PERFORMATIVE AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC CUADRO:
A MEXICANA/CHICANA TESTIMONIO ADDRESSING TRADITION AND
AUTHENTICITY IN FOLKLÓRICO DANCE

A graduate thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts
in Chicano and Chicana Studies

By
Cindy Padilla

August 2014
The thesis of Cindy Padilla is approved:

Mary S. Pardo, Ph.D.                                             Date

Yreina D. Cervantez, MFA                                      Date

Peter J. Garcia, Ph.D., Chair                                  Date

California State University, Northridge
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Peter J. Garcia, who has been a patient mentor and supportive of me throughout my studies. His guidance and contributions to this thesis project and the field of Chicana/o Studies: folklore, music and dance performance are very inspiring. It was his seminars in Chicana/o Studies that advanced my knowledge and interest in the field of Cultural Dance & Performance studies.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Mary Pardo and Yreina Cervantez, MFA, who were gracious to come on board for this creative thesis, and whose areas of expertise have contributed greatly to this project.

In addition, I would like to thank the Padilla family and my parents Angel and Juana, for their love, guidance and support throughout my studies. Also to my grandparents and guardian angels Jose and Crescencia Vargas, who have inspired me from the other side of the moon with their gifts of music, dance and folklore. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the Ballet Folklórico Aztlán de CSUN dance troupe and the folklórico dancers past and present, whom I have collaborated with and have had the honor to teach for showing me that with heart, dedication and commitment anything is possible.

C/S
# Table of Contents

Signature Page ii

Acknowledgements iii

Abstract v

Chapter 1: Cuadro de Chicana Poblana 7

Chapter 2: Cuadro de Adelita en Aztlán 37

Chapter 3: Cuadro de Guada-Mestiza 59

Chapter 4: Cuadro de Chuca Suave 77

Conclusion 84

References 89

Appendix A 94

Appendix B 95
ABSTRACT

PERFORMATIVE AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC CUADRO:
A MEXICANA/CHICANA TESTIMONIO ADDRESSING TRADITION AND
AUTHENTICITY IN FOLKLÓRICO DANCE

By

Cindy Padilla

Master of Arts in Chicano and Chicana Studies

This auto-ethnographic thesis explores the journey of a Chicana in a Mexican folklórico
dance troupe and discusses how Mexican folkloric archetypes are identified and
performed in an original Chicano influenced dance cuadro (suite). The Chicana
borderland performance that accompanies this written thesis complements and concludes
that Chicana/Mexicana hybrid identities co-exist wherever there are regional attire and
Mexican ballet, modern, folk, regional, indigenous or popular mestizo dance traditions
performed. Within a global and transnational world dance scene Mexican folkloric dance
is also presented in the Spanish Caribbean, Central and South America and
hemispherically along the U.S. Latina/o borderlands. This thesis examines the Chicana
role in Mexican folkloric dance, looking at the competitive values within the political
economy of Mexican folklórico dance, authenticity, hybridity and the Chicana’s role as a
Mexican-American dancer. I argue that the artistic and interpretive dance style of the
performer will ultimately define the authenticity of the dances, as presented through the
historical development, participation in a Mexican folklórico, accompaniment of music
and dance movement, including stage presentations and use of regional attire. My goal,
based upon my own interpretation of the folkloric archetypes in folklórico dance performance, is to solidify the identification of Mexican/Chicano folklórico as a growing dance genre and producer of a hybrid and borderland performances and folkloric archetypes. I contend that folkloric work should be viewed in a larger national, transnational and global perspective along with other hybrid (folk/ballet) Chicana/o dance traditions -- including European and indigenous influenced dances. As an emerging dance genre, folklórico needs to be documented in order to advance extensive research and development in methodology, dance aesthetic and the understanding of hybridity. While folklórico dance advocates continue to practice and perform this cultural art form, the interpretation of folklórico and Mexican female archetypes in dance are evolving every time they are performed by the dancers participating in the hybrid medium.
CHAPTER 1

Cuadro de Chicana Poblana

“The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa

(Gloria Anzaldúa, 1999, pg. 10)

Introduction

The necessity to create an academic space for Mexican folkloric dance scholarship and research has influenced me to produce a creative thesis project that included a written analysis and a dance recital in partial fulfillment of the Chicana/o Studies Master’s degree requirement. As a folklórico choreographer, teacher and performer for the past 17 years, I have been able to depict my Mexican identity as well as transcultural discourse through my choreographed works and graduate research within the department of Chicana/o Studies. Throughout the U.S. and Mexico, Mexican folkloric dance has grown since the 1960s as not only a regional dance medium but also indicative of the cultural diversity of Mexico. Mexican folklore has influenced the field of dance through feminist and gender studies, cross-cultural approaches of dance, “race,” and representation of cultural dance and presently Chicana/o dance studies. I am interested in an interdisciplinary model of dance scholarship that will provide methodological and theoretical approaches as well as allow me to continue with developing dance and written scholarship. This thesis is written through an experimental form of writing and the
chapters modeled after the *cuadro* (suite) in folklórico. Typically, a folklórico performance consists of various *cuadros* (suites), each of which is made up of music and dance that represents a particular state, region, or historical period. Each chapter is titled *cuadro de* (suite of) and is told through a personal auto ethnographic narrative to tell the story of female folkloric archetypes as they are transmogrified into choreographies, hybrid identities, and regional attire where Mexican and Chicana/o folkloric dance is presented.

My thesis work will contribute to the other experimental works emerging in Chicana/o Studies such as Claudia Milian’s, “Crónica,” an interdisciplinary, investigative medium that combines literature, anthropology, cultural reporting, and criticism and Gloria Anzaldúa’s “Autohistoria-téoria”--- a method for blending cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth, and other forms of theorizing ethnochoreography and ethnomusicology. Audre Lorde’s “Biomythography” comprises a method that disrupts aesthetic boundaries by weaving cultural history, myth and autobiography, as does Chela Sandoval’s SWAPA, the acronym for the process of “Story-World-Art-Performance-as-Activism.” The Crónica, Autohistoria-téoria, Biomythography and SWAPA are storytelling methods for pressing against traditional western ways of knowing. These methods revise experience and history on behalf of social justice. Each method comprises an ethnographic approach to cultural critique and scholarship through the use of memory, travel notes, interviews, testimonials, documentary narrative, fiction and essays. Each method’s purpose is to reveal stories for healing and for interweaving individual and collective identities.
My work has a shared purpose: to expand on stereotypic, monolithic and distorted images and investigate notions of authenticity, tradition, mestizaje, hybridity, and Chicanismo. As a Chicana and post-Mexican US citizen activist I have become the voice of an experimental narrative that goes between explaining the fantasy from reality, folklore from history, and a Mexican and US-Chicana autobiography. My task is to set the record straight going beyond the mythical creations and entertaining romance we find in Mexican folklórico. As Fregoso(1993) has noted, “The task remaining for identity politics is the ability to incorporate the heterogeneity of the Chicano and Chicana experience, reconstructing the multiplicity of alternative identities in ways that empower Chicanos and Chicanas as creative subjects of history.”(Fregoso, 671)

The folklorized identities handed down over generations that I have re-read are China Poblana, Adelita, Guadalupe, and Pachuca all empowering and strong Chicana identities. Their identities have inspired me to look beyond the folklore, romantic nationalism, and entertainment to reveal the actual historical lives of these subjects to better comprehend these immortalized women as agents of history providing alternative identities that might better empower Chicana/os as creative subjects of history. The central contradiction informing the cultural politics of Chicano cultural nationalism, including folklórico has been that, contrary to the attempts to rediscover identity in the “authenticity” of the past, cultural identity could only be constituted in the present and, more important, within representational forms such as poetry, art, drama, cinema, music and dance. The performances of these women through dance, music, historical costumes and themes is a reenactment but it is highly distorted in its highly romantic, nationalist,
and folkorized mode of performance—a hybrid of abstract expressionism, romantic nationalism, and folk realism.

