“Mexican Baile Folklórico: Dancing with Empire and Expressing the Nation”

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Volume 1
Working Paper Series No. 3

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Abstract

Mexican ballet folklórico is a popular form of cultural expression and representation of identity on both sides of the US/Mexico border. In this paper, I examine the differences in folklórico as the art form crosses national borders. In Mexico, some cultural producers take up folklórico as a state-building project while in the United States folklórico is used by Mexican Americans as a counter-hegemonic initiative. In particular, I examine subjectivity in New Mexico through a critical reading of the Southwest as a multiply colonized space. I conduct a historical and ethnographic analysis and integrate my own understanding of contemporary folklórico gained through my role as a past participant and observer of the art form. This scholarship provides an understanding of the significance of folklórico to cultural practice.

Mexican ballet folklórico is a popular form of cultural expression and representation of identity on both sides of the US/Mexico border. This paper examines the differences in folklórico as the art form crosses international borders. As a transnational expression folklórico dance produces a dissonance by speaking to the depth and complexity of notions of identity, representation, and cultural formation within imperial nation building projects. In this essay I analyze the expressions and representations of Mexican ballet folklórico among peoples of Mexican descent contemporarily and historically, its origins and development[1]—both in Mexico and the United States—and its interpretive significance to its practitioners and state sponsors.

Mexico has a rich tradition of diverse social and regional dances.[2] On the local level, grassroots people maintain this tradition, and since the 1920s public agencies have supported national companies. The art of folklórico has played two different roles as both a popular tradition and a state project that assists in the maintaining of popular expressive traditions and the construction of Mexico’s national image. In the United States folklórico serves as a counter-hegemonic expression of culture and identity among persons of Mexican descent. In particular, I consider ballet folklórico in relation to subjectivity in New Mexico. More specifically, I examine New Mexico's performance of identity in relation to folklórico. I conduct a historical and ethnographic analysis and integrate my own understanding of contemporary folklórico gained through my role as a past participant and observer of the art form.

Mexican baile folklórico encompasses dances from a variety of locations drawing from Indigenous, African, and European influences. It is popularly understood now as an expression of Mexican culture and national identity but it is as varied as its origins. As part of Mexico's post-revolutionary romanticism, some scholars have argued that folklórico enabled Mexico's nation building process through its celebratory and idealized emphasis on mestizaje and Indigenismo. Some people interpret folklórico as singularly directed and homogeneously constructed when in reality the art form arose and is maintained by people seeking to satisfy themselves physically, socially, psychologically, and even spiritually. In addition, people practice the art as a means to satisfy their entertainment desires through local performances.

Racial ideologies influenced Mexico's post-revolutionary nationalist rhetoric. The repertoire of a folklórico performance encompasses "traditional" localized forms of music, dance, and costuming from various regions throughout Mexico, coalescing to reflect and promote a regionally-based image. While the expressed beauty and harmony of a folklórico production may obscure the historical and present day oppressions of the people, the dance maintains and reinterprets racial colonial symbolic and structural forms of violence embedded in nation building projects. Some dances and their accompanying music could be interpreted as expressing disharmony and violence.

Processes of racialization have impacted and shaped all aspects of Mexican life, including the production of folklórico. Racialization and other forms of colonial subordination have accompanied the appropriation of Indigenous, African, and racially-mixed peoples in both Mexico and the United States. Physical appearance, biological difference, and degrees of blood have traditionally informed racialized perceptions.[3] However, according to Mae Ngai, US historian of race and immigration, modern racial ideology depends more on the complex intersections of cultural, national, and physical difference than on simple biological hierarchy.[4] These physical and cultural traits have informed the notion of recognition and the ways that a person is perceived and treated. Both race and culture have factored in as crucial elements to the process of "othering", a practice that fuels on notions of difference and denotes anyone outside the normalized understandings of Whiteness as inferior: racialization normalizes subordination. Patrick Wolfe acknowledges the 'organizing grammar of race' in his discussion about the relationship between genocide and settler colonialism. Wolfe argues, "different racial regimes encode and reproduce the unequal relationships into which Europeans coerced the populations concerned."[5] Essential to the structure of colonialism, race has been utilized to discriminate, disempower, and dispossess.

