*” (2006) writes of the modernization of women’s clothing and attire. During the early 1920s, *Pelonas* were described as women who wore a flapper dress, cosmetics, and the fashionable short hair styles known as the bob.¹ This style was in vogue for young, unmarried women of high society and was just beginning to be used by poor, dark skinned, lower class women. Rubenstein recounts that there was a tremendous amount of disapproval of this new look articulated as operating against traditional Mexican values. She argues that short bobbed hair symbolized the masculinization of women and the growing influence of Western modernization (57-59). Even period scholar Carlos Rincón Gallardo in *El Charro Mexicano* (1939) wrote “*Eso de ver chinas con peinados ‘a la Bob’ con miriñaques y hasta zapatos de ‘dernier cri’ es muy gran impropiedad.*” [This business of seeing *China Poblanas* with bob hairstyles, wearing hoop skirts, and even ‘dernier cri’ shoes is very improper] (240-242).² Here, Gallardo is protesting the use of the bob hairstyle and fashionable shoes as a form of Western modernization of the costume of the *China Poblana*.

Eventually, opposition took the form of violence directed at the *pelonas* in Mexico City in 1924. Male preparatory and medical students grabbed young *pelonas* from outside their schools. They then washed and shaved their heads. Outrage over these acts played in the newspapers, radio programs, and churches. Eventually, the persons involved were disciplined and the violent acts subsided. This uproar over the short hair style coincided with the gendered politics of the state. The state employed women as participants in arts and sports (Rubenstein 57-58, 67-68, 65-76). For instance, In Mexico

City, hundreds of women such as Flores de Angeles trained to be physical education teachers in a program of study newly developed by the state. Further, women attended recently integrated preparatory, normal, and vocational schools (Macias 104-106).

Rubenstein argues that the reaction against the short hair of the *pelonas* responded to the changes in the national educational system that included women in greater numbers. The *pelonas* with their short hair and entry into education challenged the subordination of women typical of traditional gender roles (Rubenstein 61-71).

According to theorist Temma Kaplan during the aftermath of revolutions, governments seek to reclaim control over society by idealizing masculinity (264). As with female gender roles, masculinity in post-revolutionary Mexico was constructed alongside revolutionary patriotism and given nationalistic ideals (Cano 45). Throughout the revolution, women fought in battle alongside men. The courage of these *soldadas* was exalted in songs and ballads. However, at the conclusion of the revolution, most *soldadas* returned to the traditional gender roles assigned to them by society (Cano 37).³ Kaplan argues that so as long as masculinity was unopposed men and women could have some leeway in traditional gender roles (Kaplan 264). This made it acceptable for women to be employed as teachers. Yet, women of all classes prepared strikes, organized suffragist campaigns, and lead feminist movements. These women quickly learned that when they challenged traditional gender roles they would be labeled as “*marimacha* a tomboy of dubious sexuality (dyke, or butch in more contemporary parlance)” (Olcott 17). Kaplan suggests that governments consider homosexuality as a social and political threat particularly when associated with effeminacy because it undermined the social order

(264-265). It was deeply rejected because it was thought to be a negation of masculinity, a denunciation of revolutionary tenets, and a refutation of national values (Cano 45).

Traditional Roles for Men and Women in Performance

The physical movements of the *Charro* dancing are indicative of the types of traditional male gender roles that dutiful Mexican male citizens were and are supposed to enact. Scholars have used the term *machismo* to describe traditional Mexican male gender roles. *Machismo* is described as a manifestation of the patriarchal system in which men institutionalize superiority over women (Latin American and Caribbean Women's Collective 6). It is a term used to represent the hyper masculine male who acts with command, control, power, and the concealment of "feminine" emotions through acts of drunkenness, violence, etc. It is also associated with positive traits such as respect, bravery, and family accountability (Kulis 260). *Machismo* is thought to be a result of Mexico's history of domination and conquest. For many men, feelings of political and economic insecurity were rationalized by the knowledge that they were in control of their women at home. *Machismo* is not unique to Mexico and Latin American countries. Scholars note that characteristics of machismo are displayed in westernized countries (Latin American and Caribbean Women's Collective 8).

I argue that the physical movements and musical renderings of the *Charro* dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* serve as a bodily archive which demonstrates the positive and negative characteristics of *machismo*. In this dance, the *Charro* expresses positive traits of *machismo* through the strength of his footwork. He stomps louder and with more force

than the *China Poblana*. In addition, the *Charro*'s low to the ground body posture is assertive and his footwork and body movements are more exaggerated than that of the *China Poblana*. The *Charro*'s masculinity is further proven through his flirtations, kisses and *gritos* [yells] directed at a woman. His joyous celebration of his conquest of the *China Poblana* at the conclusion of the dance effectively reinforces his masculinity. Also, the *Charro* shows bodily evidence of valuing family responsibility since he becomes engaged to the *China* at the end of the dance through their final kiss. In this regard, the *Charro* while dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* does indeed display evidence of honor, and family esteem (Reyes 17).

The *Charro*'s dancing also reference the importance of the domination of men over women. Juana Armanda Alegría, who wrote *Psicología de las Mexicanas* [*Psychology of Mexican Women*] in 1974, argues that generally speaking, relationships between men and women in Mexico are usually dominated by the men. Here, men need to feel in control and powerful. The macho man considers himself to be the one who possess women sexually. When they do not have economic power, macho men can comfort themselves knowing that at least they have control over their women (141). For this writer, even in 1974 male/female love relationships were still characterized as having elements of *machismo*.

Machismo can be extremely problematic when, as shown in the *Jarabe Tapatío*, the *Charro*'s actions disempower the *China Poblana*. The *Charro* seeks the love of the *China Poblana*. After he begins flirting with the *China Poblana* she responds by flirting back. Then, the *China Poblana* refuses the *Charro*'s romantic advances. In response to

this refusal the *Charro* gets drunk on a bottle of tequila, which is signaled in the footwork patterns resembling a drunken man. The *Charro*'s response is typical of most meanings of the term *machismo*, where *machismo* manifests itself in abuses to the physical body, such as sexual incidents and dare-devil antics (Gutmann 222). The *Charro*'s bodily desire to conquer the *China Poblana* sets up an oppressive force of sexual coercion in which the *China Poblana* is expected to acquiesce to his desires no matter how he responds to her refusal. Thus, drunkenness as evidenced in the dancing body is an acceptable form of sexual coercion designed to persuade the *China Poblana* of the *Charro*'s desirable masculine traits. Hence, in the *Jarabe Tapatío* the *China Poblana* is obligated to sober him up, as evidenced in the tea leaves footwork sequence, and accept his love.

According to Octavio Paz in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1967), when dealing with love matters:

The Mexican conceives of love as combat and conquest. It is not so much an attempt to penetrate reality by means of the body as it is to violate it. Therefore the image of the fortunate lover-derived, perhaps, from the Spanish Don Juan-is confused with that of the man who deliberately makes use of his feelings, real or invented, to win the possession of a woman (42).

The conquest of *China Poblana* by the *Charro* is evidenced during a section of the dance called *La Cócona*. Here, the *Charro* kicks his leg over the kneeling *China Poblana* to symbolize his conquest of her (Sodi de Pallares 418). Then, the *China Poblana* picks up the *Charro*'s hat signifying the acceptance of his romantic courtship. The *Charro* and *China Poblana* joyously dance to the *La Diana* (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). This celebratory ending signifies the mutual acceptance and re-confirmation of male/female power relationships.

The physical movements of the *China Poblana*'s dancing body are indicative of the types of traditional female gender role fulfillment that are expected of dutiful Mexican women. The term *marianismo* is the female counterpart to the term *machismo* (Reyes 18). In *marianismo* women are characterized as being kind, morally pure, and submissive. Men are seen as spiritually weaker than women (Kulis 260-261). *Marianismo* is a term that is synonymous with the image of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary is described as a suffering, sinless mother who embodies family values. On the other hand, *malinchismo* is the term based upon the name of Hernán Cortés' indigenous mistress whose name was *La Malinche*.⁴ Mexican history has criticized her for helping to defeat the Aztec empire. Yet, her *mestizo* child is the symbolic face of modern, *mestizo* Mexico today. *Malinchismo* characterizes women who have failed to live up to the ideals of moral purity and virtue (Huck 264-266). The *China Poblana* embodies the submissive, virtuous traits of *marianismo* while rejecting *malinchismo* as the idealized gender norm.

The *China Poblana* embodies the gender constructions of *marianismo* in the *Jarabe Tapatío* through her flirty, coquettish femininity which is used to attract the *Charro*'s desires. Paz noted that the Mexican man:

circles around her (woman), courts her, sings to her, sets his horse (or his imagination) to performing caracoles for her pleasure. Meanwhile she remains behind the veil of her modesty and immobility. ...She does not seek, she attracts, and the center of attraction is her hidden, passive sexuality (37-38).

In the *Jarabe Tapatío* the *China Poblana* is indeed the center of attraction. Her passive sexuality is evident since she does not ever initiate a romantic relationship with the

Charro but merely responds to his romantic advances by flirting. The *China Poblana*'s benevolence and submissive qualities are bodily visible in this dance when she sobers up the *Charro* by dancing the tea leaves sequence. Through this footwork movement the *China Poblana* accepts the *Charro* with all of his masculine weaknesses. At the conclusion of the dance, the couple kisses hiding behind the *Charro*'s hat. In her love narrative, Flores de Angeles reads the kiss at the end of the dance as a signal for an engagement to marry (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35). Mexico, a predominately Catholic country, would not encourage sex before marriage. In this regard, the engagement kiss points to the *China Poblana*'s moral purity.

The *China Poblana*'s *marianista* ideal can be very problematic because it limits women to a very particular role, which is submissive to men. Adherence to the *marianismo/malinchismo* doctrine leaves women with the dilemma of choosing to identify as either a virgin or a whore without any other alternatives (Huck 265). Norma Alarcon argues in "Chicana Feminism: In the Tracks of 'the' Native Woman" (1999) argues that patriarchy erases and excludes raced women from participation in the cultural and political economy. Alarcon describes the complexities of this scenario through which historical images of the indigenous woman operate along a good versus evil dichotomy or *marianismo* vs. *malinchismo*. She notes the irony through which the construction of *mestizo* identity entails the rejection and denial of *La Malinche* who is the dark, Indian mother while at the same time nationally representing her role in the creation of the fatherland. In addition, the dancing body of the *China Poblana* figure aptly demonstrates that the only method for women to legitimize their position is to ascribe to

the rules of patriarchy which entails marrying a man and having a family. This reality, as Alarcon notes, truly complicates the multiple negations and rejections experienced by women (65-69). I argue that the characterization of the *China Poblana* along the same lines as the Virgin of Guadalupe advises women that they should subscribe to traditional female gender roles in order to secure a husband's protection through marriage.

Discursive consideration of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as the "official" dance of Mexico cements, idealizes, and reinforces the usage of traditional gender roles by both men and women.

In addition, the bodily movements of the *China Poblana* reveal the manner in which women are taught to pursue romantic relationships. For the *China Poblana*, as evidenced in her responses, passivity is the key rather than instigation of romance. The *China Poblana* instructs women to "play hard to get." Thus, the *China Poblana* mercilessly toys with the affections of the *Charro* using shyness and flirtation as a sexual tool. She then pretends to be uninterested in the *Charro's* affections and rebuffs his romantic desires. Through her footwork movements, the *China Poblana* tells women to accept men's drunkenness and tantrums as part of their masculinity. Here, the *China Poblana* has some agency in the process because she has the power to prolong or shorten the romantic relationship. However, by the end of the dance the *China Poblana* always accepts the love of the *Charro* no matter what hurtful actions were undertaken. The *China Poblana's* dancing body instructs women to engage in the *marianista* ideal, adopt feminine passivity, and play romantic games so that these actions will lead to the ultimate goal of marriage and family.

Performances of Gender in the *Jarabe Tapatío* by the SEP from 1920 to the 1930s

“Mil Parejas Bailaron el Jarabe Tapatío” [“A Thousand Couples Dance the Jarabe Tapatío”] This was a headline in *El Excelsior*, one of Mexico City’s newspapers, published on May 6, 1924 a day after the inauguration of the national stadium as organized by the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) (“Mil Parejas Bailaron el Jarabe Tapatío”). There were a total of three inaugurations of the national stadium. All followed the initial inauguration on May 5, 1924 and were conducted before the building was entirely complete, to raise monies for its construction (Rubenstein 72). A montage of photos ran underneath the headline printed in *El Excelsior*. Pictured were the spectators, distinguished guests, and various performances at the inauguration of the national stadium including a photo of a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The photo was taken from quite a distance and showed the dancers bowing towards each other surrounded by thousands of spectators, who sat on the bleachers, and rows of people standing alongside the performers. The caption printed above the picture read “*Un Millar de Charros y China Poblanas, No Mayores de 15 Años, ‘Pespuntean’ el Jarabe Tapatío*” [“*A Thousand Charros and China Poblanas No Older than Fifteen Years of Age ‘Pespuntean’ the Jarabe Tapatío.*”]⁵ The article that accompanied this picture indicated that one thousand female students from the Escuela Normales, Técnicas, e Industriales [Teacher Training Schools, Vocational, and Industrial Schools] danced the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Disbelieving, I had to re-read this statement. For months and months of my research I had assumed that both sexes had performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* at the

inauguration. It had never crossed my mind that the *Jarabe Tapatío* would have been performed entirely by girls. As I closely inspect the picture in of the performance I can see rows and rows of couples facing each other. I can distinguish the girls wearing a skirt, blouse, and a *rebozo* [Mexican shawl] wrapped around their arms.⁶ The girls held their skirt on either side with both hands. Instead of the boy dancing the role of the *Charro*, both girls are dressed as the *China Poblana* but one wore a wide brimmed hat on her head. They are facing each other and bowed towards each other as if just about to begin dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Part of my confusion was that the caption that described the picture indicated that *Charros* and *Chinas* danced the *Jarabe Tapatío* at the inauguration. Yet, the article specifically mentioned that it was danced only by girls (“Mil Parejas Bailaron el Jarabe Tapatío”). I still had my doubts until I read another article printed in *Revistas de Revistas* on May 11, 1924, which described the performance of the *Jarabe Nacional* by one thousand female students dressed as *China Poblanas*. This dance was described as having been performed with grace. It was one of the best liked numbers on the program (“La Brillante Inauguración del Estadio Nacional”).⁷ Frances Toor wrote that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was performed on numerous occasions at the national stadium by hundreds of students as a couple dance, although without specifying same sex couples, and as *China Poblanas* in a solo (Toor, *Mexican Folkways* 33).