Cultural identity, as Hall(1990) indicates is “always constituted within, not outside, representation.” The positive feature of cultural nationalism is the fact that Movement intellectuals excavated a historical past and constructed and reconstructed memories of a Mexican culture of struggle and resistance in order to develop a cohesive group identity that would shield them from racist ideology and oppression. (Hall, 48) Folklórico is ideally suited for such an interrogation. Often, however the retelling of stories re-constructed Chicano identity in a debilitating fashion, as the site of crisis and pathology. “Given that cultural identities are handed down as essences, the task remains for an identity politics able to re-construct subjectivities in ways that empower people as creative subjects of history.” (Hall, 48)

Alternative notions of identity are available through practices and memories of resistance, the process of its constitution requires a “retelling,” performed in the presence. This "retelling" is presented in two parts: a live, on stage choreographed performance that is a component of this creative thesis work and the written work that translates the choreographic/ethnographic through third space Chicana feminism and decolonial performantics. The finding of this work agrees with Fregoso(1993) that “there is no Chicano core-essence, awaiting that inward journey of discovery, without a language, codes, or location outside of history.” (Fregoso, 671) Testimonio, ethnography, choreography memoirs, performatics, documentary, photographs, and narrative are combined in this experimental form or witnessing, performing, and writing.
Likewise, the importance of hybridity within Mexican dance is important to note when considering authenticity as it pertains to identity. There is a need to examine the role of competitive values, within the political economy of Mexican folklórico dance and debunk the issues of tradition and authenticity. The growth of this dance genre is due to the advocates who agree regarding the research methodology and continue to contribute to the development of the baile folklórico and Mexican female archetypes in dance. By investigating the areas of Mexican female gender archetypes and cross-cultural performance studies I will be able to contribute to a traditional field of dance theory and pedagogy that has excluded the academia of Mexican folkloric dance.

Act I: Performative Testimonio: Reconstructing the Historical and Folkloric Identity of China Poblana in the 21st Century

With my folklórico attire in hand, I found a seat in front of a lit dressing room mirror at the Plaza del Sol Performance Hall, at Cal State Northridge. As I hung up my dress on the attire rack nearby, I took a deep breath and prepared for the release of my butterflies. The butterflies were swarming in my stomach as I imagined myself performing on the stage of the Plaza del Sol Performance Hall, for an annual folklórico concert. China Poblana would be presented by Chicanas and Mexicana’s to depict essentialized Mexican identity in a song entitled—El Jarabe Tapatio. As I began to apply my makeup, I looked into the mirror to see my mother’s brown eyes and nose, and my father’s smile looking right back at me. As I retouched my foundation and looked into the mirror once again, I saw the face of a hybrid Chicana folklorista, a historical figure, a result of popular culture and the ongoing greater Mexican mestizaje (cultural fusion).
I not only would be transforming into Chicana Poblana but also reconstructing the folkloric 21st century identity of China Poblana and Catarina San Juan, both folkloric characters that configured European colonialism and imperialism, and dominant colonial notions of tradition and authenticity. Chicana Poblana’s folklórico identity was evolving from a folkloric tale of being sold in Mexico as a slave, and into a rhetoric Spanish and Filipina mestiza saint from New Spain, thus creating the new Filipina/Mexicana-Americana or Mexipina, a fused identity of the two. As I look down to view my trenzas (braids), embroidered Mestiza top and heavy silk skirt covered with colorful Asian influenced sequins, I see a Chicana fusion of a Asian herstory that has not been told, only through folklórico variations of a dance and folklore that have contributed to the archetype that has embodied the surface of a new hybrid Chicana/o subjectivity.

According to Rosalinda Fregoso(1993) in “Representation in Cultural Identity in Zoot Suit (1981),” she discusses playwright Luis Valdez’s motivation for broader formulation for decolonizing Chicano consciousness from dominant ideology in film. However “contrary to the attempts for rediscovering Chicano subjects in the “authority” of the past, cultural identity could only be reconstituted in the present.” For Fregoso, Chicano cultural identity was not an essence but “a positioning of Chicanos as certain subject within discourse.” (Fregoso, 671) Despite the archeological project of cultural nationalism, cultural discourses like poetry, art, drama and film represented “the major sites for the reproduction of alternative subject positions.” Fregoso contends that alternative notions of identity are available through practices and memories of resistance, the process of their constitution requires a “retelling,” performed in the present.
One such “authentic” Mexican figure who remains idealized in folklórico dance and costume is China Poblana who I imagine as Chicana Poblana. Bailey (1997) notes that the original China Poblana, was once an important symbol of her city and era. Now largely forgotten, Catarina de San Juan (1606-1688) was renowned in her day as a religious recluse and visionary, and was consulted by nobles, promoted by great churchmen, and venerated by the people. Her pervasive image is beloved by tourists and schoolchildren, celebrated by folk troupes, lauded in poetry, reenacted in plays and cinema, and extolled by politicians. “Originally a symbol of civic pride for the city of Puebla, she went on to epitomize the Republican spirit following the French invasion (1862-1863), and eventually embodied the very essence of Mexico itself. As the designer of an elaborate municipal monument in her glory proclaimed in the 1940s: [the china poblana] simboliza el ALMA NACIONAL… el arquetipo NACIONAL de la virtuosa mujer Mexicana. Some say she was an ancient princess from China, whose luxurious silks inspired the folk costume of today. Others insist that her origins are to be found on Mexican soil, in the Poblano heartland. So who was she?” (Bailey, 38)

Bailey (1997) in his analysis of China Poblana notes that “she was in her own way an artist- we might call her a performance artist-of the Mexican Baroque, and worthy of being included among the more illustrious figures of her age.” Although not literate and learned like the aristocratic Sor Juana de la Cruz, she nevertheless “had an artist’s vision, and many descriptions of her ecstasies read like poetry. Like the great artists of her day, she borrowed ideas from existing works but at the same time made original and perhaps influential contributions to the brilliant and complex conjunto that characterizes the style we call Baroque.” When exploring the role of the performer as an engagement
tool, Fraleigh(1987) reminds us that "my dance cannot exist without me: I exist my
dance" (Fraleigh, xvi).