Throughout history unequal relationships of power have been forged through physical, social, and political restraints that intensify the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, complicating the politics of belonging. The construction of national identities often times attempts to gloss over or compensate for the histories of racism and violence that taint the image of the nation. Nationalist projects are influenced by the politics of recognition—through issues of citizenship—and the politics of demarcating and defending particular space for its citizens by creating and protecting borders. In discussing the politics of recognition, Thomas Guthrie states that “in order for a group to be recognized, it must first make itself visible, differentiate itself from other groups, present itself as more or less cohesive, and, oftentimes, demonstrate ‘authenticity’ and cultural continuity through time.”[6] The constructed image of the nation attempts to promote the ideal of solidarity, despite the diversity of experiences and multiple identifications of the people. “In claiming a distinct national spirit, nation makers define their people in contrast to both internal and external “Others”, differentiating their populace from those of other nations.”[7] Both Mexico and the United States engaged in nation building projects that utilized performativity to reflect and respond to practices of subjectivity.

In Mexico, Mestizaje and Indigenismo evolved into ideologies where identities were forged and eliminated, yet promoted and understood as embracive and whole. The notion of Mestizaje was essential to Mexico’s nation-building project. Mestizaje was essential to Mexico’s nation building project as expressed by Jose Vasconcelos, a key figure in forging Mexico’s mestizo identity. He stated that “the mestizo was a product unique to the New World, a “superior” race embodying both the artistic talent of the Aztecs and the pioneering spirit of the conquistadores.”[8] Mestizaje is a performance of heritage that draws upon Mexico’s mixed historical past in order to embellish a distinct identity. “Thus Mexican intellectuals crafted a mestizo national identity not only to forge a common peoplehood but also in pointed rebuke to the imperialist incursions of the United States.”[9] Examples of mestizaje that display the alluring blend of heritage and culture and of Spanish and Mexican influences are the folklórico performances representing the state of Jalisco, Mexico. Not only are the dancers visually captivating, but there is an exuberant sound. Performance scholar, Sydney Hutchinson discusses the notion of mestizaje as it is expressed in music. She states “The music from Mexico’s central west region in and around the state of Jalisco is often cited as an example of mestizaje, combining European instruments of violin and guitar with Mexican creations like the guitarron and rhythms considered both Mexican and Spanish in origin."[10] Women who wear Adelita costumes, which are full and brightly colored dresses, represent the state of Jalisco. The name "Adelita" refers to the revolutionary soldaderas[11]—who adopted the high-necked colonial dresses of Jalisco."[12] The male performers are dressed in charro suites, a style that was originally worn by Spanish gentlemen in Jalisco, and is representative of a wealthier European heritage.[13] Mestizaje also reveals itself in the female costumes of Veracruz. The white skirt and blouse are adorned in lace, a European introduction that reflects the social rank of a wealthier Spanish woman. In Mexico, there were also poor Spaniards. The intricate design of the apron exhibits the Indigenous influence. The rhythms of folklórico expressed in the zapateado or footwork also exhibit African cultural influences. These examples of mestizaje re-presented in folklórico's costumes and footwork speak to Mexico's rich history and blending of cultural influences that have been strongly promoted through this notion of mestizaje.