The *Jarabe Tapatío* at Chapultepec Park

A third event, this one nearly a year earlier, offers further testimony to girls' same-sex of the *Jarabe Tapatío* at a public and highly visible venue. On March 22, 1923, a series of photos with an accompanying article was published in the *Jueves de Excelsior* reporting on an SEP school event at Chapultepec. The SEP's Department of Aesthetic culture organized a program held in honor of Argentinian Dr. Don Alfredo Palacios. The Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral recited her work. José Vasconcelos, Secretary of the SEP was in attendance. Two thousand school girls participated in this event some of whom wore the *China Poblana* costume. The *Jarabe Tapatío* was performed by students from the Escuela de Enseñanza Doméstica which was an all-girls school designed to teach domestic skills. The journalist described the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a crowd pleaser. He stated that it was danced by *Charros* dressed in "artistic" costumes and by "picturesque" *China Poblanas*.

The photo accompanying this article shows all-girls wearing *China Poblana* costumes. However, as in the photo of the inauguration of the national stadium, the girls who portrayed the *Charro* wore a wide, brimmed hat upon their head. There were approximately ten couples dancing side by side in a semicircle formation. One couple dancing in the center shows the girl who wore the hat lunging towards her partner. Her partner, representing the role of the *China Poblana*, arched her back away. About six other couple danced shoulder to shoulder. In a few other couples, I can see the *China Poblanas* arch her back away from the *Charros*. The girls representing the *Charros* held

their hat with their left hand. One *Charro* held her hat with both hands as if adjusting it (“Significativa Fiesta Escolar en Nuestro Bosque de Chapultepec”).

Nellie and Gloria Campobello with their Rendition of the Jarabe Tapatío

Not only did females in Mexico portray the male role in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* wearing the *China Poblana* dress with the man’s wide brimmed hat, but, as documented in other texts, some danced the role dressed in the *Charro*’s costume. One famous sister duo to portray the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* was Nellie and Gloria Campobello. Nellie Campobello was born in 1900 while Gloria Campobello was born in 1911. At twenty-three years of age, Nellie Campobello moved her siblings to Mexico City upon the death of her mother. There both sisters discovered their love for dance and began their dance education in ballet with numerous renowned teachers (Tapía 3,7, 9). Margarita Tortajada Quiroz in *Frutos de Mujer [Results of a Woman]* (2001), notes that in 1927 the sisters debuted in a ballet group directed by Lettie Carroll. This group was comprised of prestigious young women dancers of high society from the United States and England who lived in Mexico City. Tortajada Quiroz suggests that the dancers in this group were considered to be the prototype of the modern, independent woman of the 1920s. As part of this dance group, Nellie Campobello interpreted many roles, most especially the masculine roles. Some roles were created for her and other times she improvised them. Due to the lack of men in ballet in Mexico, Nellie Campobello was chosen to dance male roles. Her athletic physical condition and her figure make this casting understandable (272). I note that even later when she produced her own work,

she cast herself in male roles. Nellie herself attributed the reason for her casting portrayal of male roles to her having “Comanche blood” (272-275). Interestingly, Campobello equates indigeneity with masculinity traits, instead of feminine qualities, demonstrating how indigeneity has been put to work in different ways.

In 1930, the sisters were employed as teachers in the National Music and Dance Section of the Department of Fine Arts of the SEP (Tortajada Quiroz 276). During this time period, many vocational schools in Mexico were segregated by sex. Vocational schools taught women the skills needed to work in an office and domestic responsibilities required of mothers, instead of the expertise required for working in factories (Vaughn, *State Education, and Social Class* 191, 202). Tortajada Quiroz states that the official doctrine of the SEP at this time was to promote a domestic education for women. The Campobello sisters as SEP educators and later as dance professionals promoted a sense of liberalism or feminism to other dancers, upper class women, and women belonging to other social classes too. As educators, the Campobello sisters taught “new” bodily movements that were considered beneficial for the health, beauty and entertainment. In so doing, they subtly circumvented the traditional gender roles with the goal of improving the quality of life of women. The Campobello sisters also participated in the Cultural Missions as teachers (276). Later in life, Nellie Campobello served as Director of Mexico’s National School of Dance for forty-five years and directed the Mexico City Ballet. Gloria Campobello is remembered as having been Mexico’s first prima ballerina and taught at Mexico’s National School of dance (Tapia 24, 1, 11-13). The Campobello

sisters would become celebrated as prominent dancers, educators, choreographers, researchers, and writers.

Most importantly, Toor described how Nellie and Gloria Campobello worked with the SEP to re-invent the *Jarabe Tapatío*. She stated that Carlos Trejo y Lerdo de Tejada, the Sub-Secretary at the time that Toor's journal was published and Secretary of the SEP in 1930, collaborated with Nellie Campobello in this regard. Toor argued that the idea to interpret the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a courtship dance came from Lerdo de Tejada. Toor described this new interpretation of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, as follows; "instead of facing each other and dancing around each other in the usual way, the male flirtatiously follows the female throughout the entire dance, apparently courting her until she yields. Then she picks up the *sombrero* [hat] and they dance the *Diana* together" (34). In addition, Lerdo de Tejada composed poetic verses and Campobello recited these verses before the dance began (*Mexican Folkways* 34-35). This account gives credit to Lerdo de Tejada and the Campobello sisters for inventing a "new" courtship scenario in the *Jarabe Tapatío*, yet to date I have been unable to corroborate this source. Although both the Campobello sisters and Flores de Angeles worked within the SEP operative in the early 1930s, this "new" interpretation does contradict the version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* taught by Flores de Angeles for over fifty years.

In 1930, the Campobello sisters performed in dance presentations as part of their work with the Department of Fine Arts of the SEP. They demonstrated a repertoire that showcased their own creative works and their research on Mexican folkloric dance (Tortajada Quiroz 277). Among the dances performed was the sisters' own interpretation

of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Cultural critic Carlos del Rio details in the 1930 *Revistas de Revistas: El Semanario Nacional*, the sisters' dance. He describes their version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as performed with a "voluptuous" and "Dionysian intention". Del Rio stated that:

...Nelly y Gloria Campobello descubrieran lo que verdad es el jarabe y lo bailarían sin miedo, apasionadamente. No las detuvo la falta de bailarín. Nelly a la que ayudan su antecedente de existencia montaraz, su gusto por la aventura su silueta, es el hombre admirable que cerca, persigue vence a la mujer, la domina en una final alegría. (No la bailan con zapatillas, sino en huaraches). [Nelly and Gloria Campobello discovered the true *jarabe* and they danced it without fear, passionately. The lack of a male dancer did not stop them. What helped Nelly was her experience with the outdoors, her taste of adventure, her silhouette as an admirable man who pursues, wins, and dominates the woman in a final joy. (They did not use shoes to perform but sandals)] (38).⁸

Del Rio was elated that the sisters did not need a male dancer for their duets. He described Nellie's interpretation of the male role as rugged and masculine. She was described as adopting a behavior that was entirely masculine on stage because she pursued the woman, defeated her, dominated her and then ended the dance joyously.

In a photo of the Campobello sisters performing the *Jarabe Tapatío* dated 1930, Nellie Campobello was dressed in a *Charro* costume while her sister Gloria wore the *China Poblana* costume. This was a posed photo taken specifically for the camera. In the photograph, Nellie Campobello styled her hair in a bun with bangs. She wore a white, long sleeved shirt knotted at the waist. She posed not with her hands held tightly behind her back in a fist like the *Charro* but with her hands at her waist. Nellie wears a wide brimmed hat upon her hair and posed as if lunging towards the *China Poblana*, smiling. Gloria Campobello dressed as the *China Poblana* stood perpendicular to her sister with head facing toward her sister. Both her arms were outstretched and her hands clutched

her skirt on either side of her body. Gloria Campobello as the *China Poblana* had a *rebozo* on her shoulders, and long braids down to beyond her waist. Facing the *Charro*, Gloria stood so that she appeared to shy away from the *Charro's* lunge towards her. In this photo the *Charro* was wearing *huaraches* but due to the length of the *China Poblana's* skirt it is impossible to discern her footwear (“Nelly y Gloria Campobello-Creadora de Danzas”).

Another photo of the Campobello sisters performing the *Jarabe Tapatío* is dated as sometime in the 1930s with Nellie portraying the *Charro* and Gloria the *China Poblana* (Tortajada Quiroz 332). It appears that this image was captured at the conclusion of the dance, since the *China Poblana* wore the wide brimmed hat of the *Charro* on her head and the couple stood posing together in an exultant final stance. In the photograph, Nellie Campobello had her hair styled in a bun and wore a white, long sleeved shirt knotted at the waist. She ended the dance with her hands held at her waist right arm bent sharply. Her left arm is not visible in the photo. Gloria Campobello dressed as the *China Poblana* stood in front of her sister with her right hand holding the wide brimmed hat firmly on her head as her left hand clutched her skirt. Gloria Campobello as the *China Poblana* ended the dance with her back leaning against the torso of her sister who portrayed the *Charro*. Her head rested slightly on the *Charro's* shoulder. Both wore big smiles on their faces. Nellie Campobello, the *Charro*, appeared to be looking straight at the audience while Gloria Campobello, the *China Poblana* looked out and upward. In this photo, the sisters appear older and more self-assured than in the 1930 photo.

Consolidating and Contesting the Love Narrative

Even though the love narrative and bodily movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* encourage adherence to traditional gender roles, women in the 1920s and early 1930s in Mexico found ways to thwart this expectation. Jean Franco in “Plotting Women” (1989) argues that throughout Mexican history women used “noncanonical genres” to evade patriarchal master narratives (175). These “noncanonical genres” were either located in the private or re-appropriated in the public domain as a masculine narrative (175). Dance was a “noncanonical genre” in Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s. During this time period, dance had not yet developed as a distinct academic discipline. The love narrative of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and the bodily movements of this dance reinforce Mexican patriarchal social structures and support masculine dominance. Yet, I argue, through dance women found ways to consolidate and circumvent this patriarchal account.

The reporter for *El Excélsior* newspaper described the visual effects of seeing the young *China Poblanas* perform at the inauguration of the national stadium. This journalist recounted that the person next to him commented “this generation knows how to dance the *Jarabe Tapatío* (“Mil Parejas Bailaron el Jarabe Tapatío”). In addition, the journalist who reported on the SEP performance in 1923 for the Argentinian dignitary noted that the last part of the *Jarabe Tapatío* when the *China Poblanas* danced on the brim of the hat was so enthusiastically applauded that the audience gave the performers a standing ovation lasting several minutes. In response, the dancers repeated their performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Interestingly, both journalists who covered the inauguration and the 1923 program refer to the girls dressed as *China Poblanas* who

wore the hat upon their heads as *Charros*. Neither journalist mentioned the lack of boys or that among the girls who danced with each other, one assuming the role of the *Charro*. It appears that at both programs the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* without the male *Charro* was accepted.

In a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* both couples perform the same footwork movements throughout the dance except when they dance around the hat, when the man kicks his leg over the kneeling woman, and during the final pose when the woman places her foot on the man's knee. However, at these two events masculinity could have been read in other ways. In these performances all the girls were dressed in the role of the *China Poblana* with half of them wearing the wide, brimmed hat of the *Charro*. As evidenced by journalists accounts, even though the girls were dressed in skirts and danced the female role, the use of the *Charro's* hat by half of them was read as masculine. In addition, it appears that the all-girl couples that danced the *Jarabe Tapatío* performed using spatial patterns which positioned the *Charro* on the left hand side of the *China Poblana*. So, the *China Poblanas* who wore the hat performed in the dance position typically assumed by the man. Also, as visible in the 1923 photograph, many of the girls who portrayed the role of the *Charro* performed a bodily stance of masculinity by leaning forward towards their partner while the girls dancing the *China Poblana* performed a bodily stance of femininity by leaning their torsos away from their partners.

Utilizing the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois, Diana Taylor, Barbara Browning, and George Chauncey, I suggest that the dance movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* were read in more than one way by those who performed and watched them. Just as the *jarabes*

before them, these versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in 1920s Mexico were double coded so that they both consolidated and contested patriarchy. On the one hand, I suggest that these performances could have been read as a courtship scenario whereby the *China Poblana* was still dominated and conquered by the *Charro*. The forward leaning stance of the girls who wore the hat in the 1923 photo could have been read as a sign of masculine dominance over the *China Poblana*, aligning with SEP policies of educating women for traditional such as teaching, secretarial work, and housewife. The girls likely danced what they were taught, I haven't found any data that suggests that they got to choose what dances or with whom they would dance. On the other hand, these performances by the girls at the inauguration of the national stadium and at the 1923 program contested patriarchy because they physically erased the bodily presence of boys and offered instead an instance of boys performing girls' roles. In so doing, these girls evaded the patriarchal love narratives inherent in the oral legend and bodily movements of the dance. Their body movements could have been read as neither dominant nor submissive but as more equal. Rubenstein described the "new" woman of the 1920s, as those who danced, participate in athletics, worked outside the home, attended school, and sported a bobbed haircut (57-61). These girls attended school and danced in public places signaling that these performers were a part of the "new" women in Mexico who through these very actions promoted political change.

In contrast with the school girls who performed at the 1924 inauguration of the national stadium and in the 1923 program, Nellie and Gloria Campobello were SEP teachers at the time they premiered their 1930 version of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Thus, their

age and employment status gave them creative control over their interpretation of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Period accounts attribute successful portrayal of masculinity to Nellie's physical appearance. Yet, upon studying the photograph of the Campobello sisters performing the *Jarabe Tapatío*, I notice that in some respects her female identity still emerged. Even though she was described as "all man" in her bodily movements, the fact that her hair is pulled back in a bun and her hands are at her hips, elbow out instead of behind her back in a fist, signal her female gender.

Nellie Campobello's decision to dress and perform as a Charro could be read as resisting the patriarchal social system. The Campobello portrayal of the love narrative suggested that it was acceptable for a woman to assume the traditional gender roles of men. Women could be aggressive, domineering, and powerful too. They could successfully assume the physical traits and bodily attributes of men and perform the duties that assigned to that role. Furthermore, I argue that women were allowed to circumvent patriarchal male narratives in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* because dance was not a field where women were perceived as a threat by men. Thus, unlike the *pelonas* who entered into academic field once occupied solely by men, dance continued to be an avenue where women could circumvent the patriarchal narrative because it operated as a space in which men did not feel threatened.

There is yet another way of reading the same sex portrayal of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as danced by the school girls and the Campobello sisters. The double coded courtship scenario can be read using a lesbian optic. In *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*, Susan Manning notes that United States modern dance choreographer José

Limón's choreography entitled the *Traitor* (1954-69) used an all-male cast as Apostles to portray Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ. Granted, there were no women among the historical apostles. Limón was married at the time but was having an affair with a male colleague (193-200). From a twenty-first century perspective, Manning argues that while outwardly the *Traitor* referenced a biblical plot it also had political and a "queer subtext" that Limón himself alluded to in an interview published after its premiere (200). Using Manning's approach, I offer the possibility that the performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by school girls and the Campobello sisters could have been read as indicating romantic courtship between two women.