I began to remember the first time I heard mariachi music. The sounds from my
uncles and aunts singing live to mariachi at family parties and belting out gritos always
made me smile and feel liberated. I enjoyed watching them walk up to mariachi
ensembles with confidence, microphone in their hand, and smiling as they performed to a
supportive audience of family and friends. The audience would await their interpretation
of a popular ballad they heard by Vicente Fernandez, Rocio Durcal or Juan Gabriel, and
applaud as if they saw the actual artist perform live. Little did I know I was China
Poblana back then as a youth, I acknowledged my love for regional music and cultural
dance without feeling enslaved in a journey of lost Spanish language and dependency. As
an adult, Mexican citizen of U.S. decent and university student, I came to identify that
my journey was that of Chicana Poblana, my interpretation of this saint of the America’s,
I was a hybrid identity, enslaved and thus a result of European colonialism and
imperialism. I didn’t know at the time of my teenage years, because I like China Poblana,
was only a social identity that was not yet revealed but would be transformed into what
folklore or researchers believed I was. I was written about in many books during the time
of my personal discovery, briefs that focused on where my identity derived from,
“Chicana Poblana,” seemed to be missing from these historical findings. I felt nostalgic
as I read articles on the hybrid Chicana/o subjectivity, which were addressed by Renato
Rosaldo in his book, Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis and José David
Saldivar's article, “Border Matters.” These readings were a confirmation that an Asian
influence was part of this Chicanada’ of Asian Mestizaje. Alicia Arrizon’s chapter,
“Filipino Twist in Queering Mestizaje,” and Saldivar’s discussion on Americo Paredes military service as a reporter in Japan proved to identify a Trans-American hybridity of Mexicana/os having mixed with Asians since the 19th century.

Rosaldo(1993) expresses his view of the borderlands and cultural dilemma by discussing his view on how social analysis is built through a hybrid narrative. “Borderlands surface not only at the boundaries of officially recognized cultural units but also at less formal intersections, such as those of gender, age, status, and distinctive life experiences. The translation of cultures requires one to try to understand other forms of life in their own terms. We should not impose our categories on other people’s lives because they probably do not apply, at least not without serious revision. We can learn about other cultures only by reading, listening, or being there. Although they often appear outlandish, brutish, or worse to outsiders, the informal practices of everyday life make sense in their own context and on their own terms. Human beings cannot help but learn the culture or cultures of the communities within which they grew up in.” (Rosaldo, 26)

Shakina Nayfack’s, “¿Por Qué Estás Aquí?: Dancing through History, Identity, and the Politics of Place in Butoh Ritual Mexicano,” addresses the philosophies and methodologies of Butoh Mexicano dance and describes them as both basic, in the sense of cultivating elemental human properties, and incredibly profound, as these elements transform in what Diego Piñon describes as “the alchemy of the Butoh process.”(Nayfack, 152) Butoh Ritual Mexicano Dance is a creative research practice based around collective symbols, personal experiences and deep expressive needs of Mexican ritual dance and Japanese butoh. Diego Piñon, a teacher of Butoh Ritual Mexicano, has a unique approach to this genre of ritual dance that incorporates elements
of Mexican energetic traditions, Japanese butoh, therapeutic body practices, modern
dance and contemporary theater. He has incorporated more than 25 years of research and
intense physical training that has cultivated individual creativity through the use of
emotional environments and energetic charges within a supportive, non-judgmental
atmosphere. Each individual reinforces the exchange and expansion of collective energy
in order to realize a communal dance creation. Nayfack (2009) contends that, “What
separates Butoh Mexicano from other forms of meditative or introspective practice is that
its focus moves beyond the initial accumulation of these complex energies and insists
upon the conscious offering in both staged performance as well as a manner of living.”
(Nayfack, 152)

My cell phone began ringing as I finished putting on my eye lashes and finishing
powder. As I looked around the chaotic dressing room, I began to put on my folklórico
boots and answered my phone with my other hand. “Hello, mom are you here?” She
replied, “Yes, mija can’t wait to see my star on stage. Your dad, sisters, grandmother and
I are so proud of you.” She mentioned that there was a sold out crowd outside and that
they were going to get front row seats. The support of my parents and family at the
concert meant so much to me because they never got to attend many of my school events
during my childhood. “Cindy, apurate (hurry), we are on stage in ten minutes,” yelled
one of my compañeras into our dressing room, what I realized was that I would be taking
place in a new borderland and hybrid performatic identity experience. This star on stage
would now be representing a “New Mestizaje” or “Mestiza Consciousness,” two critical
views I was creating solely through my portrayal of “Chicana Poblana.”
I began to walk with the rest of the dancers to the back entrance of the theatre stage. In my head I kept replaying the stage entrances and exits of the songs I was dancing. I began to practice smiling and my skirt work movements. As I walked into the theatre stage door in line with the rest of the dancers, it was dark. The side curtain lights turned on as the stage director motioned for us to get into our curtain wing. I closed my eyes as I heard the announcement of our dance set, “Ballet Folklórico Aztlán de CSUN, presenting the region of Jalisco.” As the curtain rose up, I took a deep breath and I motioned the Catholic genuflect (sign of the cross). I closed my eyes and called upon my grandfather Jose Vargas’s spirit to give me luck. As the mariachi began to play the introduction of “El Jarabe Tapatio,” I stepped onto the stage as Cindy Padilla, folklórico dancer, choreographer and “Chicana Poblana” in a form of de-colonization that would allow me to transform and be identified.

In Performing the U.S. Latino Borderlands, Arturo J. Aldama, Chela Sandoval and Peter J. Garcia (2012), argue that contemporary performance studies are deeply influenced by (another result of) the de-colonial era: twentieth-century cultural theory. Both of these theoretical domains recognize that everything can be analyzed as a “performance” (even if it is not meant to be one). They theorize a new method that they identify as “de-colonizing performatics.” “Performance” and “performativity” are viewed as a new method that they identify as a de-colonization or process in regards to agents who are developing their own struggle, social identity and mestizaje in the U.S. Latina/o borderlands. The term “de-colonizing performatics,” has a technological ring. It refers to the techniques, tools, and practical knowledges necessary for transforming psychic and material cultures. But the term has a playful side as well, since it signifies the one or
more *antics* necessary for making the transformation occur. (Sandoval, Aldama, Garcia 2012, 6)

As I performed my choreography for the first time, the transformation of de-colonization began to take place as my suave skirt movements and footwork made their way around my partner into the next choreography formation. The live sound of the mariachi blaring filled me with adrenaline. My stomach butterflies continued to release themselves through the flow of my sequined *China Poblana* skirt, zapateados, and gritos. I could hear the audience clapping and the sound of my grandmother yelling, “Esa es mi Cindy,” (That is my Cindy) from the audience. Dancing had always been one of those exhilarating feelings but performing my choreography on stage for the first time was something so phenomenal. As I exited the stage to await my next dance entrance; I began thinking how beautiful it was to see my choreographed sketches come to life. Practicing for the show took three and half months of hard work, which included teaching footwork, skirt work, posture and choreography.