Indigenismo developed as a counterpart to mestizaje.[14] In discussing Indigenismo, Hutchinson draws upon government-employed anthropologist, Miguel Gamio, who "stressed the positive in Mexico's Indians, creating a romanticized image that could serve as a basis for a national identity, while still encouraging racial mixing."[15] The inherent contradiction between mestizaje and Indigenismo lies in the fact that the former looked to eliminate the Native, while the latter attempted to include and preserve it. The Yaqui Deer Dance, also known as Danza del Venado, is commonly incorporated into the repertoire of folklórico performances, manifesting the notion of Indigenismo. Although the inclusion of the deer dance within the ballet folklórico tradition underscores heterogeneity in regards to people and customs, it starkly contradicts historical US/Mexico relations with the Yaqui. My understanding of this particular dance is based upon my viewing of a folklórico performance in Denver, Colorado, as well the recordings available online. In Danza del Venado, two dancers who appear to be Native express themselves across the stage with bold and fearless moves. They exit the stage as another "Native" dancer appears on stage wearing nothing except a loincloth, the head of a deer on the top of his head, and rattling anklets. Freely, he leaps around the stage as if prancing in his natural environment, imitating the actions of a deer. All of a sudden, the deer pauses, his senses become heightened, fully aware of the presence of danger. The Native dancers who opened the performance reappear as hunters. With the power of the arrow and the man's specific aim towards his target, the man is in control of the inevitable change of life. To the common eye, this may seem to be a spectacular reenactment of a hunting adventure. Yet, one fails to realize the reality of what is being presented. The deer represents the Natives of the land, whose life is in a state of transition because of the colonial arm of Europe and because one of his own points the arrow in the effort to kill him. On stage, as part of the folklórico performance and as part of Mexico's nationalist narrative, the Yaqui deer dance presents a romanticized reenactment of the Native in his natural setting, hunting as a means to survival. This performance conceals the ongoing power dynamics of empire. Set within the context of different styles of folklórico, the deer dance represents a marker and a break from the indigenous past, surpassed by a modern Mexican personage.

In Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries, Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez abandons celebrated discourses of mestizaje and Indigenismo. Here, she concentrates on the violence forced upon racialized and gendered bodies where Anglos and non-

Anglos alike negotiated their relations to systems of power and capital. She argues that violence inflicted on subordinated and 'inferior' peoples in the past is often silenced to set a foundation for nation formation, as it served as an ongoing social process of differentiation for racialized, sexualized, and gendered subjects within the US/Mexico borderlands that nation-building projects attempt to hide. The Native on Native violence depicted in the Yaqui deer dance can be correlated to the Yaqui Indian Wars of 1880-1910.

> The Yaqui were made to undergo specific, diffuse, and directed forms of violence because of the nation-state, both the United States and Mexico prescribed particular gender roles and race and class statuses that they did not adhere to in their everyday cultural and social practices. The violence against them was very much a process of using deportation and wars designed to restrict their autonomy and mobility.[16]

Guidotti-Hernandez's work reveals the genocidal violence exerted by people of color upon members of their own racial/cultural group, an understated reality where denial persists.[17] Yet this violence continues and plays a significant role in the power dynamics of the Mexican government today.

The incorporation of the Yaqui Deer Dance into the repertoire of a Mexican ballet folklórico production complicates questions of national belonging and national pride. The Yaqui, a marginalized native group from the Northern Mexico, never received attention in national narratives because of their cultural differences. Nothing manifested this reality more than the Mexican government denying them the full rights of citizenship. Under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, the Yaqui routinely found themselves enslaved and removed from their homeland.[18] Some may argue that the inclusion of the Yaqui deer dance preserves the "authentic Native" and his cultural traditions. However, a critical analysis is necessary in regards to the perception of folklórico as providing "authentic" and traditional representations of culture and identity. The notions of authenticity and tradition are much more complex than commonly understood. In Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity, Joanne Barker fleshes this idea out through a legal analysis, arguing that notions of "Native authenticity" and "cultural traditions" are constructed within the parameters of Western ideologies and paradigms. She specifically looks at the ways in which concepts of Native identity and tradition are shaped and defined according to White heteronormative standards, and then reiterated by Natives themselves, as they utilize the same colonial power-dynamic upon fellow Natives. Her insightful analysis is intriguing, as she states "it seems that cultural authenticity for Native peoples exists in a pre-colonial -indeed pre-historical- moment that has been forever lost to the natural, inevitable, compromised, or tragic ends of colonialism and imperialism."[19] Barker's analysis lends insight into notions of cultural authenticity and the ways that idealization of culture can be problematic.