Due to the distance at which the photo was shot, it is impossible to discern very many details of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as danced at the 1924 inauguration of the national stadium. However, the 1923 photo of the school girls dancing for the Argentinian diplomat was taken at a closer range. Thus, this photo showed that the girls danced shoulder to shoulder, face to face, and quite close together almost touching each other. One couple in particular, who danced in the center of the semicircle, appears to dance with abandon. This couple is pictured focusing directly at one another. The girl who portrayed the male role lunged toward the *China Poblana* while the *China Poblana* arched her torso away from the *Charro*. The Campobello sisters' two photos (1930 and in the late 1930s) both show Nellie dressed as the *Charro* and Gloria as the *China Poblana*. However, because the late 1930s photo was taken after the *Charro*'s conquest of the *China Poblana* had taken place; it better illustrates the courtship scenario. In this picture the couple is standing close together with the *Charro* standing behind the *China*

Poblana. In fact, the *China Poblana* rested her torso and head against the chest and shoulder of the *Charro*. These photos of the school girls and Campobello sisters dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* could have been double coded to reference a same sex courtship. If that is the case, it is a female who is pursuing the love interests of another female. Then, Nellie Campobello dressed as a man utilized traditional, masculine behaviors to pursue, dominate, and romantically conquer a woman. This interpretation directly opposed patriarchy because it operated against traditional heteronormative gender roles of early twentieth-century Mexico.

I have yet to find any period accounts that directly point to any interpretation of a same sex courtship scenario within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. This does not exclude the possibility that the performance by the school girls and the Campobello sisters as with José Limon's modern dance piece entitled *The Traitor* could have been read this way by some of the audience in attendance. Thus, this is an avenue for further research.

REGARDING CLASS IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY MEXICO

Indeed we Mexicans are the first ones to blame for having concocted and nurtured the myth of the ridiculous *Charro* and the absurd *China Poblana* as symbols of so-called Mexicanism. . . . At the sight of a *Charro* or a *China*, at the opening notes of the horrible *Jarabe*, one is automatically reminded of the nauseating Mexican stage, and all this, amalgamated, becomes "Our own." Whose own? Why pick the most outdated and most ridiculous attributes of a single social class and inflict them on the whole country? (qtd. in Charlot 66).

As famed Mexican painter José Clemente Orozco attested in 1923, not everyone was enamored of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Orozco pointed out that entrenched within a

performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* are characteristics depicting social class standings. Dan Malmström in *Introduction to Twentieth-Century Mexican Music* (1974) wrote that during this time period one percent of the Mexican population belonged to the upper class. He argued that shortly after the conclusion of the revolution a middle class began to develop and prosper in Mexico. This was due to rapid industrialization. The middle class, as Malmström labeled them, included a diverse array of people including farmers, clerks, and employees who were paid a substantial amount of money from industry. Many took advantage of the educational opportunities afforded to them and sought academic degrees. However, in Mexico the vast majority of the population was from the lower classes. These included the peasant and indigenous populations that lived in poverty (25).

Class divisions in Mexico derived from economic and racial categories. Generally, people were defined as *gente de pueblo* or *gente decente*. The literal definition of *Gente de pueblo* is people from the village while *gente decente* is translated as well brought up people. The *gente de pueblo* were classified as *mestizo*. Also, those who identified themselves as indigenous were included in this category (Bermudez 24-27). Thus, I note that the peasant people were thought of as *gente de pueblo*. The *gente de pueblo* was employed as miners, woodcutters, fishermen, and laborers. They also worked in the service industry in occupations such as domestic servants, seamstresses, blacksmith, street vendors, and carpenters. The *gente de razon* encompassed people from the middle and upper classes. Generally, the middle classes were comprised of *mestizos*. This class contributed to the intellectual and technical development of the nation. The upper classes

were predominately comprised of Spaniards and their children, as well as people from other countries such as the United States, and Europe. Only the farmers within this class were from Mexico. The upper classes owned commercial, apparel, and agricultural industry. They owned huge tracts of land, were ranchers and *hacienda* owners (Bermudez 24-27).

Class, Costuming and the *Jarabe Tapatío*

As the central figures in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* embody ideals concerning class based notions of Mexicanness. The *Charro*, a figure derived from colonial Mexico, has over time come to represent the epitome of what it is to be Mexican. At the turn of the century, instead of wearing the peasant *traje de manta*, Carlos Curti, Director of the *Orquesta Típica Mexicana*, had the idea of dressing the musicians in *Charro* outfits for the 1884 Universal Exposition at New Orleans. By 1907, at Mexican President Porfirio Díaz's garden party at Chapultepec in honor of United States Ambassador Elihu Root, the best dancers from *Cocula*, Mexico, performed dressed in the *China Poblana* and *Charro* costumes. In addition, the musicians who accompanied the dancers wore the *Charro* costume (Jáuregui 52). Over time, the *Charro* costume became synonymous with Mexicanness. The peasant *traje de manta* costume was no longer used as part of the musician's uniform nor was it utilized in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The *Charro* when dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* wears the *traje de gala* costume. On one hand, the bodily movements of the *Charro* depict the culture, beliefs, and livelihood of the peasant and indigenous communities. On

the other hand, the costuming refers to upper class values and belief system. The teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* fulfilled the educational goals of the SEP which were as noted by Moisés Sáenz in *La Educacion Rural En Mexico* (1928), to culturally incorporate the peasant people (24). So, a performance of *Jarabe Tapatío* instructed the Mexican people to admire their rural heritage while becoming upwardly mobile.

There are many variations of the legend surrounding the costume of the *China Poblana*. One recounts the story of a princess from Asia kidnapped and sent to live in Mexico. She lived in Puebla as a slave, servant, and later wife. She was baptized and given the name Catarina de San Juan. She was so homesick that she sewed a beautiful skirt that reminded her of her home country. This outfit, so the story went, would later become known as the *China Poblana* (Palou 69-70; Rustomji-Kerns 70-74). However, most scholars dismiss this legend as false. Instead, scholars point to the caste system as implemented by the Spanish during the colonial period in Mexican history as a way/route by which the *China Poblana* could have gotten her name. The Spanish formulated a hierarchical listing of the racial makeup of the people of Mexico. This listing included: *mestizos* (people of Spanish and indigenous blood), *criollos* (Mexican-born Spaniards), *zambos* (African and indigenous blood) and many others. Also included in this list, were the categories of *chinas* and *chinos*. *Chinas* and *chinos* had parents who were described as individuals who had a mixture of both *zambo* and African blood or African and indigenous blood. The *chinas* and *chinos* occupied the lowest social class. They were employed as servants or washer women. They sold *aguas frescas* in booths and were

servants and waitresses. Some worked as prostitutes for the visitors, ranchers, and soldiers (Ballesteros 123).⁹

The *China Poblana* in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* utilizes a costume linked to the pre-revolutionary state of *Puebla*, Mexico. This costume only remotely resembles the colonial attire of the peasant women from *Puebla* who wore a peasant blouse with an A-line skirt and a *rebozo*. Changes in fabric, stitching, utilization of a petticoat, and the usage of shoes specifically made for folkloric dance are some of the alterations. Over time, the *China Poblana* costume has been transformed to represent the nation. Sequins depicting historical accomplishments of the nation adorn her skirt. The colors of the Mexican flag decorate the costume. Following the arguments of Desmond, I postulate that these changes to the *China Poblana* costume have “refined” and “polished” it (34-35). With the changes, this costume has been elevated in racial and social class status to better accompany the *Charro*. In a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* the *China Poblana* costume reveals the mutability of class rather than the fixity. I argue this portrayal told, and still tells, indigenous and peasant communities to modernize their customs and ways of life to better represent the post-revolutionary nation.

Class, Music, and Movements of the Jarabe Tapatío

The *Jarabe Tapatío* is known to have been derived as a *mestizo* dance performed by the peasant population. The music and bodily movements reference animal images and aspects of indigenous and peasant life. Flores de Angeles is quoted as having taught the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a living, breathing tradition:

Empecé a enseñar El *Jarabe Tapatío* a los extranjeros en 1932 y nunca lo he enseñado dos veces exactamente igual. Yo enseñé parte del ‘Proceso Folclórico’ viviente, que como una mariposa, se transforma para hacerse más hermosa.”[I began teaching the *Jarabe Tapatío* to foreigners in 1932 and I have never taught it the same way twice. My teachings reflect the living ‘folkloric process’, in which like a butterfly it is transformed to make it even more beautiful] (Flores de Angeles and Houston 2000).

In an interview with me, Nelda Drury Guerrero, colleague and friend of Flores de Angeles remarked that Flores de Angeles taught the *Jarabe Tapatío* in slightly different ways at workshops throughout the United States (Drury Guerrero). Folk dancers from different parts of the country brought different versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* to the dance floor depending on where and when they had learned it from Flores de Angeles.

Flores de Angeles taught the *Jarabe Tapatío* as an ever changing art form. In so doing, her teaching style utilized the improvisational nature of dance common to the peasant communities. Paradoxically, Flores de Angeles was not of the peasant class. Drury Guerrero described her as being well-connected, with a social status above that of a teacher (Drury Guerrero). Yet, Flores de Angeles taught the *Jarabe Tapatío* as peasant communities would have performed it, using improvisation, and by slightly altering the movements. The codification of the dance by the SEP goes against the improvisational nature of the dance practice from which it was derived. I argue that Flores de Angeles in

her manner of teaching the *Jarabe Tapatío* retained something quite significant from the customs of the peasant and indigenous communities.

AN INTERSECTIONAL READING OF THE JARABE TAPATIO

Matters of nation, race, gender, and class intertwine in my own intersectional reading of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Analisa Taylor in *Indigeneity in the Mexican Cultural*

Imagination: Thresholds of Belonging (2009) argues that Mexican national discourse:

constructs gender, ethnic, and national identities along a rigid, binary opposition between dominator and dominated, masculine hispanicity and feminine indigeneity; on the other, we have a revolutionary discourse that looks to a remote horizon onto which it can project its utopian longing for a location where past, present, and future escape the dynamics of colonial subjugation (101).

She analyzes the national myth of the birth of the *mestizo* country of Mexico as stemming from the historical figures of Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés, and his indigenous companion La Malinche (91-92). In Taylor's view, this nationalist discourse projects the Spanish colonizer as dominator versus the indigenous people as the dominated, Hernán Cortés as the masculine hispanicity and *La Malinche* as feminine indigeneity. Taylor uses the term *indigenismo* to describe the social movement that began after the Mexican Revolution and promoted a belief that a resigned, abject indigenous culture was the basis of modern Mexican national identity (2). She notes that *indigenismo* further extends this nationalistic discourse by characterizing the Indian as a figure from the past and the *mestizo* as a modern citizen. It casts "the Indian as *other*, within, yet always external to, the nation" (3). She argues that this enables the construction of Mexican national identity based upon the homogenization of the country so that the ideal *mestizo* citizen is depicted

as a male symbol of “national unity, modernization and progress” while the Indian is portrayed as “feminine, fertile and inert” (3). Thus, Taylor’s analysis provides insight into the imaginings of Mexico in the early twentieth-century as a homogenous, culturally unified, and a modern nation.

Kaplan, Alarcón and Moallem in *Between Women and Nation* (1999) contend that “nation-state formations are influenced, underpinned, and even founded by ideas rooted in the Enlightenment and liberalism of the West” (1). In their quest for modernization, nation-states focus on “the defining lines of citizenship for women, racialized ethnicities, and sexualities in the construction of a socially stratified society” (1). In building the modern nation-state, such nationalistic constructions set up a series of contradictions which denies sexual and/or racial difference while concurrently advocating a universalization of difference. One of the inherent paradoxes evident in nation-state formations is that these powerful contradictions serve as vehicles to undermine institutional, political, and cultural practices that were designed to assist the people (2,7). The editors argue that nation-state formations utilize racial, sexual and gender based notions to surpass modernity “to become a timeless and homogenized entity” (7). With this analysis it is clear how Mexico’s educational policies, which appeared to be intended to help indigenous and peasant people, instead undermined their cultural traditions. Learning and dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the school system was part of the process of cultural incorporation that erased some things while trying to establish others.

Rosa-Linda Fregoso in *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (2003) postulates that in “nationalistic discourse women are represented

as the authentic, primitive, and the natural embodiment of tradition which serves nationalism's conservative principles of continuity" while men are represented as modern, progressive agents of change that embody "nationalism's progressive or revolutionary principle of discontinuity" (77). Fregoso argues that the nationalization of images of women is based upon "masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope" (74). Kaplan, Alarcón and Moallem also suggest that a result of nationalistic discourse is that "the essential woman (raced or not) becomes the national iconic signifier for the material, the passive, and the corporeal to be worshipped, protected, and controlled by those with the power to remember and forget to guard, to define, and re-define" (10). In these ways, nationalistic discourse utilizes images of women to reinforce patriarchal doctrines.

The popular recognition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as the national dance assisted the post-revolutionary leaders in offering a construction of nation along sexual, racial, gender, and class lines in 1920s to 1930s Mexico. I argue that the *Charro* represents the country of Mexico as a masculine, modern, *mestizo* state. He is masculine in that he adopts the bodily movements of the ideal, macho Mexican man. The men portrayed by the dancing *Charro* are hyper-sexualized, aggressive, and powerful. He is modern and *mestizo* in that his costume does not depict the peasant and indigenous communities but instead represents the landholder class, which with the upper and middle classes were the main proponents of cultural nationalism during 1920s Mexico.

As Kelly Swathout shows in *Assimilating the Primitive: Parallel Dialogues on Racial Miscegenation in Revolutionary Mexico* (2004) the Mexican elites realized that in

order to achieve economic and social progress it was important to adopt a Mexican national identity. That identity had to embrace the rural and indigenous elements of the country (67-69). A paradox developed in which the intellectual elites promoted *mestizaje* as the cultural ideal while relegating indigenous traditions and contributions to the past. (Swathout 77-78). In a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* the *Charro* dances with his torso slightly angled forward and low to the ground. This stance, taken together with the music and bodily movements in the dance that depict animal imagery, reference the customs of the indigenous and peasant communities. Yet even while nationalist discourses acknowledged indigeneity within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, they also erased these references by attributing indigenous contributions to *mestizo* sources.

I argue that women represent the country of Mexico through the dancing body of the *China Poblana*. They are presented as feminine, traditional, and indigenous. The *China Poblana* provides an embodiment of the ideal, Mexican woman. She is feminine in that her dress and her bodily movements depict love and courtship. She is traditional in that some of her bodily movement qualities, such as the kiss when engaged to marry, are linked with the moral purity of the Virgin of Guadalupe. She is indigenous in that her costume presents aspects of dress of the peasant women of *Puebla*, Mexico. The *China Poblana* accompanies the *Charro* in dancing, some of which conjures up animal imagery that glorifies the *mestizo* and not indigenous people's contributions.