As I walked into the hallway and into the dressing room, the dancers congratulated me and gave me hugs. As I sat down in front of the mirror I told myself, “I did it; I presented myself and my work as a Chicana for the first time.” As I began to remove my boots and attire I sat and thought about how I had never participated in dance and music performing arts programs as a youth. As I was growing up, the role of Mexican music was an important element at family parties such weddings, baptisms, first communions, quinceañeras, and birthdays. Also, being exposed to the art of Spanish influenced flamenco, a very popular form of dance in Santa Barbara, was part of my experience as a dancer. I did not practice flamenco as a youth, but I was always inspired
to search for the Mexican folklórico dance form that accompanied mariachi music. In my hometown, of Santa Barbara there were not many dance groups that focused on Mexican folklórico. It wasn’t until I came to Cal State Northridge, as a college student in 1996 that I first participated in the Ballet Folklórico Aztlán de CSUN dance organization and began my quest to identify my folkloric identity.

Influence & Identification

Rudy Garcia’s “Dancing culture: A personal perspective on folklórico,” was an influential essay that allowed me to reflect on the influence and identification of folklórico. Garcia reveals the process of reclaiming his Mexican heritage by joining a folklórico dance group. He says, “Folklórico dance was great exercise, gave me a social circle to interact with, and gave me a new cultural focus. I started to relearn Spanish, building my vocabulary, and I began reading everything I could get my hands on about Mexican history and culture. In this process, I discovered many things about the dance form and its expression that came from my particular background.” (Garcia, 229) As an undergraduate student I searched for what I was familiar with which was a community of Chicanos. My involvement with Mexican-American organizations such as M.E.Ch.A (Movimento Estudantil Chicano de Aztlán) was all I was familiar with coming from a community of Santa Barbara, where the population was predominately Anglo. Growing up in Santa Barbara, I did not encounter many folklórico dance programs as there were in Los Angeles. I always knew it was due to the cultural divide or small population of Mexicanos, who sought the necessity of these types of performing arts programs in their communities. Compared to living in Santa Barbara, residing in Los Angeles was quite a
cultural identification breakthrough for me since I would later attend a university with a diverse student population.

Every first week of August in Santa Barbara there is an annual week-long event called *Old Spanish Days Fiesta*, where the community celebrates the Spanish, Mexican and North American pioneers who founded the city. The annual celebration serves as a tradition of colorful Flamenco dance, music and equestrian parades that are predominately Spanish influenced. During the annual *Old Spanish Days Fiesta* parade it was typical to see the Flamenco dancers, with their castanets in hand, twirling their arms and moving their feet to a fast paced zapateado, in their Spanish influenced, bright fitted polka dotted dresses. I never imagined myself wanting to be on a parade float to dance with them, I enjoyed the sound of the footwork and look of fulfillment as they danced to demonstrate their cultural affiliation as Spanish flamenco dancers. I remember seeing a group of children walking down the parade route with bright Jalisco regional attire that consisted of bright colored dresses, tri-colored ribbons, lace and a movement of a flowing skirt that looked like swirls of colored waves. The men were dressed in black Ranchero charro attire, reminiscent of the Mexican cowboys my grandmother used to watch on TV. As the group passed us my grandmother screamed at the top of her lungs, “Que viva Mexico,” that’s when I knew what country these folklórico dancers represented. The dancers were not representing their Spanish heritage; they represented the cultural traditions of their borderland residency of Mexico and the U.S where they resided or family had migrated from. I made the connection right away and was influenced by that memory and connection of representation of tradition and culture through Mexican dance.
To identify how Mexican-origin dances were formed, the complex history of Mexico, including the Spanish Colonial period, Mexican War of Independence, and the 1910 Mexican Revolution need to be recognized as the influence behind the culturally rich dance expression of Mexico. Mexico’s national dance, El Jarabe Tapatío, and the identity of the China Poblana, were interpreted by the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova in 1918. She fell in love with the culture and costume and performed the dance as part of her ballet repertoire in pointe shoes, for which she captured the attention of audiences outside Mexico. The symbolism behind the Jarabe Tapatío included the interpretations of: courtship of doves, rooster and hen chase, the courtship of the charro and his sweetheart, and indigenous natives imitating Spanish horses. These were all part of the folklore of the Jarabe Tapatío, one of the most popular dances from Mexico. Originally the Jarabe Tapatío, known as Mexico’s national courtship dance, included singing in the original composition that was created in the nineteenth century by Jesús González Rubio. The instrumental version of the Jarabe Tapatío, was adapted and choreographed by Felipa López in the early 1920s to help celebrate the successful end of the Mexican Revolution. It is important to identify the significance behind the song and courtship dance, Jarabe translated as sweet syrup and the natives of Guadalajara, Jalisco, where the Jarabe dance originated, identified themselves as tapatios. The word jarabe also derives from the Arabic word xarab, which means a mixture of herbs and other ingredients. Thus the courtship song and dance is about and represents the sweet mixture of people from Guadalajara, Jalisco.

The Jarabe Tapatío can be described as a three beat, fast zapateado which derived from the sixteenth century Zambra, a fast-paced Moorish dance that involves an
intricate use of hands, a trance-like state called *duende*, and percussive footwork called *zapateado*. The locomotive footwork of this Spanish-influenced dance originated from the fusion of the *Jarabe Gitano* and *Danza Mestiza*. The *Jarabe Gitano* of New Spain during the early sixteenth century had a theme of songs that were used to mock authorities, church nobility, and politicians. This type of *baile* was forbidden until the choreography was dignified in the seventeenth century which would later be adapted into the courtship dance known as the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The inclusion of a wooden platform or *tarima* and elegant dance movements added to the arrangement of the *Jarabe*, creating a marathon of entertainment. *Punta* (pointed toed) steps, and circular and diagonal choreography were all part of elements of the dance as well as the fast paced *zapateado* footwork around a Mexican *sombrero* (hat) and dance partner that would become influential to the work of Pavlova and Mexican folk dance enthusiasts.

*Exposure & Authenticity*

Part of what I was searching for when I first became *Chicana Poblana*, is how I could connect to a lenguaje (language) that I lost when my grandmother died. My parents had raised me as an English only speaker in our household because they did not want me to have an accent or have teachers mispronounce my name in class. When my mother was in junior high school her name, “Juanita,” was always mispronounced. To make it easier to pronounce she was given American names such as: “Jenny,” and “Jane,” by her teachers and classmates. I was therefore given an American name “Cindy” but that still didn’t stop me from becoming a transcultural participant in folklórico. When I began folklórico at the age of 18, my first year in college it was spring of 1997. My outlook and view on the folklórico dances was new but I was intrigued, I became exposed to a
Mexican dance language that I would later master, explore and dedicate my studies to. “Folklórico plays a role in shaping a cultural or national identity, both here in the United States and Mexico. It is important to understand the role each of these three fundamental elements- performance art, traditional cultural art, and political theater-plays in folklórico because if one assumes that only one is dominant it can lead to the disillusionment with the art form or abuse of it.” (Garcia, 226)

My first exposure to the China Poblana archetype was through the Ballet Folklórico de México, national dance company directed by Amalia Hernández. The troupe of dancers circled the stage in beautiful formations with the women dressed in their China Poblana attire that consisted of a white sequined embroidered mestizo top, Spanish hair comb, and red cotton folklórico dance skirt made of cotton fabric and black sequin design. I compared the visual aspect of their attire that looked Spanish influenced yet was designated on stage to be from Mexico. It became my first exposure to mestizaje in the genre of folklórico dance. All I had known was the variation of the attire that the folklórico dance group I belonged to wore. The variation of Amalia Hernandez’s China Poblana was not authentic, but had a modern and glamourized look on stage in comparison to the China Poblana attire I knew. When I entered graduate school I started to pose the question of “authenticity,” style and variation of a national symbol, “China Poblana,” that represented Mexico. It was the first time that I started to critique the style, visual conception and the definition of what “authenticity,” consisted of and if the criticism I posed was the same as someone who viewed the attire I wore as I performed as China Poblana. Would I be representing Mexico and the United States with my individual version of Chicana Poblana or was I creating a work that would become part
of a Chicano folklórico genre that is not represented formally in the folklórico dance genre?