In Mexico, Amalia Hernandez created Ballet Folklórico de Mexico, the most well-known folklórico group sponsored by the Mexican government. Ballet Folklórico de Mexico accompanied the government serving as an expressive form of national identity. Hernandez developed ideas recognized by many as "modernist choreographies ... based not on living traditions but on pre-Columbian artwork."[20] The emphasis on pre-colonial Native images obscures the very powerful and significant presence of modern day Natives whose identities and cultural expressions survived geographical, temporal, and political boundaries. Moreover, the African influence in folklórico is often made invisible by the symbolic significance attributed to mestizaje, as a process informed by Spanish and Indigenous cultural hybridity. The popularity of Mexican ballet folklórico attributed through the work of Amalia Hernandez and serving as an expressed form of the Mexican nation cannot pervade the communal and regional dance forms that have been a common form of expression for the local communities and its inhabitants of various cultures and influences.

Much effort goes into creating and maintaining the image of a nation. In this way, Mexican ballet folklórico continues to serve as a significant element in Mexico's nation building process as well as a means of enhancing Mexico's touristic economy. In Mexico, folklórico performances create a cultural experience that helps distinguish itself from the United States. Throughout the country and especially in popular tourist sites the art form creates a spectacle and promotes this ideal of Mexico's "authentic" culture. The study of folklórico also holds a place in prevalent institutions the Mexican schools encourage and incorporate folklórico into its curriculum. For those who practice the art form in Mexico, ballet folklórico becomes a way of life; it embodies a part of Mexican culture and identity by disseminating a popularized image of Mexico as a nation.

Mexican Ballet Folklórico in the US

The United States provides an example of a colonial empire that thrives on maintaining its social, economic, and political power by normalizing the integrity of whiteness. Ultimately, this ideology provokes the use of culture by minorities. Mexican ballet folklórico represents a cultural practice that serves as a counter-hegemonic expression. In this second section of my paper, I examine folklórico expressions as a response to subject formation in the US Southwest. More specifically, I consider the agency of folklórico dance as performed in the state of New Mexico. New Mexico's identity incorporates the reality of existing as a multi-colonized space, well known for its tri-cultural (Native, Anglo, and Spanish) heritage. Due to New Mexico's long and rich history its culture and politics of belonging are diverse and complex. Under both Spanish and Anglo colonial rule white supremacist ideology dominated and denoted all others of darker skin pigmentation as inferior and primitive. This practice influenced the perception of New Mexico inhabitants as a problem and echoes the reasoning of why New Mexico was the 47th state admitted to the United States.

In Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race, Laura Gomez depicts the tension between racial groups and what developed into the "Mexican Problem." She states,

> The Acquisition of northern Mexico, and especially of New Mexico, as an American colony raised thorny questions of inclusion and exclusion in the American nation and polity. These questions led elite Euro-Americans to engage in conversations about the racial character of American citizenship and of national belonging more generally . . . Questions about race, citizenship, and belonging were at the heart of the national debates about the U.S. declaration of war against Mexico and about the ratification of the peace treaty that ended the war. The core issue, both for pro-war Democrats and for anti-war Whigs, was the 'Mexican Problem': What was to become of the more than 115,000 Mexicans who lived in the conquered lands?[21]

The restructuring of the US/ Mexico border complicated claims to belonging and space. The geographic boundaries transformed into a social imaginary that both Mexico and the United States utilized to distinguish themselves from one another. The inhabitants of what Carlos Velez-Ibanez terms the "Southwest North American Region" were forced to endure an inevitable struggle over space, power, and identity. The United States strongly enforced ideals of assimilation and extermination, legal exclusions, border practices, policing, racism, and limited citizenship opportunities. Communities of color fell victim to the United States' processes of racialization. All of these exclusionary practices shaped the embodiment of space and provoked the use of culture by minorities and elites.