Using Taylor's analysis, I argue that the *China Poblana* figure expands a Mexican nationalistic discourse that depicts the indigenous people as feminine, living in the past, external to the nation, and fertile (3). The masculine dominated love narrative informing

a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* produces nationalistic rhetoric which locates women as embodying passive traditional gender role characteristics while it portrays men as embodying ideals of the modern state. For instance both the *Charro* and the *China Poblana* figures perform the conquest scenario within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. This can be read as symbolizing the sexual conquest of men over the women, the successful overthrow of the Spanish rule, the end of the Mexican Revolution, and the birth of the *mestizo* people. I read these conquest representations as a symbol of “masculinized hope” for the *mestizo* nation state.

This chapter has demonstrated ways in which the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* has and continues to bodily invoke early twentieth-century Mexican notions of nation, race, class, and gender. The choreographic analysis of Flores de Angeles’ love narrative has offered a template for my analysis of the dance, its music, and its costuming. In the next chapter I explore several twenty-first century contexts for the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and the meanings made and challenged therein.

End Notes

¹ *Pelonas* is literally translated from Spanish as bald.

² Gallardo was part of a committee that first organized the National Association of *Charros* in 1921 (Montefort, Estampas 124).

³ *Soldadas* is the name given to women who fought in armed combat during the Mexican Revolution. *Soldadera* is the name given to women who accompanied men in war camps cooking, raising children, and caring for husbands. For more information please see *The Women's Revolution in Mexico 1910-1953* edited by Stephanie Mitchell and Patience A. Schell.

⁴ Hernán Cortéz was given a woman as a gift from the indigenous people. This woman was known as *Malintzin*, *Doña Maria*, and *La Malinche*. She could speak Spanish and an indigenous dialect. *La Malinche* served as a translator and companion of Hernán Cortéz. She bore him children and is remembered for her invaluable language skills which helped Cortéz defeat the Aztec empire. Mexican nationalistic history has vilified La Malinche for her role in the conquest of the Aztec empire.

⁵ Nieves Rodríguez Valle in “Al Son que me Toquen...la Música, los Instrumentos Musicales, el Canto, y el Baile en los Refranes” (2010) describes the Spanish word *pespuntean* as a dance movement that includes crossing of alternate legs while stepping on the balls of the feet. This is danced to the rhythm of the son of the music (70).

⁶ A *rebozo* is a Mexican shawl used by indigenous people. Women used this shawl to keep them warm, wrap their babies, and as a fashion statement, and it had many other uses.

⁷ Period scholar Gabriel Saldívar makes no mention of gender in the twentieth-century performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* (Saldívar, *El Jarabe* 16-17).

⁸ *Huaraches* are a type of sandals that were specifically used in Mexico and worn by the peasant people.

⁹ *Aguas frescas* is a term used to describe drinks made out of Mexican fruits such as lemonade.

CHAPTER 4:
THE JARABE TAPATIO IN THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY

UNITED STATES

Bright colors of red, yellow, pink, purple, green, and blue swirl by as dancers quickly walk past carrying their costumes, preparing for the next dance number. A multitude of women squeeze gently beside each other vying for a glimpse of themselves in the dressing room mirrors as they carefully fasten bobby pins to their headpieces and re-apply a bit of stage make-up. Two men stand around a box filled with black boots frantically helping one another find their size. Dancers dressed in costume begin to line up backstage awaiting their cue to perform. Then, the audience applauds at the conclusion of the dance signaling that it is time for the next number to begin. All the dancers stop what they are doing and race backstage. The red, velvet curtain closes allowing a few dancers to exit while another group of dancers quietly walk upon the semi-lit stage. A few whisper words of good luck to each other. Meanwhile, Alura Flores de Angeles stands backstage and appraises the situation. Upon her cue, the curtain opens squeakily. The audience reacts with roaring applause at the vision of the Charro and the China Poblana. Then, the all too familiar melody of the Jarabe Tapatío fills the air. The final dance has begun!

This opening scenario could have described any one of a number of performances given by Flores de Angeles from the 1930s to the 1980s. She began teaching folkloric dance at the Center of Studies for Foreigners at the National Autonomous University in Mexico (UNAM) in 1932 (Cano & Radkau 68). According to her fiftieth anniversary dance program, as well as personal interviews, Flores de Angeles taught Mexican folkloric dance as a college course to students who traveled to Mexico during the

summer, directed her own folkloric dance company, and was responsible for weekly public performance of Mexican folkloric dance on the UNAM campus (Drury Guerrero; Houston interview; 1). It was here that Nelda Drury Guerrero, former dance educator at San Antonio College, first met Flores de Angeles in 1939. Drury Guerrero was a college student at the University of Texas at Austin and traveled with her teacher Gertrude Mooney to take folkloric dance classes at UNAM. Drury Guerrero returned to UNAM every summer for years to take these classes. Drury Guerrero maintained a friendship with Flores de Angeles throughout the rest of her life. Drury Guerrero remembered that Flores de Angeles asked her to perform the *Jarabe Tapatío* at the weekly programs called *Jueves Sociales* [Social Thursdays] at UNAM. The *Jarabe Tapatío* always concluded the show (Drury Guerrero).

Beginning in 1952, the National University of Mexico Extension Services employed Flores de Angeles to teach folkloric dance in San Antonio, Texas. In 1954, Flores de Angeles was invited by recreational international folk dancers in Texas to teach at Texas Folk Dance Camp held in Dallas, Texas. Over the next forty years, she would present the *Jarabe Tapatío* at many seminars and folk dance camps throughout the United States and abroad (Houston; Houston, *Problem Solver* 1993 38-39). According to the printed program for her fiftieth anniversary dance concert at UNAM in Mexico City, Flores de Angeles taught dance classes in San Antonio, Texas as part of UNAM's extension center from 1955 to 1980 (1). Her printed programs for her 1964, 1969, 1970, and 1971 concerts, as well as one undated, printed dance program, Flores de Angeles always ended her concerts with the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. In fact, even a

1950 and 1972 printed program from the summer courses that she taught in Mexico City as part of UNAM list the *Jarabe Tapatío* as closing the show. Until approximately 1969 at her class recitals for the UNAM extension center in San Antonio, Texas and Mexico City, Flores de Angeles would follow the *Jarabe Tapatío* with the presentation of the Mexican and the United States flags. Why did the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* take such a prominent place in the work of Flores de Angeles? Drury Guerrero remarked “Well, she was very nationalistic, very proud of her country and very...she always wanted to make people aware of her, you know...how much she loved her Mexico” (Drury Guerrero).

In this chapter, I analyze the significance United States practitioners attach to the *Jarabe Tapatío* plays in the twenty-first century. I examine the bodily movements of twenty-first-century dancers of the *Jarabe Tapatío* to determine if, how, and why the dance has changed over time with immigration. I question whether the themes of *mestizaje*, gender role depiction, class status, and cultural unity which were so relevant in early twentieth-century Mexico have bodily immigrated with the dance to the United States in the twenty-first century. To help answer these questions I interviewed five Mexican folkloric dance practitioners who lead dance companies in the United States in cities that receive a large influx of Mexican immigrants. These practitioners are as follows: Maria Guadalupe Castro Paramo, Ph.D. and Julio Bustos from Fresno, California; José Tena from New Mexico; Julian Hernández from Elgin, Illinois; and Alicia Veronica McKinnis from Laredo, Texas.¹ Every one of these individuals immigrated to the United States from Mexico as a child or an adult. In addition, all were

educated for some time in Mexico's public education system. They all are folkloric dance practitioners who direct their own dance companies in the United States. They teach in public schools, universities, community colleges, and as part of non-profit organizations. Together with their insights, I utilize the life story, teachings, and bodily memories of Flores de Angeles to envelop my understanding of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first-century United States.

IMAGINING THE MEXICAN NATION AND RACE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Folkloric dance has continued to follow the immigration of people from Mexico to the United States. In the mid-twentieth century, Mexican folkloric dance was one of the many types of folk dances taught in United States public schools. Many United States publications about Mexican folkloric dance seem designed for physical education teachers.² They described a simplified version of a folkloric dance, gave a brief historical description, and detailed the costuming for the dance. Included in these books were musical scores for piano accompaniment. However, it was not until the 1960s with the Chicano movement that Mexican folkloric dance began to burgeon in the United States.³ During this time period, folkloric dance was a part of the Chicano movement and performed as a response against assimilationist and discriminatory practices (Nájera-Ramírez, *Dancing Across Borders* 281-282). A few of these discriminatory practices

include the unfair treatment of farm workers, unjust housing practices, and lack of educational opportunities.

Folkloric dance accompanied the Chicano movement's quest to recover cultural identity that had long been disregarded by mainstream Americans. A form of Chicano cultural renaissance was born whereby poets, screenwriters, muralists, musicians, and dancers re-interpreted Mexican cultural expressions. Folkloric dances were performed in schools, events, political rallies, and church functions to showcase the splendor of Mexico's rich cultural traditions (Nájera-Ramírez, *Dancing Across Borders* 281-283). Whereas the SEP promoted folkloric dance in early twentieth-century Mexico to culturally unite the country, in the 1960s to 1970s United States folkloric dances served to culturally unite a minority community against prejudicial governmental policies which sought to assimilate Chicana/os. In early twentieth-century Mexico, the *Jarabe Tapatío* served an integral role in the nationalization of its people. This dance operated as an important part of civic ceremonies, the educational system, and the efforts to incorporate the peasant population. Although many dances brought to mind images of Mexico, the *Jarabe Tapatío* as performed in early twentieth-century Mexico was central to embodiment of the nation. I draw from my interviews with practitioners to argue that in the twenty-first-century United States the importance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* for this purpose has begun to diminish. Castro Paramo, Tena, McKinnis, and Hernández agreed as to the significance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Hernández stated "it's one of those songs that when you dance Jalisco it's almost like doing the national anthem...it's like the national anthem of folkloric dance" (Hernández). Castro Paramo stated, "this represents

the republic, it became the national dance. So that's what made it important....This embodies the nationality, the pride in the culture and the dance...this is Mexico" (Castro Paramo). McKinnis declared, "this is the number one dance used to identify Mexico... It is most representative of Mexico" (McKinnis). However, Bustos disagreed. He remarked:

In my opinion, I think that the *Jarabe Tapatío* has lost its relevance a lot in the past, I don't know, twenty or thirty years ...I think *La Negra* is more of a universal dance to the folklorico dancers both sides of the world, both sides of the fence...of the border.. and I have heard that many times in recent years....In other words, you're more likely to find people playing *sones*, just a *son*, even now with *banda* ...than you are to find somebody playing a *Jarabe*...So, to me *el son* it's more of a national dance (Bustos).⁴ To Bustos, the *Jarabe Tapatío* is but one of many folkloric dances that embody

Mexicanness. Although the majority of the practitioners that I interviewed believed that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was a very important dance representative of Mexico, unlike Flores de Angeles, many folkloric dance practitioners in the twenty-first century do not feel a need to close their programs with the *Jarabe Tapatío*. I myself concur with this view. As a folkloric dance practitioner, I began my career concluding my programs with the *Jarabe Tapatío* following the tradition of my own instructor Roy Lozano, who was a student of Amalia Hernández.⁵ After quite some time, I decided to vary my programs and no longer concluded the show with this dance. I suggest that this changed pattern is an indication that the dance's importance has begun to fade.

Folkloric Dance as a Political Vehicle of Expression in the Twenty-First Century

Although the dance practitioners that I interviewed were at odds as to whether the *Jarabe Tapatío* remains influential today, I noticed that folkloric dance itself continues to operate against U.S. assimilationist practices and governmental policies as in the 1960s Chicano movement. Through dance, practitioners showcase their unique cultural heritage and unite a minority community. Practitioners articulated this in the following manner. Brizeida Ruiz, a dance student of Bustos, remarked that the *Jarabe Tapatío* “reminds people that even if you’re not in your native homeland that you’re still Mexican” (Ruiz). Castro-Paramo remarked that for the Chicana/os performing the *Jarabe Tapatío* “*Les da orgullo de raza, de nacionalidad ..Porque este les da una conexión con México...refuerza el sentido de patria*” [it gives them pride in their ethnicity, their nationality.It gives them a connection with Mexico. It reinforces this feeling of love of country] (Castro-Paramo). I argue that the very act of teaching, dancing, and performing Mexican Folkloric dance operates against U.S. assimilationist practices that encourage its people to relinquish ties to their home country and adopt the practices of the dominant culture.

Furthermore, some Mexican Folkloric dance practitioners have found novel ways to express their displeasure at U.S. governmental policies. When I visited the *Teocalli* Cultural Academy in Fresno, California, Bustos offered me a t-shirt designed by one of his dance students. The t-shirt pictured a rectangular, yellow sign. Within the sign was a silhouette of a family dressed in Mexican folkloric dance costumes holding hands: a man, woman, and little girl. Their heads bent down, they appear to be walking. On the

back of the t-shirt was the name and logo of the *Teocalli* Cultural Academy. Right away, I realized that this was a spoof of a sign used along the highway in San Diego, California, warning travelers that Mexican immigrants were crossing. In other words, the t-shirt visually indicated the prohibition of entry to the United States by Mexican folkloric dancers. I asked Bustos about the meaning behind the t-shirt and he said, “We are more than undocumented workers, and we are not going anywhere” (Bustos). The fact that the t-shirt shows a family dressed in folkloric dance costumes and that it was designed, printed, and distributed by Mexican folkloric dance practitioners demonstrates one of type of practitioner agency and engagement with political critique.

Views of Race among Twenty-First-Century Practitioners

As a *mestizo* dance the *Jarabe Tapatío* in early twentieth-century Mexico worked alongside educational policies which sought to unify the country along racial lines by incorporating the peasant population. I ask whether this dance had by the year 2011 accomplished this goal. Do folkloric dance practitioners in the twenty-first century still recognize indigenous features in the *Jarabe Tapatío*? Although every folkloric dance practitioner in my interview group received some type of dance training in Mexico, only Bustos noted the indigenous references in the *Jarabe Tapatío*⁶. Bustos said:

I think in all of those steps, especially for men, you see all of the animals that are being imitated, in my opinion, you have the cock. you have the rooster right? And then you have the steps of the horse, they’re doing *caballitos*, even the name of the step tells you....There are elements that I can see that are definitely indigenous” (Bustos).

Castro-Paramo, Tena and Hernández emphatically declared that there were no indigenous influences in this dance (Castro-Paramo; Tena; Hernández). Castro-Parama remarked, “There is no Indian in it. Period” (Castro-Paramo). In addition, Tena did not recall his teachers ever telling him otherwise (Tena). Interestingly, I have noticed that a discourse of indigeneity as a part of the *Jarabe Tapatío* has begun to subside with time. In “The Dances of Mexico” published in *Real Mexico* in 1934, Flores de Angeles herself mentioned that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was once performed in a village in Jalisco by the indigenous people in Mexico (17). Yet, from the 1960s to 1990s Flores de Angeles absents indigeneity in her own contributions to the written historical discourse of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Poring through the archives of the Society of Folk Dance Historians, I found many oral summaries of the history of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as written by Ron Houston which cited Flores de Angeles as a source. All these summaries accompanied a version of the notated score of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and were distributed to participants in the many Texas folk dance camps and workshops she taught from the 1950s through the 1980s. I noticed that throughout this time frame, Flores de Angeles merely mentioned indigeneity in passing--in one publication. In Houston’s notated score of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as communicated by Flores de Angeles, she describes the *jarabes* as “indigenous to Mexico” (Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28). Indigeneity was not mentioned in the rest of the publications printed from 1967 to 1996 (*El Jarabe Tapatío*).