The folklórico lineage and formation of national dance companies such as the Ballet Folklórico de México directed by Amalia Hernández, is important when discussing the Mexican origin of dances and the topic of “authenticity” because this dance company began reaching a broader audience in the early 1950s. Known as the Ballet Moderno de México before its name change in 1952, its director Amalia Hernández, had an extensive background as a dancer and choreographer having studied at the National Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico. She had the opportunity of having private at-home lessons from the Paris Opera ballet, which inspired her to also study American, modern dance, and flamenco. Her ballet company began to expand its exposure by performing on Mexican television on a program called, Función de Gala (Gala Function) in 1954. This was an outlet for her to display her choreography of different regional dances during the weekly broadcasts, thus expanding her troupe that began with eight dancers to twenty. The televised performances then attracted the attention of the Mexican Department of Tourism in 1958. The Department of Tourism asked Hernández if they could tour with her dance company to endorse Mexico through her Mexican folklórico dance presentations in countries such as Cuba, North America, and Canada. The work of the Ballet Folklórico de México continues today in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City where the company has resided since 1959.

While the focus in this chapter is on Chicana Poblana, looking at ‘authenticity’ in folklórico dance may also be an opportunity to prove that the true identity of the China Poblana archetype is not historically accurate but unique. It is allowing the viewer to
identify with performance variation and improvisation as they are demonstrated by the dancer in a traditional dance role. It is this paradigm shift that I propose could be used to allow the performer and the archetype to be viewed by an audience as the “real” identity for the duration of the performance event. When a work is specifically designed to be experienced by the audience, then the role of the performer, the actual performance, changes the experiential possibilities for that audience. Dyson (2008) notes that “‘with historical precedents in theatre and post-modern dance, the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ dancer is a performer who is able to connect via immediacy, engaging their audience not by illusion, but through a visceral connection of the everyday.” (Dyson, 4) Hence most postmodernists believe there is no authenticity; everything is contaminated by modernity and “authenticity” is an illusion. According to anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, “The notion of an authentic culture as an autonomous internally coherent universe no longer seems tenable, except perhaps as a ‘useful fiction’ or a ‘revealing distortion.’” (Truth and Culture 1989, 217) Authenticity, when connected with dance, connotes a long history of therapeutic usage. “Authentic Movement’ and ‘dance therapy’ are established processes by which the individual embodies movement as therapy, utilizes these processes as a witnessing and teaching tool, or as a process of engagement with the self and the consciousness within the body.” (Whitehouse, Adler, & Chodorow, 2005, pp. 11 – 12 and 142 – 149).

The concept of authenticity arises in many contexts as a way to discriminate between the “real” and the “fake”—a distinction that on the surface appears to be relatively straightforward. Indeed, the problem of “authenticity is by no means confined to folklórico dance but rather is a recurring and critical theme implicit in most of
literature on cultural traditions, and it is discussed most explicitly in the “invention of traditions,” literature (Hobsbawn 1983; Handler and Linnekin 1984; Najera-Ramirez 2001). In “Staging Authenticity Theorizing the Performance of Folklórico Dance,” Olga Najera-Ramirez argues that folklórico dance should be recognized as its own genre in order to fully embrace the importance of its unique characteristics. Through her ethnographic research she gives an overview of folklórico dance by creating a discussion on its historical emergence and development in Mexico and the US and how it is viewed as a transnational medium. Since it is not adequately studied or widespread the art of folklórico is continuing to grow as a cultural expression and is often associated with commercialization and tourism of folklore and the notion of “authenticity.”

Heidegger’s use of the word authentic "brings with it a more sharply defined sense of what it is to be human." (Guignon, 1983). He suggests that as an authentic, transparent self, we know ourselves, our social requirements, our finite time as a living being and the impact of choice on our life. “All of our decisions, once seen and taken responsibility for, are what make us authentic: make us ‘be-in-the-world’. It is that understanding which makes us unique. We now have choice. This pathway of transparency and authenticity, ‘as the “art of existing” points to a capacity for grasping life in a different way.” (Guignon, 136). The assumption here, however, is that to Be-in-the-world, is better than being inauthentic and that authenticity and experiencing are nourishing ways not only of living, but also of engaging with live art. Anthropologist Charles Lindholm(2008) says that while this search for authenticity is a current concern, it has been active since the 18th Century and that “the quest for authenticity touches and transforms a vast range of human experience today… authentic art, authentic music, authentic food, authentic
dance, authentic people….“ (Lindholm, 1) Najera-Ramirez (2009) addresses folklórico as a “cultural phenomenon” that continues to attract participants and spectators who understand that folklórico dance merits those who are interested in cultural representation and interpretation. In order to better understand folklórico as a genre she examines the concept of cultural performance and the range of goals, intentions and aesthetic principles among dancers who participate in the folklórico phenomenon.

Jimmy New Royball’s essay, “Baile Folklórico,” addresses the authenticity of the performing company of Amalia Hernandez (Ballet Folklórico de Mexico) and that of Rafael Zamarippa (University of Guadalajara, University of Colima) and Miguel Belez (University of Veracruzana), which had two different schools of technique, style and costuming. The two different schools of technique, style and costuming still cause fervent debate about authenticity, technical merit, and appropriateness for stage. However, the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico, embraces a distinct ballet technique as its foundation, placing emphasis on such aspects as open talus moments (pointed toes), ballet forms, and costuming designed to embellish the performance for the audience’s sake. Other companies such as those directed by Miguel Belez and Rafael Zamarripa have chosen to preserve and develop a greater amount of folk technique that frequently emphasizes closed talus movements, a step style that is more audibly rhythmic, and costuming that is primarily designed to reflect the essence of the folk subject rather than to entertain the audience. (Royball, 53) Royball concludes that critics like to point to these differences in order to debate authenticity of folklórico content. “Many people like to point to these differences to debate authenticity of content, but academic folklorists agree that once a particular dance has been removed from its original participants and context, then it
ceases to be authentic folk material. Even the best-researched performances can only
desire to be artistic representations of folk material once they have been placed on the
stage. The difference, then, is truly one of artistic style pitting the more abstract
“expressionistic” ballet style against a sort of “folk realism.” (Royball, 2004)