Strides toward statehood and full rights as citizens were continuously negotiated. "The region's Anglo and Hispano elites faced the conundrum of how to persuade a skeptical nation that the territory was fit for statehood. Attempting to assuage congressional concerns about a population often denigrated as "dirty Mexicans," politicians and boosters transformed Hispanos into "Spanish Americans."[22] Carey McWilliams refers to this idea as a "fantasy heritage," that correlates to claims of whiteness lending its claimants the prestige of a romantic (but false) past while distancing them form the taint of Mexican origin.[23] We cannot deny the construction of New Mexico's Spanish identity mobilized by the elite for national acceptance and by cultural preservationists in order to enhance the exoticness of the US Southwest. However, my grandmother, among many other Nuevomexicanos, would argue that we are in fact Spanish. Drawing upon the Spanish conquest, Nuevomexicanos have continued to negotiate space and express a rightful claim to belonging. Fiestas, re-enactments of New Mexico's Spanish conquest and culture, expressions of the art of flamenco, and Spanish land grants all reflect Nuevomexicano's ties to a Spanish heritage. Nuevomexicanos have played an integral role in re-presenting the Southwest and its distinctive Spanish legacy. This activism fuels the expressed distinction between Nuevomexicano and Mexicano communities. The emphasis of a "fantasy heritage" depicts the tension embedded into New Mexico's landscape and an ideology engrained into the minds of its inhabitants. From this perspective, Mexicans and/or Mexican Americans have been marginalized and excluded on various levels.

Anglo elites have also drawn heavily upon New Mexico's native population to promote the exoticness of the Southwest. Efforts to preserve the authentic practices and life ways of the Natives are longstanding and sincere. The display of Native culture and identity distinguishes the unique heritage of the area and enhances the touristic experience of the Southwest. In Recognizing Heritage: Politics of Multiculturalism in New Mexico, Thomas Guthrie grapples with the significance of recognizing heritage in New Mexico as a process.

> Understanding the politics of recognition therefore requires analyzing the social and institutional contexts within which people negotiate identities and produce difference. Heritage development makes cultural difference more recognizable. It brings culture, identity, and the past into consciousness and into view, lifting people, places, and social practices out of everyday existence and holding them up for inspection.[24]

Performances of heritage depict the power relations of the region while the politics are the conditions under which interpretation and preservation unfold. The role of New Mexico's authentic identity and cultural expressions remain integral to the development of the Southwest as a tourist mecca. However, as previously mentioned, the notion of authenticity embodies a much more complex reality than popularly understood. Guthrie engages with the contrast between real and fake authenticity and suggests that "there is no reason to consider sites of staged authenticity unreal" or that "unmarked authenticity does not exist (although it is a powerful and productive fantasy)," but that the "quest for authenticity not only is doomed to fail but also perpetuates injustice."[25] The people of New Mexico have been distinguished for their essentialized identities or innate traits they are imagined to have. Reflecting upon New Mexico's subject formation in terms of authenticity, Guthrie states,

> Native American and Hispanic culture in New Mexico have been scrutinized, studied, curated, and managed more than other cultures. Concerns about their authenticity add an extra burden. Authenticity is an impossible ideal with significant political implications. In New Mexico, the political rights of Native Americans and Nuevomexicanos sometimes depend on their ability to maintain and perform "traditional" cultures. Anglo-Americans have often defined and

> evaluated the cultural authenticity of these groups, and the ultimate measure of authenticity lies in the (imagined) past. Demands for authenticity therefore constrain Hispanos and Indians, who benefit when they orient their lives in the past rather than the present or future. The successful maintenance of tradition reassures all New Mexicans that American colonization has not been totally destructive. However, New Mexico's double colonial history and highly developed tourism industry fuel anxieties over culture loss, casting doubt on all cultural performances.[26]

New Mexico's Spanish and Native cultures are by no means oblivious to the ways that the tourist gaze has objectified them. Anthropologist Sylvia Rodriguez speaks to this awareness as a division "between the self offered up to or hunted down by the tourist gaze and the self who tries to live where the gaze cannot penetrate."[27] This ideal is similar to W .E. B. Dubois' "double consciousness" or Gloria Anzaldua's notion of "Mestiza consciousness" that acknowledge intertwined experiences, expressions of identity, and agency in negotiating space. Gloria Anzaldua discusses the mestiza of the borderlands.

> En unas pocas centurias, the future will belong to the mestiza. Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos--that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave--la mestiza creates a new consciousness.[28]

La Mestiza constantly engages with the borderlands politics. In fact, it is within that space where la Mestiza and all that she embodies—physically and subconsciously—was born. "The borderlands are present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrink with intimacy."[29] Through a conscientious embracement of her identity, la Mestiza inhibits the potential to surpass borders and boundaries of oppression. Being cognitively aware of one's social position, in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality allows one to successfully maneuver through space, and pervade the power structures at play. To examine conscientious expressions of identity as a performance allows us to conceptualize the agency of local communities and their claims to space and belonging.