In early twentieth-century Mexico, I suggest, there were two contrasting ways of interpreting indigeneity within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Gabriel Saldívar in *Historia de la Musica* (1934) and Alura Flores de Angeles in *Real Mexico* (1934) pointed

to the influences of indigeneity within the bodily movements of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Meanwhile, Nellie and Gloria Campobello in *Ritmos Indígenas de México* [*Indigenous Rhythms of Mexico*] (1940) wrote that the *jarabes* do not have indigenous elements. Instead, they suggest that the *jarabes* as *mestizo* dances display Spanish influences that are uniquely Mexican (9). Moisés Sáenz who served in various high ranking administrative capacities within the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) appears to align with the perspective of the Campobellos. He wrote in *México Integro* (1939):

“Cuando bailan el ‘jarabe suelto,’ creemos ver una jota hispana que se hubiese tornado de solemne, evocando el ritual indígena...’Esa música, esa danza... Todo es tan indio!’ exclamaría el visitante extranjero. ‘Tal mezcla con lo Viejo español’, dirá el etnólogo purista. Yo insinúo: ni indio, ni español; sencillamente mexicano.”[When the *Jarabe Suelto* is performed. We may perceive a *Spanish Jota* turned solemn to invoke an indigenous ritual....’This music, this dance....It is so Indian!’ a visiting foreigner would claim. ‘Such a mixture of old Spain’ the purist ethnologist would say. I insist, it is neither Indian nor Spanish simply Mexican] (21-22).

In this quote Sáenz wrote about the *Jarabe Suelto* and not the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

Nonetheless, he illustrated exactly how the *jarabes* were conceived as *mestizo* dance forms that represented the entire country of Mexico. This discourse paralleled early governmental policies that sought racial and cultural incorporation of the Mexican people.

Bustos emphasized that in the twenty-first century, the *Jarabe Tapatío* was definitely a *mestizo* dance, equating it with the country of Mexico. He indicated that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was “more *mestizo*, more Mexico” (Bustos). In some ways, Bustos’ equation of *mestizo* with the country of Mexico is not novel, it echoes the discourse surrounding the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in early twentieth-century Mexico as

articulated by the Campobellos and Sáenz. In addition, the fact that Flores de Angeles stopped linking this dance to indigenous people and that many twenty-first century practitioners no longer identify indigeneity within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, leads me to argue that *Jarabe Tapatío* as performed in the twenty-first-century United States continues this dialogue of racial and cultural incorporation as espoused by early twentieth-century Mexican intellectuals.

Not only are indigenous elements within the *Jarabe Tapatío* beginning to be left out of some oral accounts in the twenty-first-century, but this discourse does not include the possibility of the dance having African influences. In early twentieth-century Mexico, Gabriel Saldívar noted in *El Jarabe: Baile Popular Mexicano* (1937) that the *Jarabe Tapatío* was derived from the *Jarabe Gatuno* and possessed African inspired body movements so that its performance was outlawed during the Spanish Inquisition (14). After years of negation, twenty-first-century scholars are beginning to investigate this possibility. However, Bustos, Castro Paramo, Hernández, and Tena all stated that there were no African elements within this dance. Within this conversation, no one mentioned that this was a topic under contention, or referred to any kind of on-going dialogue. Tena did disclose that the word *china* was used to describe the curly hair of the mulattos that worked in the mines in the state of Jalisco⁷ (Tena). His acknowledgement of mulatto miners in the state of Jalisco corroborates the underlying argument positioned by Gabriel Saldívar's in *Historia de la Música [History of Music]* (1934). Yet, practitioners do not mention of any kind of African musical or dance influence on the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Therefore, I argue that early twentieth-century nationalistic discourse of racial

incorporation continues to operate within the dialogues surrounding some performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first-century United States, invisibilizing African and indigenous dimensions if any in favor of *mestizo* dimensions.

I question what is it about a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first century that promotes this *mestizo* rendering. As mentioned in chapter one, Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (1989) analyzes the manner in which memories of social groups are communicated and upheld. He defines social memory as those past images that “legitimize a present social order” and are communicated and re-affirmed by ritual performance (2, 3). He suggests that social memory can be found in commemorative ceremonies since they rely on ritual performance (4, 5). He writes that “in habitual memory, the past is, as it were, sedimented in the body” (72). From this vantage, a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first-century United States can be seen as a way to maintain memories of Mexico as a *mestizo* nation. I argue that the concept of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a *mestizo* dance that subsumes indigenous influences and negates racial difference is still bodily and orally articulated by twenty-first-century practitioners in the United States.

GENDER PORTRAYLS OF THE JARABE TAPTIO IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

During my research, I was able to observe a rehearsal of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by the *Grupo Folklórico de Fresno City College* under the direction of Maria Guadalupe Castro Paramo, Ph.D. and the *Ballet Folklórico Huehucoyotl* directed by Julian Hernández. I

also observed a performance of this dance at a high school *Cinco de Mayo* event by the *Teocalli* Cultural Academy as directed by Julio Bustos. I witnessed this dance as part of an outdoor festival celebrating Mexico's Independence by the *Ballet Folklórico Tierra del Encanto* directed by José Tena. I must say that not one version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* was exactly the same. Yet, each possessed similar footwork sequences, choreographic patterns and musical melody. In every performance the couple faced each other the entire dance until the *La Diana* military tune began. At that point in each dance, the couple faced the audience for the first time. Also, every rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* ended with the couple posing: the man knelt down as if proposing marriage while the woman held the *charro* hat behind her head and put her right foot over the man's knee.

Bodily Movement Depictions of Gender

The set of United States *Jarabe Tapatío* performances I witnessed evidenced a few important differences in bodily movement practices. In the version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* performed by *Teocoalli* [Frenso, California] under the direction of Bustos, the couple performed the drunkard step together. However, the woman used both arms to physically push the *charro* away from her as the couple performed the *quebrada* sequence traveling away from each other.⁸ Here, the arm movements that accompany the *quebrada* footwork sequence better illuminate the love narrative described by Flores de Angeles in which the *charro* gets drunk on a bottle of tequila and the woman rejects his advances (Flores Barnes 17, 39). Bustos recounted that he learned this sequence while in Mexico City. He explained, "the way I interpret it is that the girl, as attracted or in love as she might be,

will not tolerate being courted by someone who is under the influence. It sends a positive message, but it also adds humor to the piece. The girl is putting the drunk in his place” (Bustos). Néstor García Canclini in *Hybrid Cultures* (1995) has argued that “many subaltern ritual practices that are apparently devoted to reproducing the traditional order humorously transgress it...People resort to laughter to have a less oppressive relationship with their past” (157). Such transgressions seem to be at work with this pushing of the *Charro* by the *China Poblana*. It reveals the manner in which dance turns the tables on traditional gender role depictions. In demonstrating her disapproval, the *China Poblana* in fact shows some agency in indicating how and when the *Charro* should court her.

Another very important difference was performed by *Ballet Folklórico Tierra del Encanto* [Las Cruces, New Mexico] under the direction of Tena, a difference which changes the plot of the love narrative. Instead of following the drunkard steps by either *mecedora* or *quebrada* steps as the couple moves away from each other, Tena’s group performs an entirely different footwork movement; the *atole* step.⁹ The woman kneels on the floor; she pretends to hold a bowl in her arms while she stirs it. The man stomps his foot twice alternating feet as he does this. He then raises his leg to help stir the pot with his foot while lifting the heel of the opposing leg two times in quick succession. This is followed by two stomps on the right foot with two taps of the point of the left foot while lifting the heel of the opposing foot. This sequence is repeated so that the *charro* begins with the left foot. Then, the *charro* dances in a circle while stomping twice on each foot. Tena stated that this part of the dance brings to life the lyrics of the *Jarabe Tapatío* (Tena).¹⁰

Several textual sources corroborate Tena's oral account. Carlos G. Robledo wrote in *Colección de Danzas y Bailes Regionales Mexicanos* (1948) that *El Atole* is both a *son* and a *zapateado* or footwork sequence. His discussion includes a few of the lyrics and the piano arrangement for the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Furthermore, Frances Toor made available for the public three different renditions of the *El Atole* melody.¹¹ She included lyrics and a music score for an *El Atole son* that was published in 1895. Toor also printed two versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío*: the lyrics of an early twentieth-century version as interpreted by Hignio Vasquez Santa Ana, dubbed the "modern" *jarabe*; and the lyrics and piano score for one collected from the state of *Hidalgo*, Mexico which was titled the "official" *jarabe*. In Robledo's and Toor's texts, the *El Atole* portion of the danced *Jarabe Tapatío* occurs at the part of the song where Tena's students stirred the pot (Toor 9, 23-25; Robledo n.p.). This confirms the integral manner in which dance, music, and lyrics are intertwined in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

The *atole* footwork sequence as performed by dancers of *Ballet Folklórico Tierra del Encanto* changed the meaning of Flores de Angeles' love narrative. In their scenario, the *Charro* no longer gets drunk on a bottle of tequila, which thereby eliminates the conflict in the narrative. Instead, the narrative reads as follows. The *Charro* rides his horse to visit the *China Poblana*. He takes his horse to the stable and knocks on the door. No one is home. He leaves and happens to meet the *China Poblana* along the way. They flirt with each other. She makes him some *atole* and they both help to stir it. The *China Poblana* then serves him tea and they continue to flirt with each other. The *Charro* throws his hat on the floor wondering if the *China Poblana* will accept his affections. She picks it up.

Elated, they both face the audience for the first time and dance in military style formation to the *jarabe* called *La Diana*. They end with the *China Poblana* accepting the *Charro*'s marriage proposal (Flores Barnes 17, 39; Houston, *Problem Solver* 1996 28-35).

Tena noted that he did not create the *atole* step. His version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* is similar to all the ones performed in his area (Tena). Hernández remembered that Edgar Preciano from the University of Colima, Mexico, taught the *Jarabe Tapatío* to his group in Elgin, Illinois. Preciano demonstrated the *atole* footwork sequence and told them that this step is performed by the dancers in Colima, Mexico. Hernández described the stirring motion made by the men as a *lazado* step.¹² Preciano indicated that the director had the option to perform the *atole* or the *borracho* step. Hernández recalled that his Illinois group performed the *atole* sequence for a number of years. He decided to remove this step and replace it with the drunkard footwork sequence because when the women knelt down their skirts touched the floor. Their skirts were becoming stained (Hernández).

Throughout my many years' experience as a folklorico dance student and teacher, I had never heard or seen the *atole* step performed until I began conducting my own research. In the three versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that I learned as a student, the *atole* step was definitely not included. As a consequence, I have never taught the version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* with the *atole* step. In addition, the version that I learned from my teacher Roy Lozano eliminated the tea leaves footwork and music that accompanied it. This is the version commonly performed by *Amalia Hernández's Ballet Folklórico de México*. In this Lozano/ Hernández version of the *Jarabe Tapatío*, the *China* does not sober up the *Charro* from his drunken state. Instead, they merely resume flirting after the

drunken episode. However, I have noticed that every single folkloric dance group that I observed for this study includes the tea leaves sequence.

The significance of the tea leaves sequence lies in issues/questions of masculinity. I argue that there are two opposing bodily depictions of masculinity within the *Jarabe Tapatío*'s love narrative. These bodily depictions sustain patriarchy, but in different ways. Performances that utilize the drunkard footwork sequence, as well as those that exclude the tea leaves movement and music, continue to portray the *charro* with the negative characteristics of *machismo*. Here, the *Charro* still embodies all aspects of *machismo*. The *Charro* still gets drunk and the *China Poblana* forgives his behavior. Eliminating the drunkard sequence and replacing it with the *atole* step still reinforces patriarchy since it shows women performing the tasks of traditional gender roles such as cooking. Furthermore, the women remain in a submissive position of kneeling while they stir the pot. However the man helps her stir the pot and he does not become drunk. These alterations showcase the positive attributes of *machismo*. These two different bodily narratives of the *Jarabe Tapatío* reveal the fact that men in their depiction of traditional gender roles are allowed some fluidity as long as these performances adhere to the main tenets of *machismo*. Paradoxically, in all narratives of this dance the women do not stray from their portrayal of traditional gender roles of *marianismo*. Even when the *China Poblana* physically pushed the drunken *Charro* away from her, she still conforms to the *marianismo* ideal by accepting his romantic advances. Only a single, conservative narrative is afforded to women. This corresponds to the manner in which traditional gender roles were enforced in 1920s. As was the case in 1920s Mexico, the

performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that I witnessed by a set of twenty-first-century United States dance companies transmits traditional gender role portrayals in which *machismo* remains unopposed. The fact that these portrayals of gender roles continue to operate within performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in the twenty-first century are a testament to their power and enduring effect.

Reception of Traditional Gender Roles Representations

The traditional gender role depiction evident in the *Jarabe Tapatío* and other folkloric dances does not go unnoticed in the twenty-first century. As a graduate student at the University of California, Riverside, I attended a Mexican folkloric dance lecture/demonstration by the *Ballet Folklórico del Valle* on campus that stimulated my research inquiry. As I sat waiting for the lecture/demonstration to begin, I chatted with a male dancer and female board members of the group from Los Angeles, California, that was about to perform. I explained to them what my research was about and we began a very captivating dialogue. They commented on the fact that in this dance group the majority of male dancers were gay. Yet, they noted that they were instructed to portray themselves as virile, macho, strong, heterosexual, love conquerors. Also, the women dancers were students, teachers, and employed in many professions. However, the women were instructed to perform their roles as meek, humble, flirtatious, teases. The male dancer wondered why the folkloric dances continue to depict these kinds of portrayals. “When are we going to get past this?” he questioned out loud (“Conversation with Dancers”).¹³

Thinking about this dynamic, I decided to ask the dance practitioners that I interviewed in 2011 whether they taught their students to portray a character in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. In response to this question, Tena stated that he did not teach his students to portray a character. In addition, he did not feel that the *Jarabe Tapatío* told men and women to behave in a certain way because anyone can interpret the dance as they would like. Hernández stated that he instructs his student to dance as if they are at a party so that the couple interacts, flirts, and looks at each other (Tena; Hernández). On the other hand, Bustos remarked “So I think, you know, in all of the dances that we do we try to teach them how our grandparents or our great-grandparents thought that ladies should behave and how guys should behave, and how graceful the girl should look, and how manly the guy should, you know, also look” (Bustos). Castro Paramo responded, “*No nadamas que se vean como hombre y mujer aunque sean gay....en los ailes Mexicanos se glorifica la masculinidad y la feminidad. Entonces, eso es lo que quiero.*” [No, only that they appear as a man and as a women even if they are gay.....in Mexican folkloric dances masculinity and femininity is glorified. So, this is what I want”] (Castro Paramo). It is clear that in the twenty-first century, the dance practitioners that I interviewed bodily enforce and reproduce heteronormativity.