Mexican-origin dance presentations became important as a means of introduction
to *folklórico* to the theater arts productions in Mexico. The ambassador of this effort was
Amalia Hernández’s national dance company that created the platform for the
construction of Mexican dance. The concepts of *mestizaje*, racial mixing, and cultural
nationalism were at this time viewed as critical and nation-building processes of the post-
revolutionary period. Amalia Hernández’s goal was to reflect a history of Meso-
American culture and *mestizo* influences in her life-time of work that included over
seventy choreographed works. The scholarly work of folklorist Americo Paredes is
important in the conceptual framework of *Mexico de Adentro* (Inner Mexico) and *Mexico
de Afuera* (Outer Mexico) in relation to the connection of the Mexican borderland
experience. In Craig Stinson’s essay, “Americo Paredes and the Liberating Potential of
Folklore Study,” he assesses Paredes work with the framework of *Mexico de Adentro*
(Inner Mexico) and *Mexico de Afuera* (Outer Mexico). “The first encompassing the
territory inside the political boundaries of the nation of Mexico and the later consisting of
places outside of Mexico, particularly in North American and specifically in the United
States, where people of Mexican descent have taken up residence and continue to practice
and live within a Mexican cultural framework.” (Stinson, 33) In addition, Paredes uses
this construction to play upon the fluidity of the Mexican experience in terms of border
crossings, literal and metaphorical, that, due to simple geography, give Mexicans
connections with their homelands in a way that people from other parts of the world living in the United States are not allowed.

The sacrifice made by folklórico groups is that of having to subject themselves to what the audience of an organized society who sees their interpretation of authenticity through their theatrical representation as a cultural construction. The exchange value of performance, music and money; by constructing repetition or a “spectacle” type of performance and liberation of the performer is essential when interpreting their sacrifices to create a voice through their performance. There is the comparison of a community or university folklórico group that does not have a surplus value on stage and that of a national known dance company such as the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernandez, that serves as a representative of Mexican tourism and a symbol of capitalism. “The accumulation of wealth through music appears only with representation, which both creates value and is the mode of functioning of the decline of the religious. In this network, value is created and accumulated outside the control of the composing musician.” (Attali 1985, 39) Therefore, we then can see how representation of authenticity and sacrifice then becomes an important element in music and interpreted through the performers on stage who are paid in wages and engage as accomplices. Furthermore, dance has then also become the violent and sacrificial victim that has created order, political integration and popular culture.

For Raymond Williams (1977) tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits. He argues that tradition is always more than an inert historicized segment; indeed it is the most powerful practical means of incorporation. “What we have to see is not just “a tradition” but a selective tradition; an
intentionally selective version of shaping past and pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification.” (Williams, 115) Discovering one’s identity and tradition is synonymous to discovering one’s authentic self. Authenticity, as has been discussed, emerges from within. Applied to folklórico, it emerges from the discovery and realization of what is true to one’s nature. It then becomes an individual’s expression and defines the perception others (folklórico enthusiasts) will formulate in regard to it. Additionally, it will create historical and artistic value. However, the nature of the authentic self must be comprised of the requisite attributes deemed essential by those who give it value. After all, a folklórico dancer’s authenticity only has as much value as others ascribe to it. And a folklórico dancer is only as authentic as others believe him or her to be. Therefore, authenticity is a transformative process based on the evolution and discovery of individual identity that involves morals, ethics, values, history, tradition and behavior as it relates to others (folklórico enthusiasts) and the cultural borderlands it originates from.

_Chicanada_

_Folklórico_ dance companies began to expand after the 1960s Chicano movement in the United States. Mexican-origin dances continued to develop through the organization of _folklórico_ networking and educational events. Dance conferences such as _Danzantes Unidos_ (United Dancers), which was founded in 1979 at the University of California, Los Angeles and _Asociación Nacional de Grupos Folklóricos_ (National Association of Folklórico Groups) in 1973, were founded for the purpose of having the participants learn regional dances from Mexico, _folklórico_ dance aesthetic, and for the participants to engage in the _folklórico_ experience with other dancers. Taught in the form
of *folklórico* regional dance workshops by visiting Mexican instructors from all over Mexico and the United States; the festival allowed the participants to preserve, promote, and create a space for *folklórico* development by having them learn the dances in order for them to teach the dances to their respective dance groups and to add to their repertoire. These types of conferences have also become networking outlets for folklórico dancers who participate in the yearly event. As participants in workshops and dance recitals, the conference aims for attendees to preserve their Mexican identity through dance.

In Sydney Hutchinson’s essay, “The Ballet Folklórico de Mexico and the Construction of the Mexican Nation through Dance,” we see the political integration, concepts of nationhood, mestizaje and value judgment that have evolved; similar to the progression of identity as constructed through the role of China Poblana. Jacque Attali’s (1985) concept of “Representation” and how the showcasing of popular culture has developed as a commodity, use-value and social structure is important when identifying the construction of the folklórico performances. “Repetition creates an object, which lasts beyond its usage. The technology of repetition has made available to all the use of an essential symbol, of a privileged relation to power.” (Attali, 100) Attali’s overview is of utter importance because we see the replacement of the festival to concert hall, monetary value of music, ticket sale and production of mestizaje through the representation of what Hutchinson (2009) calls “post-revolutionary romantic nationalism,” as presented by groups such as the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico. The representation of the Yaqui deer dance, *danza del venado* that was altered by Amalia Hernandez who created the story line of the hunter killing off the Yaqui deer, who in reality does not die in the actual dance.
that originated from the Yaqui. Though Amalia argued that this alteration was necessary to supply the dance with a plot line, a symbolic interpretation of the dead deer might yield a more sinister message. (Hutchinson, 221) Representation is a form of demonstrating individual work therefore, allowing the performer and the audience to relate to the portrayed archetype and its interpretation.

Chicana/o founded folklórico groups in the United States have become advocates for this influential genre of dance—reinforcing a Mexican nationalist notion of authentic Chicanismo. Fregoso (1993) discusses the viewpoint of Angie Chabram-Derneresian who explains, that the definition of identity “was deceptive, since Chicano nationalism was also predicated on the necessity of mimesis: a one-on-one correspondence between the subject and its reflection in a mirror like duplication.” As seen in works such as Zoot Suit by Luis Valdez and the neo-Mayan indigenous version he portrayed of Chicano ancestors is In Lak’ Ech (I am another you). The same holds true for folklórico performance and recent theories of “enunciation.” Instead of thinking of “folklórico,” identity as an already accomplished genre, where cultural dance is present, we should think instead, of our folkloric identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall writes in his 1999 article “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” he instructs us, ignores the site/location from where the subject (he/she) speaks, the positions of enunciation:

What recent theories of enunciation suggest is that, though we speak, so to say ‘in our own name,’ of ourselves and from our own experience, nevertheless who speaks, and
the subject who is spoken of, are never identical, never exactly in the same place. Identity
is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. (Hall, 1999)

Mexicana/o and Chican@/o folklórico participants have continued to expand this
emerging and dynamic performing art that is viewed all over the world. The necessity to
take pride in Mexican culture and preserve regional histories through dance was
important to Amalia Hernández and to many U.S. based folklórico groups who today also
have been influenced by the work of Rafael Zamarripa, who is presently the chair of the
Department of Dance at the University of Colima. Zamarripa is known for his zapateado
technique, emphasis on style and costuming that reflected the folk subject instead of
putting on a visual and ballet influenced show for audiences. His extensive ethnographic
research has allowed him to create his own original suites and choreographies.