Communities of color have resisted hegemonic structures of power through a variety of means including politics, art, and education. During the Chicana and Chicano Movement a rich array of creative expression intertwined and influenced the Movimiento. Some of these expressions included: ballet foklórico, danza azteca, and teatro. Expressive culture provided individuals and communities with a powerful site for performing conflict. The presence of folkórico dancers within educational institutions, local community gatherings, and rallies provided a form of entertainment while also holding a deeper cultural meaning for participants. Folklórico served as a means "to reaffirm, promote, and preserve Mexican identity" while serving as an expression of Chicano "opposition to cultural assimilation and other discriminatory practices to which they were subjected."[30] Through participation in folklórico dance groups, Chicanas and Chicanos actively engaged with the community and the struggle of the Movimiento. By upholding claims to language, cultural dance traditions and other practices in a space where Mexican culture has been marginalized and excluded on a number of levels Mexican ballet folklórico has been able to counter US and Southwest dynamics of exclusion and processes of assimilation.

Despite the long history of the United States' upholding ideals of white supremacy a shift occurred when the US began to present itself as a country that takes pride in its rich and diverse multicultural make up. By operating through a lens of multiculturalism, the US is able to deny its inherent acts of racism and prove its capacity to accept difference. There are many examples of cultural groups/performers that have accompanied the United States and their multicultural agenda. For example, Baila Baila, a New Mexican folklórico group represented the United States in the 2012 Olympics displaying the allure of their multicultural make-up. And on several occasions Ballet Folklórico Huehuecoyotl from Pueblo Colorado has been asked to perform for President Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, and Vice-President Joe Biden. Throughout the United States some aspects of Mexican culture have been deemed acceptable, commodified and strongly marketed. By incorporating Mexican ballet folklórico into nationalist narratives, Mexican culture and identity is acknowledged and presented in terms of being superficially accepted.

When a particular notion, identity or culture is placed on display or made visible it is important for us to be critical and consider what is invisible and significant to the larger picture. Thomas Guthrie examines how "multiculturalism as a political ideal and practice can subtly reinforce colonial hierarchies."[31] Although he emphasizes the politics of Multiculturalism in New Mexico, his analysis can be applied to the United States as a whole. Multiculturalism focuses on the ideal of coexistence while historical and contemporary realties of colonial violence and racism are downplayed.[32] Mexican ballet folklórico exemplifies an art form that responds to rhythms of a colonial past that extend into contemporary acts of discrimination and racism. Through the politics of recognition, folklórico's expressions of mestizaje and indigenismo challenge notions of Spanish purity and native authenticity. Folklorico's local and regional variations reflect the significance of identity and culture in negotiating space.

In conclusion, Guthrie examines an event hosted by the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area in Española New Mexico. His reflection of Danza de los Antepasados captures the significance of folklórico in New Mexico.

> Ballet Folklórico, Mis Sueños, a dance troupe from Española, performed a variety of social dances from Mexico and New Mexico to recorded and live music. The dancers ranged from little children to teenagers and went through multiple costume changes. Their high heels and boots punctuated the rhythm of the music on the plywood dance floor. With roots in both Mexican nationalism and the Chicano movement, ballet folklórico is a genre with complex cultural politics (Nájera-Ramírez, Cantú, and Romero 2009). But the Mexican connection was unmistakable. . .[33]