In their writings Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner give insight into this dynamic of heteronormativity. They discuss heteronormativity as having a subtle “love plot of intimacy and familialism that signifies belonging to a society in a deep and normal way. Community is imagined through scenes of intimacy, coupling, and kinship; a historical relation to futurity is restricted to generational narrative and reproduction”

(554). In this view, heteronormativity is entrenched in every aspect of everyday life including laws, culture, commerce, romance, etc. (554). As I see it, heterosexual love relations are silently normalized and reproduced through the bodily enactment of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The conquest of the *China Poblana* by the *Charro* served as a constant reminder to all in the early twentieth century that heterosexual intimacies are the only acceptable love relationships. Even in the twenty-first-century United States, when performers may or may not be Mexican citizens, versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that I have witnessed do not recognize additional sexualities as an affording alternative love relationship.

Not only is heteronormativity bodily displayed within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* but so is adherence to traditional gender roles. Throughout my research I wondered whether the students of folkloric dance were aware of their embodiment of Mexican traditional gender roles when they danced the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Even though Tena declared that he did not teach his students to portray traditional gender roles when performing the *Jarabe Tapatío*, his students were cognizant of this type of depiction in their performance. In my interview with Tena's students, they described to me the *atole* footwork sequence and the part of the dance where the woman crouches down to pick up the hat. A lively debate ensued which I narrate as follows:

FEMALE STUDENT 1. Esas dos partes como que no... [Those two parts, I don't agree with. I have my doubts. no just no.]

INTERVIEWER. No te gustan...[Don't you like them?]

FEMALE STUDENT 1.No, pues eso es cuando recoge el sombrero la mujer. [No, well that is when the woman kneels down and picks up the hat.]

INTERVIEWER. Sí, sí.. qué significa eso?.. las mujeres están agachadas, los hombres..[Yes, yes what does that mean when the women are crouched and the men...]

FEMALE STUDENT 1. Y.. por qué tenemos que recoger del piso?.[And why do we have to pick the hat from the floor?]

FEMALE STUDENT 2. Tenemos una feminista...ella es feminista. [We have a feminist, she is a feminist.]

FEMALE STUDENT 1 . Obvio.., yo veo todos esos detallitos...[Obviously.., I look at all those details.]

FEMALE STUDENT 2: Yo no, yo bailo. [I don't. I just dance.]

FEMALE STUDENT 1: No, a mí no me importa, porque al final yo tengo el sombrero. [No, that doesn't bother me because at the end I am the one with the hat.]

FEMALE STUDENT 2: Triumph!

MALE STUDENT. Sí.. de qué?...?qué tiene que ver cuando ayuda mucho la mujer al hombre.., porque le levanta el sombrero la mujer...nadamás.. como que.. también hay mucho machismo en ese..en esa parte..de que el hombre que la domina a la mujer.” [Yes, of what?..how is that important when the woman helps the man very much by picking up his hat. The only thing is that there is also a great deal of *machismo* in this part. In this part when the man dominates the woman.]

INTERVIEWER: Qué piensan ustedes hombres de esa parte? Del machismo? [what do you men think of this part of the dance? What do you think of the machismo involved?]

FEMALE STUDENT 1: A mí no me gusta agacharme, y a mí no me gusta menear el atole. [I don't like to crouch and I don't like to stir the *atole*.] (Galvan, García, Gutierrez, Tena)

In these cases, both male and female students expressed their dislike for the portrayal of traditional gender roles whether or not they were specifically told to perform them. In the first instance, female student 1 became angrier as we discussed the topic. She voiced her displeasure in having to physically kneel to stir the pot and crouch to pick up the *charro* hat. Instead of labeling her a *marimacha* as would have been done in 1920s Mexico for opposing masculinity, female student 2 teasingly called her a feminist. Female student 1 came to terms with the portrayal of traditional gender roles within the *Jarabe Tapatío* by realizing that as the *China Poblana* she has the power to choose whether or not to accept the love interests of the *Charro*. Thus, picking up the hat signals

that the *China Poblana* is the one who makes the choice, taking on--however briefly--the male role of decision making. I must note that this idea of the *China Poblana* possessing agency in determining whom she will marry is a mere illusion, because in every version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* that I have observed, the *China Poblana* always picks up the *charro* hat and accepts the *Charro*'s marriage proposal. It may be that one way for women in the twenty-first century to reconcile their gender portrayals is to believe that in their depictions the *China Poblana* has a choice whether to accept or reject the love interests of the *Charro* when they actually do not. Another method of reconciling opposing notions of gender is as female student 2 declared to "just dance" (Galvan, García, Gutierrez, Tena). By focusing on the dance movements instead of the patriarchal elements, practitioners sidestep analysis and revel in the aesthetic experience.

Men whom I interviewed were also at odds with the depiction of gender as performed in the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Richard Delgado, a student of Bustos who also teaches folkloric dance, began to re-think the storyline behind the *Jarabe Tapatío* during our conversation:

Interesting..that's an interesting question because within the dance, the man is doing these *borracho* steps which gives a sense of ...he's been drinking..... So, I don't know if that's telling the man..hmmmm. and more than likely at the beginning the woman sees this..you know, I don't wanna be..I don't wanna be with this guy that's been drinking or whatever at the *cantina* and then finally at the end she gives in..... I don't know if that's the proper way, you know...cause when you think about it I don't think it is.I think at the end when everything's done at the end, you know it's a proper way of the man and woman to come together, but yeah, I mean the whole..the whole playing of it (Delgado).

In this quote, it appears that Delgado is thinking aloud. He was at odds with the portrayals of masculinity and its acceptance by the *China Poblana*. At one point in the

conversation he decided that this was not the “proper way” for a man and a woman to interact (Delgado). However, he did agree that ending the dance with an engagement was acceptable, but the manner in which this came about was questionable.

As was the case with the dance teachers, not all students I interviewed disagreed with traditional gender role depictions in the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Some deemed them appropriate. In my conversation with the members of the *Ballet Folklórico Tierra del Encanto* quoted on page twenty, the male student finally told me what he thought of the gender portrayals within the *Jarabe Tapatío*. He stated: left off here.

I think that it is one that in reality we see as macho but in reality the man helps the woman and she helps him. That is what is common in a partners dance. Each one should help the other in the real world. In a marriage each one has to help the other. A little bit together and a little bit separate”
(Galvan, García, Gutierrez, Tena).

In the previously quoted passage, this student noted that the woman helped the man by picking up his hat. Later on in the conversation, he indicated that while it may be easy to equate this dance to referencing machismo, depiction of traditional gender roles in a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* is evidence of the couple’s desire to assist each other, as is done in real life marriages. Other students interpreted the gender role dynamics within the *Jarabe Tapatío* as indicating the manner in which men and women showed “respect” for each other (Hernández and Pineda). Two male students thought that the way in which the man must win the woman’s affection was “kind of romantic” (Hernández and Pineda). Some female dancers thought that the women were portrayed as “strong” because they were in “battle” with the men (Chavez and Madrigal). I must note that in this “battle” the *Charro* always wins the affections of the *China Poblana*.

The *Jarabe Tapatío* as a Cultural Display of Gender

Ricardo Pérez Montefort in *Estampas de Nacionalismo Popular Mexicano* [*Images of Popular Mexican Nationalism: Lessons About the National Culture and Nationalism*] (1994) argues that in the 1920s and 1930s the *Jarabe Tapatío* invoked imaginings of Mexico as a rural countryside. During this time period, actors in popular theatre dressed as the *Charro* and *China Poblana* to embody Mexicanness. Here, the “*Charro* was depicted using the masculine stereotypes of in love, a braggart, quarrelsome, drunk, plays games, singer, rider, dominator, womanizer, witty among other attributes. In opposition, the *China* did not miss an opportunity to demonstrate her timidity by biting the *rebozo*, playing the role of the victim, being coquettish, and mocking indifference towards the excesses of the *Charro*” (129-130, 126). Rosaura Sánchez in “The History of Chicanas: A Proposal for a Materialist Perspective” (1989) points out that “the discourses of submission are often masked and misrepresented as legitimate and necessary, but they merely allow for the continuation of domination” (22). Looking through these lenses, I see that the dominance of men over women in the *Jarabe Tapatío* is disguised so that practitioners articulate traditional gender roles, depicting how men and women were exhorted to act throughout twentieth-century Mexico, at the same time continuing to re-exhort them. Practitioners envision the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a custom of Mexico’s cultural past and use the terms “help,” “respect,” and “romance” to render the performance of masculinity acceptable to them.

Whether or not they were opposed to the depiction of traditional gender roles within the *Jarabe Tapatío*, practitioners whom I interviewed were reluctant to change any

portion of the choreography. Acceptable changes to the *Jarabe Tapatío* included tempo of the music, footwork sequencing, and spatial patterns. Interviewees described Amalia Hernández's Ballet Folklórico de México's rendition of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as the most radical because of its fusion of modern and ballet dance (Bustos, Castro-Paramo, Hernández, Tena). Practitioners described their own versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as "genuine" and "old fashioned" (Hernández; Castro-Paramo). Tena remarked that in his version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* he is "preserving..the more or less original choreography" (Tena). In addition, he revealed that he has been teaching the same version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* for the past forty years (Tena). The philosophy articulated by these practitioners, using terms such as "genuine," "old fashioned," and "preserve," acts to thwart the invention of new renditions of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

In related vein, Richard Handler in *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (1988) analyzes Quebecois folk music and dance. Handler argues that practices that appear old, traditional, were at one time considered novel. In fact, he states that these very practices are not unchanging, static traditions but exist as constantly changing innovations. Pursuit of the preservation of traditional folk culture by folklorists and others has caused it to be imagined as authentic, fixed, and existing solely in the past. In fact, this attempt to collect and preserve traditional folk culture has led to its objectification which in itself has brought change (75-80). Néstor García Canclini in *Hybrid Cultures* (1995) argues that the modernization of society does not erase cultural traditions but instead transforms them (153). It must be remembered that although elements of the *Jarabe Tapatío* were generated during the Spanish colonial era in

Mexican history, the versions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* I witnessed in 2011 were re-interpreted in early twentieth-century Mexico, at which time they constituted a relatively new portrayal. Practitioners in my interviews imagine the *Jarabe Tapatío* to be deeply rooted in the past without acknowledgment of how theatricalizing this dance in early twentieth-century Mexico has changed its previous nature. In this view, the *Jarabe Tapatío* and the country of Mexico are equivalent, so that imaginings of the nation are considered unchangeable. In a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by the twenty-first-century United States groups that I studied, Mexicanness continues to reproduce traditional gender role depictions that reinforce masculinity.

Case in point is the fact that every single folkloric group I observed perform the *Jarabe Tapatío* did so as a male/female couple dance. Not one performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a duet of two women or two men. Hernández stated, “we only have danced it with couples, the reason being that most of the *sones* were created with couples, plus *El Jarabe* is a courtship dance” (Hernández). McKinnis remarked, “I teach the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a couples dance because it is important to respect tradition. This is a courtship dance that must be danced with a male/female partner. I feel that it is fundamental for the *Jarabe Tapatío* to be danced with a partner to represent the tradition of the *Charro* and the *China Poblana*” (McKinnis). Although in the 1920s women performed the man’s role dressed as the *China Poblana*—some wore the man’s hat, and others wore the complete *Charro* costume—and thereby embodied the *machismo* gender role depiction, no one that I observed in 2011 demonstrated a version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* in this manner.

Compared to their twenty-first-century counterparts, women in 1920s Mexico were denied many basic civil liberties. However, through their performance of the male role in the *Jarabe Tapatío*, some Mexican women temporarily challenged patriarchal underpinnings. I note that women in the twenty-first-century United States enjoy a great number of civil liberties including the right to vote. I suggest that one reason folkloric dance practitioners continue to sustain and re-create traditional gender role portrayals within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* is that the roles are articulated as a nostalgic look at Mexico's past. Svetlana Boym's notion of restorative nostalgia offers useful insight in this regard. In *The Future of Nostalgia*, (2001) Boym writes of:

...an ache of temporal distance and displacement. Restorative nostalgia takes care of both of these symptoms. Distance is compensated by intimate experience and the availability of the desired object. Displacement is cured by a return home, preferably a collective one. Never mind if it's not your home; by the time you reach it, you would have already forgotten the distance. What drives restorative nostalgia is not the sentiment of distance and longing but rather about the anxiety about those who draw attention to historical incongruities between past and present and thus question the wholeness and congruity of the restored tradition (44-45).

I think Boym's "availability of the desired object" translates to the *Jarabe Tapatío* as dance, music and song. An equivalent of Boym's "return home" is relived through a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by a dance group. I suggest that Boym's restorative nostalgia illuminates practitioner's views of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a dance that is unable to be modified. Through their eyes, the *Jarabe Tapatío* is seen as sentimentally embodying Mexico's rural past where traditional gender roles were part of the country's cultural history. I use Boym's interpretation of restorative nostalgia to help demonstrate how practitioners' nostalgic understanding of this dance makes the performance of traditional gender roles in the twenty-first century acceptable.

However, I would like to add that as a folkloric dance practitioner I have danced the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a soloist. As was the case with the inauguration at the national stadium in 1923 where students from an all-female school performed the *Jarabe Tapatío*, I was in a position where I lacked a male partner. While pursuing graduate studies at the University of California, Riverside, I gave lecture/demonstrations to community elementary school children as a Gluck Fellow. During sessions, I re-told the legend of the *China Poblana*, narrated the love story behind the *Jarabe Tapatío*, taught a folkloric dance, and performed. I remember wondering if I should try to recruit a male partner to dance the *Charro* role. I decided against it due to logistical issues. I also debated what I should do with the *charro* hat. I finally decided to leave the hat on the floor for the entire dance and pick it up only at the end. I remember thinking to myself that this was not an acceptable way to dance the *Jarabe Tapatío*. This feeling centered on the debate among folkloric dance practitioners that I have heard expressed many times. Some think that couple dances should be danced by men and women and not by a soloist. All-male dances and all-female dances should be performed by the appropriate gender. Others say the solution for folklorico groups that lack men is it to perform dances that are designated for women only. I suggest that one reason why performing the *Jarabe Tapatío* as a soloist is considered by many to be unsuitable in the twenty-first-century U.S. is that it counters heteronormativity even though a hat may be used to stand in for the male role.