Folklórico performances have played a big part in the popularization of Mexican-
origin dances, especially in the United States where celebrations such as: weddings,
anniversaries, birthdays, and quinceañeras (sweet fifteen birthdays), include a baile de
sopresa (surprise dance) dedicated to a married couple or birthday person. During a
quinceañera, the birthday honoree celebrates her transition from childhood to
womanhood by having three dances performed during this birthday celebration: a group
waltz, father-daughter waltz and a dance of choice or baile de sopresa. The surprise
dance is usually a less traditional dance of choice that is selected by the quinceañera
honoree. In California, where folklórico is very predominant, the surprise dance varies
from hip-hop, salsa, and a Mexican-origin folklórico solo, or group performances.
Folklórico, when represented in a celebratory context, becomes recognized by the
attendees at the celebration as a cultural expression that celebrates Mexican-American
identity, community building, and a space for cultural pride. Mexican-origin dances can be described by Mexican-Americans as cultural representations and part of their cultural assimilation to Mexican song and dance.

*Plural Identity*

Bailey (1997) notes that China Poblana was in fact two people. The China Poblana of the popular imagination—of the brightly embroidered blouse and *rebozo* shawl—is an invention of the nineteenth century. A symbol of Mexican womanhood, she is related to Spanish prototypes such as the *maja* immortalized in paintings by Murillo and Goya. In this sense, the name *china* is simply a generic term for “servant” “country girl,” or even “concubine”—reflecting her various roles in Mexican Legend. (Bailey,1997: 38) He concludes that since viceregal times, however, the word *china* referred specifically to a person of Asian background. I have transformed the China Poblana into the Chicana Poblana, a plural politicized identity of Chicana, Mexipina and Indigenous fusion. She has transformed using decolonial performatics to be liberated on stage when she performs part of her revolving identity. She has descendants that are part of her folklore and her reality. She is not a fantasy or folkorico princess she has become an archetype that can be argued to be part of a transnational identity that is constantly decolonizing and performing in the U.S. Borderlands. She wears a Mestiza top and silk skirt embroidered by hand by a grandmother who sits and reminisces about her days in the school yard in Mexico City, dancing *Jarabe Tapatio*. She is the Chicana Poblana that applies eye shadow onto her Mexican eyelids that were inherited by the folklore of Asian and Mexican pervasive image of China Poblana, as she adjusts the *trenzas* (braids) made of yarn she writes the narrative of an identity she shares from the Chicana perspective.
This newly constructed role she performs as is only part of the construction of her new “Mestiza” fused identity.

As I reflected on Gloria Anzaldúa’s purpose on writing "Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza," I began analyzing as to how the label of “Mestiza” affected us both. Like Anzaldúa I am writing an auto-ethnographic piece that will identify my duality. The physical border in Anzaldúa’s writings was a metaphor for the identity discovery that she explored that highlighted where the differences began physically (such as language, culture and identity). Since the mestiza is a fused identity, it is a combination of personal and individual auto-ethnographic experiences which have helped contribute to the construction of a mestiza and what she experiences in her life journey. Anzaldúa discusses in her work the concept of “mestiza consciousness” and how it helps one deal with social and economic issues that affect oppressed groups in the U.S. “The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in pluralistic mode-nothing is thrust out, the good the bad the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.” (Anzaldúa, 1999)

Chicana Poblana stands dressed in a silk three-quarter sleeved high V-necked blouse with colorful embroidered flowers. As the tri-colored theatre stage lights hit her skirt containing Asian and Spanish-influenced embroidered and colorful sequins, she looks down to view her attire; and sees her inner mestiza--highlighted in a fabric that is made only in the cities of Puebla and Mexico City. The regional outfit I wear as the
Chicana, *China Poblana*, originated from Puebla, Mexico in the early 1800s and is worn to embody my inner hybrid identity on stage—in display in front of an audience of 500 people in Northridge, Califaztlan. My plural identity on stage transforms me into the Mexicana and *Chicana Poblana*, I become the archetype of the lover, and Asian enslaved domestic servant who resided in the city of Puebla in 1620, who was courted and fell in love with a Creole man. *Chicana Poblana*, transcends herself into a folklorico performer and female juggler of cultural identities and hybridity in a Mexican-American choreography that is part of a growing Chicana/o folklorico genre and era of de-colonizing performantics.

As I began to walk out of the theatre with my attire, into the parking lot, I see my family anxiously waiting for me. They greeted me with hugs, kisses, and high fives. Just embracing them was very emotional for me. I felt so honored to become part of a family of performers at CSUN, as well proud to be the first dancer in the family and the first *Chicana Poblana*. As I walked away with them to celebrate the show’s success, the last butterfly left my stomach. As I felt it leave I knew that the swarm would return to console me the next time I took the stage to liberate Chicana Poblana and add to my newfound hybrid consciousness.
Chapter Two

Cuadro de Adelita en Aztlán

Adelita has always stood tall, ready to fight against injustices and for Chicana/o Studies. She has marched within the battlegrounds of Aztlán as a Chicana--summoned by the Indigena spirits of those who came before her. She embodies strength, demeanor and hunger for equality and her history. Adelita presente!

-Cindy Padilla, 2013

Act 2: Traditional Culture and the Emergence of Adelita as a Chicana Archetype

Adelita stands tall as her sombrero rests on her back, with artillery wrapped around her heart and torso. Her black boots have traveled the endless roads of “Aztlán,” her native Chicana homeland. The sounds of her marching can be heard from afar as she presents herself on stage with a rifle in hand and serious demeanor. She is revealed to her audience as an Adelita—the female soldier who identifies with Calif’Aztlan, Santa Barbara where she was born and raised. Adelita lives within the borderless states where women battle to represent themselves and their individual battlegrounds of hybrid identities, gender and academia. She likes to describe herself in dialogue, writings and in folklórico performance dances as a Chicana because it allows her to identify with her indigenous lineage of Mexicanidad. The archetype of “Adelita” is represented through her eyes as a hybrid identity who writes and performs to her story as a Chicana scholar and performance artist. Her genre of music can be identified as the Mexican corrido and mariachi sound and her life’s tribulations and triumphs can be identified as that of a Chicana. She embodies the role of the soldadera(female soldier) and student that allow her to embrace her true identity of a heroine and historian.
In *Bloodlines*, Shiela Contreras (2008) contends that Aztlán is the most enduring feature of Chicano indigenism whether initially introduced into an activist lexicon by Jack Forbes or by Alurista, as is most often claimed by Chicana/o scholars. This symbolic ancestral home was a complex negotiation of identity because Aztlán encompassed not only the Mexican in Mexican-Americans, but an aspect of Mexicanness that had particularly degraded: the Indian. A mythic symbol retrieved from the Aztec codices and sixteenth-century Spanish accounts of the Conquest, Aztlán places Chicana/os at the origin of the Mexican nation, in a pre-national moment that is distinctly and inarguably indigenous. Politically, Aztlán foregrounds the history of Mexican dispossession and occupation at the hands of the Anglo-Americans and reconfigures the U.S. Southwest as a “homeland denied.” (Contreras 30-31)