In New Mexico, performances of Mexican ballet folklórico not only contest these larger structures of power but also signify a Mexican cultural presence that often gets ignored or tends to be written out of the tri-cultural narrative. Through the art of ballet folklórico not only do participants forge a community but through folklórico performances a larger sense of community is created. The powers of folklórico performances reside in their ability to create sentiments of ethno-nationalism that surpass the confines of geographical, social, political, and psychological borders. In New Mexico, expressions of Mexican ballet folklórico initiate sentiments of belonging as their ties to Mexico are performed. The music, costumes, gritos, and dances create prideful displays of Mexican culture and identity. This informs Renato Rosaldo's notion of "cultural citizenship" that speaks to claiming ones heritage and the rightful belonging to a particular space.[34] The way a particular group or person inhabits and performs their daily activities within a given physical or imagined space provides the impetus for identity formation that distinguishes them or unites them with others through their own experiences, connections to the land, and motivation for expressing themselves.. Different perspectives are inevitable considering the diverse experiences and mass movements of people. Mexican ballet folklórico is an artistic expression that continues to circulate throughout the globe. Although, the art form is mobilized for different purposes in different spaces it remains a significant cultural practice for the New Mexican community. Folklórico performances transform the experience of space from a marginal and subordinated position to an expression of homeland and belonging.

Notes

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[1] The art of Mexican Ballet Folklórico is referred to by its practitioners in various terms. Some refrain by utilizing the term 'ballet' due to its emphasis on high culture and staged spectacles that is not representative of the local community and their folk expressions. In this paper, I utilize the terms Mexican ballet folklórico, baile folklórico, and folklórico interchangeabley.

[2] For more scholarship on Mexican ballet folklórico dancing please refer to Gutierrez, Electra. *Danzas and bailes populares.* Mexico: Editorial Hermes, 1976; Núnez Mesta, Martín Antonio. *Bailes del folklore mexicano: Pasos, coreografia y vestuario.* Mexico: Editorial Trillas, 1990; Straffon Vásquez, Elodia. *Fortalecimiento del nacionalismo en México a través de sus danzas y bailes populares.* México: Academia de la Danza Mexicana, 1978.

[3] Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 3.

[4] Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 8.

[5] Patrick Wolfe,"Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native". Journal of Genocide Research. 8(4):387

[6] Thomas Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage: The Politics of Multiculturalism in New Mexico* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 9

[7] Sarah Horton, *The Santa Fe Fiesta, Reinvented: Staking Ethno-Nationalist Claims to a Disappearing Homeland* (Santa Fe: School For Advanced Research Press, 2010), 7.

[8] Horton, *The Santa Fe Fiesta*, 6-7.

[9] Horton, *The Santa Fe Fiesta,* 7.

[10] Sydney Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico and the Construction of the Mexican Nation through Dance," in *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos,* eds. Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma Cantú, and Brenda M. Romero (Urbana and Chicango: University of Illinois, 2009), 209.

[11] One of the most popular ballads of the Mexican Revolution was a song titled "Adelita" that honored women who joined war effort in Mexico. Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).; Shirlene Ann Soto, *Emergents of Modern Mexican Women: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940.* (Denver: Arven Press, 1990).

[12] Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico," 209.

[13] Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico," 209.

[14] Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico," 210.

[15] Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico," 210.

[16] Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 187.

[17] Guidotti-Hernandez, *Unspeakable Violence*, 175.

[18] Rafael Brewster Folsom, *The Yaquis and the Empire: Violence Spanish Imperial Power, and Native Resilience in Colonial Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2, 213.

[19] Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 16.

[20] Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico," 211.

[21] Laura Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2008), 17.

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[22] Sarah Horton, *The Santa Fe Fiesta, Reinvented: Staking Ethno-Nationalist Claims to a Disappearing Homeland* (Santa Fe: School For Advanced Research Press, 2010), 7.

[23] Horton, *The Santa Fe Fiesta*, 162.

[24] Thomas Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage: The Politics of Multiculturalism in New Mexico* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 9.

[25] Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage*, 81.

[26] Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage*, 12.

[27] Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage*, 90.

[28] Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 102.

[29] Anzaldua, Borderlands La Frontera, 19.

[30] Olga Nájera-Ramírez, "Staging Authenticity: Theorizing the Development of Mexican Folklórico Dance," in *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos,* eds. Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma Cantú, and Brenda M. Romero (Urbana and Chicango: University of Illinois, 2009), 282.

[31] Thomas Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage: The Politics of Multiculturalism in New Mexico* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 11.

[32] Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage*, 11.

[33] Guthrie, *Recognizing Heritage*, 240.

[34] Renato Rosaldo, "Cultural Citizenship, Inequality, and Multiculturalism." in the *Latino Cultural Citizenships*, eds. William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 27-38.

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