FOLKLORIC DANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON CLASS POSITIONING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY UNITED STATES

In the preceding pages, I have recounted how the *jarabes* were first performed by the lower classes, made to be acceptable by the upper classes and eventually transformed to represent the entire country. While the dance itself has crossed social class lines, I note that in the twenty-first-century United States, among the people I interviewed, the teaching and performance of Mexican folkloric dance enables practitioners to gain and /or secure upward mobility.¹⁴ The immigration stories of a few of them help illuminate this phenomenon,

José Tena

Every dance practitioner that I interviewed immigrated to the United States as a child or adult. Scholars note that in the twentieth century, Mexican immigrants to the U.S. have served an important role in the maintenance of the Spanish language, as well as the promotion of Mexican cultural traditions (Maciel and Sobeck 6). Tena, who immigrated from *Chihuahua*, Mexico, recounted how he first learned folkloric dance in third grade during his physical education class. His physical education teacher also taught Mexican folkloric dance at the *Centro de Prestaciones Sociales de IMSS*, a cultural center.¹⁵ He began taking dance lessons every day after school at this center. Later, he enrolled in the *Escuela Superior de Danza de Chihuahua*, a fine arts school for Mexican folkloric dance, he said.¹⁶ There, students learned pedagogical skills, dance choreography, and history, as well as how to research Mexican folkloric dance. He soon began teaching folkloric

dance in the public schools in the morning and attending his own classes in the afternoon every day. In 1977, after his graduation, he visited his sister who lived in Las Doña Ana, New Mexico. She encouraged him to seek employment in the United States as a way to earn extra money. So, he worked in the fields. “I started working and went to the field, you know *la escarva de la lechuga* [harvesting lettuce]. Working in the field at over one hundred degrees for a dancer is kind of tough” (Tena). He had made some money and was about return to Chihuahua to begin teaching when he attended a festival in Mesilla, New Mexico, with his brother. There, he met the director of the New Mexico State University folkloric group. Learning of Tena’s folkloric dance teaching experience, the university official urged him to stay in New Mexico. He told him that there were tremendous opportunities in New Mexico for someone with his skills, and that he would help him “work something out” so that Tena could teach folkloric dance (Tena):

And of course, I ended up staying here, illegal, and it was hard. It was hard because as you know here in Las Cruces we have check points about twenty miles around us. There’s no way you can move anywhere else, the only thing you can go to [is] El Paso, that’s it. I was stuck and that feeling, believe me, I didn’t wish nobody had to pass through those feelings like, you really feel like a prisoner because you cannot go after that point. I was like that for five years” (Tena).

Eventually, Tena fell in love, married, and arranged all his legal documents so that he could reside legally in the United States. Currently, Tena teaches folkloric dance at La Academica Dolores Huerta Middle and at New Mexico State University. He also directs his own non-profit folkloric dance company called *Ballet Folklorico Tierra del Encanto* (Tena). His life story shows how Tena used his knowledge of folkloric dance to gain upward mobility. Transitioning from working in the fields to the classroom is no easy

task. Yet, Tena managed to do just that. Tena's desire and ability to teach Mexican folkloric dance eventually served as a means to secure legal immigration status in the United States.

Julio Bustos

Mexican folkloric dance helped some folkloric dance practitioners, such as Julio Bustos, surmount the cultural barriers he found in the U.S. Bustos was born in Mexico City, Mexico. He first remembers dancing Mexican folkloric dance at school festivals at the age of six. As a middle school student he enrolled in a school that focused on giving its students a technical and artistic education. Eighty-five percent of the student population took folkloric dance classes. Bustos remembered excelling in folkloric dance. He was selected to perform in a mother's day festival in the eighth grade. Bustos remarked, "Then, I came to the United States against my will" (Bustos). His family moved to Fresno, California, and he was enrolled in one of the few schools that taught Mexican folkloric dance as part of its curriculum:

And on the day I'm getting enrolled, the teacher happens to come by and they go 'Hey, this is Julio Bustos, he just arrived from Mexico and he's going to be taking your English class.' And she's like 'That's great! How about some folklorico? Would you like to do, you know, some folklorico dancing?' And I'm like 'Yeah sure.' You know, I had no idea that in the United States I was gonna find a class that was doing dances from my country" (Bustos).

He describes his involvement in folkloric dance throughout his high school years in the United States as a "lifesaver" (Bustos).

Not knowing English was a big challenge for Bustos, but the folkloric dance class gave him something that he excelled in. And, he made friends through folkloric dance

who helped him master the English language. In his senior year of high school his dance teacher asked a university professor to teach the classes during her maternity leave. Ernesto Martinez, a dance teacher at Fresno State University recruited Bustos from this class. “He kind of became my mentor, he kind of like helped me get into the university and showed me the paperwork and the applications and talked to so and so” (Bustos). Bustos danced a total of five years with the Fresno State folkloric group. He also taught folkloric dance at the high school from which he graduated, and he worked part time as a Spanish radio announcer. Bustos described teaching folkloric dance at the high school level, although without a teaching credential. In one incident, only his advanced students were invited to perform at the school recital while all levels of tap and ballet classes performed. He spoke against this; since he did not have a teaching credential, he could and did lose his job. This motivated him to finish his studies and graduate from the university with a teaching credential. Later, he worked at Fresno City College as an adjunct professor teaching folkloric dance. From this experience, he started a non-profit organization called *Teocalli* Cultural Academy which offers classes in Mexican folkloric dance classes, music, and other dance forms to children and adults in the Fresno community (Bustos). In Bustos’ case dance offered a pathway that helped him adjust to American cultural traditions, assisted him in gaining access to higher education, and spurred him to finish college with a teaching credential.

Julian Hernández

Julian Hernández was born in Zacatecas, Mexico. He immigrated to the United States in 1989. He remembered learning Mexican folkloric dances in the public school system and performing for civic celebrations. He described immigrating from Mexico because of:

the economic situation. In my house it wasn't good. I mean, I come from a really small town, it's probably like at that time it was five hundred people in the town so it was really small. So after I finished my school, my plan was to come to the United States and probably a lot of young people came here and make money and they go back to school, but I came here and I couldn't make the money that I needed, so I stayed around and then I ...since I couldn't go back to Mexico to school, so I decided to enroll in classes" (Hernández).

Hernández worked a series of jobs in Elgin, Illinois. He worked as a landscaper, dishwasher, and bus boy. He noticed that in the United States there were not much cultural activities for immigrants to participate in. So, he started a Mexican folkloric dance company. His group began as a church group and slowly evolved into a full-fledged company in partnership with Elgin Community College in Elgin, Illinois. At the same time, Hernández pursued educational experiences. He took English classes. Then, he earned his GED, two associate degrees, and a bachelor's degree in Business Management. Hernández directs the *Ballet Folklorico Huehuecoyotl*, which has a children's and adult dance company and is housed at Elgin Community College.¹⁷ He teaches dance as a volunteer at the same institution where he earned his associate degrees (Hernández). I had the honor of watching his group perform in concert at Elgin Community College in 2011. After the show, Hernández remarked that the collaborative agreement between Elgin Community College and his folkloric dance company was important because it enabled his students to acquaint themselves with higher education.

He stated that in his dance group approximately eighty percent are Mexican immigrants. He said that oftentimes women are discouraged from seeking higher education. The partnership with Elgin helped his students envision themselves as participants in the academic world, striving to attain an advanced degree (Hernández). Hernández demonstrates to his student how dance can partner with education as a mode for achieving upward mobility.

Alicia Veronica McKinnis

Alicia Veronica McKinnis was born in Nuevo Laredo, a city located in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas and that borders the United States city of Laredo, Texas. Her father was a journalist for a Nuevo Laredo newspaper for fifty-two years and wrote for the Sports section, later for political columns of the newspaper. Her mother worked at home to take care of the family. The family owned and operated a small printing press from home. McKinnis recounted that her father was a very educated man who read every single day. As a young girl, McKinnis was exposed to her cultural heritage. To celebrate *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), McKinnis remembered, her father printed booklets with satirical poems, called *Calaveras Vasiladoras*, that he wrote himself.¹⁸ She would go with her siblings to the cemetery on November 1st and 2nd and sell these booklets to people who wanted to commemorate the event. McKinnis recounts that her parents taught her to love and admire her cultural heritage. She attended elementary, middle school, and high school in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Although she did not learn Mexican folkloric dance within the public school system, she did participate in *rondas*

infantiles which were part of the curriculum. A *ronda infantil* is a series of basic locomotor skills taught in circles and set to music to be sung by children. One component involved children who learned jump rope tricks and competed against each other to a set choreography. Competitions were held in the biggest arenas. McKinnis stated that she saw the *Jarabe Tapatio* performed at Mother's Day celebrations, parades, and patriotic events. In high school, McKinnis competed as a cross country athlete, on both sides of the U.S./Mexican border. At eighteen years of age, she was offered an athletic scholarship at Laredo Community College, so began her story of immigration to the United States. After completing her Associates Degree at Laredo Community College, McKinnis earned a track scholarship to the University of Texas-Pan America in Edinburg, Texas. She recounted a traumatic experience as a university student. As a track athlete, McKinnis broke the university record running a time of 4:47 in the 1,500 meter race. Her coach praised her accomplishments in front of the entire track team. An older, female athlete on her team was very upset with these remarks. She yelled that she was not going to let a "****Mexican beat her in track." This athlete visited McKinnis in her dorm room and physically assaulted her. McKinnis filed a police report but did not want to worry her family, so she kept this a secret. The assailant was expelled from the university and faced criminal charges. McKinnis stated that this incident greatly affected her. Not wanting to face discrimination, she no longer told anyone that she was from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, but said that she was from Laredo, Texas, the neighboring U.S. border city. However, she still loved her country of Mexico. As a junior in college, McKinnis ran by the dance building every day. She was attracted to the music and colors

and asked permission to observe a Mexican folkloric dance class. The next semester she took a Mexican folkloric technique class and discovered her love of dance. She later joined the performing Mexican folkloric group at the university and began her studies in Flamenco and Spanish dance. She graduated with a degree in Physical Education.

Upon graduation she applied to the school district in her area and was told that there were no teaching positions in physical education, but that, because of her earned credits in dance, she could apply for a job teaching Mexican folkloric dance to middle school students. She taught Mexican Folkloric dance to middle school students in *La Joya*, Texas for eight years. Then, she earned a teaching certificate in Dance and moved to Laredo, Texas, to teach at the Vidal M. Treviño Magnet School. She now directs the Mexican folkloric and Spanish dance companies at the Treviño Magnet School and at Laredo Community College (McKinnis). McKinnis and her father were recognized in the Sports Hall of Fame in *Nuevo Laredo*, Mexico. This story reveals that not all immigrants from Mexico come from the lower classes. McKinnis is one of many Mexicans who immigrate to the United States with family histories of educational accomplishments. In this instance, dance interest and experience coupled with educational training enabled McKinnis to secure middle class status in the United States.

The immigration stories of the dance practitioners whom I interviewed enable me to understand J' Aime Morrison's conviction in "Dancing Between the Decks: Choreographies of Transition During Irish Migrations to America" (2001). Morrison wrote that "dance was a performance of memory that connected them to their native land even as they move away from it" (8). Julian Hernández echoes this sentiment:

I did a lot of study in Mexico when I was going to the *preparatoria* and through school, sometimes when you live in Mexico you have the folk dance or any other kind of art in Mexico and sometimes you don't really appreciate it until you look back and you're far away from it. So that's what happened to me when I was here. I felt that that was something that I wanted to do, and actually it wasn't like a plan to do this, it just came out of necessity" (Hernández).

McKinnis' life story also relates how folkloric dance is used in a way to connect with the country of Mexico. McKinnis stated that she discovered Mexican Folkloric dance after she left her home in Mexico to study in Texas. This finding of her "passion" for dance occurred when she lived the furthest away from her home (McKinnis). McKinnis and other dance practitioners I interviewed bodily articulated the cultural memories of their country through learning and teaching dance.

In addition, the four life stories recounted here reveal the way in which dance can partner with education to advance the social class positioning of the practitioners. Néstor García Canclini in *Hybrid Cultures* (1995) offers additional insights into income motivations and class advancement issues:

uses of traditional culture would be impossible without one basic fact: The continuity in the production of popular artisans, musicians, dancers, and poets interested in maintaining and renewing their heritage. The preservation of these forms of life, organization, and thought can be explained by cultural reasons but also, as we said, by economic interests of the producers, who are trying to survive or to increase their income (155).

Even though all the practitioners I interviewed except Hernández earn a living from teaching folkloric dance, I suggest that every practitioner has gained some form of upward social class mobility through the teaching and performance of Mexican folkloric dance. Teaching folkloric dance gave Tena a way to navigate from field work to classroom teaching while in the United States. With this change, Tena was able to enter

into the social circles of the middle class and upper class Americans. Operating within these circles, Tena met his wife, who shares his love of folkloric dance. His marriage would help him secure his immigration paperwork. Bustos' ability to perform and teach folkloric dance provided an important skill that helped him gain entry into higher education. In addition, the discrimination he experienced as a folkloric dance teacher served as the primary motivator to finish his university degree. With his university degree and teaching credential in hand, Bustos entered the social world of middle class America. Dance, alongside educational opportunities, offered Hernández and McKinnis, a way to secure upward mobility in the United States. Hernández is no longer a landscaper but an engineer by profession, yet through dance he teaches his own students the value of higher education. McKinnis secured middle class status by utilizing her education and dance experience to find her first job. In these stories dance served as the bridge, pathway, and the motivation for achieving upward mobility in the United States.

Interviews with contemporary teachers and students in California, Illinois, New Mexico, and Texas have led me to argue that their twenty-first-century performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* evoke race, nation, class, and gender portrayals of what it meant to be Mexican in the 1920s. Their present-day performances continue to convey nearly a century old ideology. My research demonstrates ways these twenty-first-century practitioners utilize depictions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* to articulate a Mexican identity in the face of U.S. assimilationist policies which are designed to encourage people to abandon their homeland identity and adopt culture of the dominant society. Circulating these depictions, performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* re-affirm traditional gender role

portrayals as a form of cultural safeguarding. Here, practitioners assume a nostalgic view of Mexico's past, envisioning traditional gender role depictions as part of their cultural history which needs preservation. And, they advance their own social class standing through the teaching of Mexican folkloric dancing.

End Notes

¹ I was able to observe rehearsals of the *Jarabe Tapatío* directed by Castro Paramo and conduct a quick interview with her. However, due to time constraints I was unable to document her immigration story. In addition, I interviewed Alicia Veronica McKinnis, Director of the Laredo Community College Ballet Folklórico as part of my re-embodiment of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Due to my on-going dialogue and her familiarity with my findings, I chose to limit my interview with her to exclude topics of nation, race, class, and gender in the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

² Listed below are a few of the books printed for an English speaking audience. *How to Perform the Dances of Old Mexico: A Manual of Their Origins, Legends, Costumes, Steps, Patterns, and Music* by Norma Schwendener and Averil Tibbels (1934), *Regional Dances of Mexico* by Edith Johnston Kendrick and Louise Remund (1935), *Dances of Mexico* (n.d.) by Guillermina Dickins, *Mexican Folk Dances for American Schools* by Gertrude X. Mooney (1948 & 1957), *Mexican Regional Dance for Elementary Schools* by Albert Pill (1963).

³ The Chicano movement was a civil rights momentum in the 1960s United States. Participants in this movement re-interpreted the word Chicano from its negative connotation to a positive word designating the people of Mexican descent residing in the United States. Many farm workers united with the Chicano community to fight for equities in work, education, and social realms.

⁴ *El Son de la Negra* is the name of the dance that Bustos spoke of. This dance is also known as *La Negra*. Bustos also referred to this dance as *El Son*. *La Negra* is a dance from the state of Jalisco, Mexico. Musicians have told me that this is the national song of the Mariachi groups. It has a very recognizable melody and one of the staple of dances performed by Mexican folkloric dance groups. The music of *La Negra* is classified as a type of *son*. The word *banda* literally translates from Spanish to English as band. Bustos referred to the word *banda* as a musical group that is comprised entirely of brass instruments. Such bands play different types of *sones* and other types of musical forms.

⁵ Amalia Hernández was the director of the Ballet Folklórico de México beginning in the 1950s. She died in 2000. Her company is directed by her children and still performs today at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City and tours throughout the world. This company always ends its program with a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*.

⁶ I did not interview McKinnis on issues surrounding indigeneity, race, class, and nation of the *Jarabe Tapatío*; see note 1. Thus, when I mention that only Bustos made reference to indigeneity within the *Jarabe Tapatío*, this excludes my dialogue with McKinnis.

⁷ *Mulattos* is a term that describes a person of mixed African and white ancestry.

⁸ *Quebrada* is the name given to a footwork sequence whereby all of the weight is placed on one foot while the ankle of the opposing foot is gently bent with its side touching the floor. To the audience this footwork movement is astounding since it seems that the dancer is twisting his/her ankle.

⁹ *Mesadora* is the Spanish word for rocking chair.

¹⁰ I must note that the lyrics of the *Jarabe Tapatío* were not sung at any the performances that I observed. In addition, the music provided to me by Ron Houston that was used by Flores de Angeles to teach the *Jarabe Tapatío* did not include lyrics.

¹¹ Frances Toor in *Mexican Folkways* (1930) reprinted Miguel Ríos Toledano's piano score entitled *Una Coleccion Authentica de Trienta Jarabes: Sones Principales y Mas Populares Aries Nacionales de la Republica Mexicana* [A Collection of Thirty Authentic Jarabes: The Foremost Sones and the Most Popular Aires Nacionales of the Mexican Republic] (1895) as secured from a private collector.

¹² A *lazado* step is a footwork sequence which resembles the *Charro's* method of making flourishes with the lasso.

¹³ In a casual conversation that took place several years before I began my research, two people made these comments that continue to resonate with me. Names of the individuals and the company discussed in this paragraph have been disguised to provide anonymity.

¹⁴ I was able to observe rehearsals of the *Jarabe Tapatío* directed by Castro Paramo and conduct a quick interview with her. However, due to time constraints I was unable to document her immigration story.

¹⁵ Cultural centers or *Centros Culturales* are government sponsored areas in the community that promote theatre and the fine arts. Here, classes in music, dance, arts, and theatre are given free of charge or at low cost to people who live in the nearby community. Oftentimes in Mexico, such cultural centers sponsor a Mexican folkloric program with a performing group.

¹⁶ An *escuela superior* is an institution offering a college level type of instruction. Graduates earn degrees equivalent to university degrees in the United States. In this case the institution specialized in dance.

¹⁷ Hernández indicated to me that he is a volunteer dance teacher but he noted that his wife earns a salary from teaching the folkloric dance group.

¹⁸ *Dia de los Muertos* is a celebration first begun by the indigenous people of Mexico. On November 1st and 2nd Mexicans remember their ancestors who have died. They believe

that on these days their loved ones return from death and join them on earth. Therefore, Mexicans build altars and decorate them with the favorite items and foods of the deceased. This celebration runs parallel to the Catholic celebrations known as All Souls Day. *Calaveras Vasiladoras* were humorous poems that were infused with political commentary and referenced the Day of the Dead.

CONCLUSION

With this dissertation, I have demonstrated that the *Jarabe Tapatío* has and continues to function as a way to envision Mexico. The discourse of the *Jarabe Tapatío* follows the history of Mexico; the dance itself has been re-created depending on the strategies of those in power or seeking power. In addition, the music, lyrics, and body movements of the *jarabes* have triggered associations with which people of various classes could recognize. In so doing, a performance of the *jarabes* in operas, by comics, on the theatrical stage, and in tent shows offered viewers a form of political commentary. The SEP used the *Jarabe Tapatío* in 1920s Mexico within the public school system to help the country imagine itself as comprised of a homogenous, rural, *mestizo* population. The Cultural Nationalist movement led by José Vasconcelos in the 1920s encouraged the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and other Mexican folkloric dances within the public school system to enact and legitimize post-revolutionary governmental policies. Public school teachers taught and organized public performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* within urban schools, rural schools, and in Cultural Mission programs to help culturally incorporate the indigenous and peasant communities into the nation. Assuredly, these communities understood the intentions and sometimes created avenues of negotiation to thwart cultural unification by the SEP. One such method was identifying themselves as belonging to a *patria chica* or their own communities instead of the nation. 1920s performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by school children at public school events such as at the *Escuela de Comercio Lerdo de Tejada*, at Chapultepec Park, at the Inauguration of the National Stadium, at weekly Cultural Concerts, and at School

Festivals demonstrated how this dance successfully bodily crossed ethnic, class, and gender lines to represent the nation. Also, the way in which folkloric dances were collected, disseminated, and performed by Cultural Mission and public school teachers showed that the peasants were active agents in some parts of this process. My analysis of the propagation of folkloric materials by the SEP demonstrates that articulations of nation via folkloric dance were negotiated at multiple levels.

Alura Flores de Angeles learned the *Jarabe Tapatío* from the SEP in early twentieth-century Mexico. A love narrative spelled out by Flores de Angeles infuses most performances of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and reaffirms ideas of nation. This love narrative infused within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* re-affirms ideas of nation. Analysis of the reconstruction of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as performed by twenty-first-century dancers, as well as a choreographic analysis of the love narrative and its interplay with associations summoned up by some of the component *sones* in the tune, demonstrates the manner in which the dual discourse of indigeneity are both visible and invisible within a performance of this dance while African influences are negated.

Close readings of newspaper accounts written in 1920s Mexico revealed SEP sponsored programs whereby school girls performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* as couples with one wearing a hat to signify the male role. This dancing both consolidated and contested patriarchy. It consolidated patriarchy because the school girls did not have much agency in this process and were enrolled in SEP programs intended to direct women towards occupations that aligned with traditional gender roles. Also, their lunging and arching of the torso could have been read respectively as dominance of the *Charro* over the *China*

Poblana. This dancing also contested patriarchy in that their renditions of the *Jarabe Tapatío* erased the bodily presence of boys; the girls movements could have been read as neither dominant or submissive but more equal. Just as important, it must be noted that these school girls attended school and performed in public spaces signaling which was in direct opposition to traditional gender roles. Furthermore, the version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* as danced by the adult Campobello sisters, in whom Nellie portrayed the *Charro*, could be read as instances of women assuming the traditional gender roles of men. The sister's interpretation also can be analyzed using a lesbian optic, to discern the romantic conquest of a woman by another woman. Both these readings challenge patriarchy because they show how some women side stepping the traditional gender roles assigned to them.

Dancing the *Jarabe Tapatío* also performs the lower class status of colonial *mestizo* people while it uses the costuming of the colonial upper class Mexican people. The dance thereby tells the nation in 1920s to strive to be upwardly mobile at the same time that it valorizes attributes of both social groups. My own re-interpretation of the *Jarabe Tapatío* analyzes the way in which the love narrative is masculinized and racialized, and how it utilized heteronormativity to envision the nation as an upwardly mobile, modern, *mestizo* population.

In the twenty-first-century United States, my interviews with selected Mexican folkloric dance practitioners reveal that aspects of the love narrative of the *Jarabe Tapatío* are reinforced, negotiated, and re-thought. While in 1920s Mexico, the *Jarabe Tapatío* was aligned with governmental policies designed to culturally unite a

heterogeneous nation, for one folkloric practitioner in the twenty-first-century United States this dance culturally unifies the Chicana/o community against assimilationist governmental policies. This was the case for *Teocalli* Cultural Academy in Fresno, California. In addition, 1920s Mexican educators implemented the teaching and performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* within the public school system alongside governmental policies promoting the cultural incorporation of indigenous and peasant communities. It appears that this quest is succeeding, at least in regards to U.S.-based folkloric groups, because only one Mexican folkloric dance practitioner whom I interviewed was able to articulate the influences of indigeneity within a performance of this dance. No one that I interviewed affirmed African influences within a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. Thus, the indigenous and African discourses remain subsumed or invisibilized within a *mestizo* account. Ironically, even though many of the 2010s dancers vocally protest the bodily performance of traditional gender roles depicted in the *Jarabe Tapatío*, no one thought that the dance should be changed. Some women in 1920s Mexico performed the *Jarabe Tapatío* with female/female partners and circumvented patriarchal narratives as a result. However, a number of dancers in the twenty-first-century United States bodily re-inscribe patriarchy in the course of “preserving” Mexico’s cultural heritage. Also, in 1920s Mexico the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* encouraged the population to strive for upward class mobility as a modern, *mestizo* nation. In the 2010s, a number of dance practitioners in the United States pair the teaching and performance of Mexican folkloric dance with attainment of educational credentials to maintain or improve their social class status. Adherence to

traditional gender roles continues to be bodily enforced within the *Jarabe Tapatío* in some U.S., twenty-first century renditions whereas in the 1920s and 1930s Mexico, women found ways of circumventing conventional roles expected of them.

Contributions to Debates within the Dance Studies Field

My dissertation research has entered into Dance Studies debates surrounding the discourses of invention and re-invention that have and continue to circulate in the dance world. My work aligns with scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, whose edited volume *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) demonstrates how dancing, costuming, and musical renderings were launched as new things while still laying claim to having deep roots in the past. In his writings on dance reconstruction, Mark Franko in *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (1983) argues that choreographers should use the “intended effects” of past dance works as a basis for creating new choreography, rather than trying to replicate dances from the past. Both these scholars teach us to look skeptically at claims about that which calls itself tradition and to discern re-invention as a frequent and often politically charged occurrence.

Scholars writing in such vein include David Harker in *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British “Folksong” 1700 to the present day* (1985) and Georgina Boyes in *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology, and the English Folk Revival* (1993) focused on the re-invention of English country dances as part of an international late nineteenth and early twentieth-century folk dance revival movement. Also, Janet O’Shea in *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage* (2007) demonstrates how *sadir*

was reinvented in early twentieth-century India as *bharata natyam*. *Sadir* was revised from a temple dance practiced by small communities of women to a staged, theatrical dance performed and taught by upper and middle class Indian women in the twentieth century during the struggles for India's independence from Britain.

Chicana/o scholars are analyzing the re-invention of dances derived from Mexico's history. Olga Nájera-Ramírez "Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, and the Mexican Charro" (1994) writes of the image of *charro* and how this association intermingled with notions of gender, nation, and class throughout Mexican history. Anita Gonzalez in *Jarocho's Soul: Cultural Identity and Afro-Mexican Dance* (2004) analyzes the *Jarocho* folkloric music, dance and theatre traditions in the state of Veracruz, Mexico, to demonstrate the manner in which artists re-imagine Afro-Mexican performance in the context of "official" national constructions of *mestizaje*. Russell Rodriguez in "Folklorico in the United States: Cultural Preservation and Disillusion" (2009) criticizes the fact that although folkloric dance was popularized in the United States during the Chicano movement, this movement practice in the twenty-first century does not address social issues.

My research moves in similar directions. It also calls attention to the community-generated nature of the *Jarabe Tapatio* which contrasts strongly with the single-authored choreographies in western dance that have previously attracted so much scholarly attention. I analyze the *Jarabe Tapatio*'s re-invention in 1920s Mexico and its circulation by dance practitioners in the twenty-first-century United States. In so doing, I point to three different kinds of community-generated productions that were at stake—

that of the indigenous and peasant people in 1920s Mexico, that of the SEP as a community, and that of the Chicana/o folkloric dance practitioners in the twenty-first century. Accessing historical group processes for indigenous people's creation of dance is difficult. Vestiges in the twentieth century can perhaps be seen in the agency that indigenous people express when they limit visitors' access to their dance events. More readily available for research has been the dances created by the SEP as a community of educators, whose work I accessed through textual and photographic sources. Throughout my interviews with a select group of twenty-first-century United States folkloric practitioners and some of their dancers, I found a lack of re-invention of the *Jarabe Tapatío*. In their case, and despite some instances of ongoing internal discussions about gender roles embedded in the dance's love narrative, preservation or protection of Mexican heritage assumed greater importance. In each of these groups, decisions have been made by a community of people: about the manner in which the dances have been re-invented and whether or not the dances should be re-invented at all. I join the dialogue within Dance Studies about re-invention to move the field toward increased consideration of movement practices generated by communities, and with regard to communities that have long been placed at the margins of mainstream dance inquiry.

Future Research

My findings on the *Jarabe Tapatío* have the potential to serve as a springboard for further research. For example, scholars could examine the manner in which ideas of race, gender, class, and nation operate in the dance community among twenty-first-century practitioners in Mexico. This query could involve several strands: analysis of dance teachers employed in the Mexican public school system, as well as folkloric dance companies in Mexico. Whereas in early twentieth-century Mexico, Physical Education teachers transmitted folkloric dance as part of the kinesiology curriculum, in the twenty-first-century, dance specialists specifically trained in this art form impart their knowledge to school children. Also, professional folkloric dance companies became popular in the 1950s when Amalia Hernandez inaugurated her Ballet Folklórico de México. Thus, the manner of transmitting the *Jarabe Tapatío* has changed since 1920s Mexico. Investigation of both strands would help scholars decipher how and why the *Jarabe Tapatío* is performed by twenty-first-century Mexicans.

In another avenue of research, scholars could conduct a choreographic analysis of the *Jarabe Tapatío* using an Indigenous or Africanist perspective. This would require archival research, as well as some fluency in the indigenous movement cultures of Mexico, or with dance cultures of African people who were transported to Mexico in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. This could quite possibly help untangle the racial influences at work in the performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* and give voice to bodily movement practices that have been subsumed by nationalistic rhetoric.

In a third vein, scholars could analyze Gloria and Nellie Campobello's version of the *Jarabe Tapatío* by queering it. They could also study Flores de Angeles' love narrative using a queer lens. This approach would enable scholars to delve into ways in which a performance of the *Jarabe Tapatío* subtly has or is capable of evading heteronormative dialogues.

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