Aztlán represented an important symbol of spiritual and national unity as well as a U.S. and Mexico homeland that is populated by indigenous Mexica and Chicana/os. Chicano activists presumed that it would unite under the banner of cultural nationalism. One cultural survival strategy that emerged from Christian colonization and evangelization of the Americas in the 16th century was the syncretism of indigenous religious worldviews and practices into what is now termed *religiosidad popular*, or popular religion (Broyles-González, 2002). In this perspective, the events in the physical world were influenced by human and divine actions. Broyles-Gonzalez in “Indianizing Catholicism” discusses her Yaqui roots and grandmother, curanderismo, and her Chicana indigeneity. The example of Broyles-Gonzalez’ title of her work is an important part of my testimonio and the importance of “Adelita en Aztlán.” Another influential work is the Luiz Valdez poem, “Pensamiento Serpentino,” The poem is based on Mayan thought
and cosmology, that analyzed the cultural, religious and political circumstances of Mexican Americans.

Pensamiento-Serpentino
In Lak’ech Tú eres mi otro yo.
You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti,
If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo.
I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto,
If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo.
I love and respect myself

(Luis Valdez, 1971)

I became acquainted with Aztlán as a high school student in 1993 in Santa Barbara; I was part of the first pilot Chicana/o Studies program that was taught voluntarily by Dr. Yolanda Broyles-Gonzales, who was at the time a professor at UCSB. Broyles-Gonzales was very influential to me and other students in the pilot program at San Marcos High School. Aztlán represented an important symbol of spiritual and national unity as well as a U.S. and Mexico homeland that is populated by indigenous Mexica and Chicana/os. I became very outspoken through my duration in high school and was recruited to the school newspaper, which was something I felt I would have no voice or interest in. Just the empowerment of learning about my culture alone helped me to feel as if I could also empower local students through writing feature stories that would bring
attention to their community of Chicana/os. I became one of the student leaders and Chicana pioneers who learned about the Mexican-American/Chicana/o experience and who also became part of a community group in Santa Barbara who called themselves a "concilio" (council) which became a collaboration of M.E.Ch.A (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlán) and Chicana/o student and community members and leaders. It was during this time in high school that this "concilio" group along with the African American leaders in Santa Barbara helped create and draft the first high school curriculum of Chicana/o Studies and African American Studies that was implemented in the spring of 1995 at the three local high schools: Santa Barbara, Dos Pueblos and San Marcos in our community of Santa Barbara. It took numerous school board meetings and discussions, marches and tireless hours to create a curriculum and book reading lists that had to be approved by the school board. Knowing that ethnic studies programs were being implemented at the high school level allowed the students of color to view and appreciate the political actions of the professors and community at large at the university level. Instead of school being known as the door that was always closed, the doors to education were busted wide open by these wonderful leaders "temachtiani’s" (Nahautl word for wise teachers). Their voluntary actions of teaching and speaking to the community about the need for ethnic studies programs, allowed students to ask questions, demand these programs and continue onto the university level to preserve these programs today. These experiences made me an Adelita and a revolutionary Chicana.

Adelita’s first encounter with the Santa Barbara school board was in December of 1994. It was a cold winter evening when I walked down the hallway to the school board meeting with fellow Chicana/os from my high school. Walking into Santa Barbara junior
high school where the district school meetings were held was making me feel nauseous. It was the day I had my boots on, artillery, and would embody “Adelita,” as my persona. It was a day for battle and being courageous—that of a heroine especially, since today was the day the school board would hear out the students and community during their open forum. I walked past the entrance of the board room and spotted the bathroom. As I reached the bathroom door I turned around to watch students, parents, teachers and community members walk into the battleground. As the school board members greeted one another, I hid my artillery under my rebozo and would wait to reveal my ammunition of words. I turned around and marched to see a woman hold her child’s hand, and I thought about the day my sister was born. She barely cried when my mom allowed me to hold her for the first time in the hospital. As her weary eyes opened, our eyes met and she grasped my index finger. I knew, by the strong grasp of hers, that this child would be ready to take on the challenges of the world. Little did she know her sister would be writing about the battles she faced and her role as “Adelita,” the one who would try to protect her from the battleground of those who opposed her history and her homeland of Aztlán.

I overheard the students arriving asking if they could take in posters and signs and conversing about how they couldn’t wait to speak to the board. I smiled as my boots and I made a U-turn to walk towards the door to the school board meeting room. My legs felt extremely heavy and I began to feel nervous as I made my way to the doorway of the room. It felt as if I was commanded to hault and take a back seat from the battle line. Something told me to take a deep breath as I walked into a sea of chairs and community ready to confront any verbal gun fire. I saw one the school board members arriving as
they walked up to their prospective desk podiums. As I asked one of my classmates, “Hey do you think they will hear us all out?” She just said, “Yes,” and continued to sit quietly as the meeting began. As we continued to sit, we listened to the items on the school board agenda that dealt with retirements, local fundraiser and field trip approvals that were being scheduled. As soon as the open public forum item was announced I could see the faces in the room tense up. As the first person was called up to speak my hands followed along with the crowd of students, parents, community members and the M.E.Ch.ista’s as we began the Chicana/o “unity” hand clap to show support for our proposed cultural studies programs. I thought about all the female soldiers who came before me and how they were fearless in standing to defend and protect their land and family. They were protectors of life and had given life and I was there trying to support a community that was doing battle with their school board. I began to see that my battle was not only in that room but outside in the world of academia. I had to capture her story and that of the Adelita who would emerge as the heroine and historic figure.

*Adelita’s Exposure*

The explosive role of the pre-revolutionary Mexican woman and “Adelita” was only one of the many roles that were not traditionally viewed by the female gender in the early 1900’s. Prior to the Mexican Revolution, family life, marriage, work and the Catholic Church, were part of the Mexican women’s daily life as they lived in virtual seclusion (Soto, 31-32). In 1884 (prior to the revolution) the government passed the Mexican Civil Code. It dramatically restricted women's rights at home and at work (Bush and Mumme, 351). Soto states that the code "sustains an almost incredible inequality between the conditions of husband and wife, restricts in an exaggerated and arbitrary
manner those rights due the woman, and...erases and nullifies her personality." (Bush and Mumme, 351). The code was just one of the many inequalities women and other ethnic, economic, political, or religious minorities suffered under the regime of Porfirio Diaz. When the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 emerged to fight against the dictator Porfirio Diaz and the oppression and discrimination of his regime, women began to find a place for themselves. It gave them the chance to control their own fate and live more public lives successfully (Soto, 31). Another battleground for Mexican women has been in the representation in corridos and their archetypal images represented in these ballads.

Maria Herrera-Sobek’s, The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis looks at the archetypal representation of Chicana and Mexican women in Mexican ballads. Herrera-Sobek identifies four components in the structure of archetypal images found in the Mexican ballad: patriarchal ideology, social class of the corridista and the corrido audience, Mexican history and Western literary tradition. Herrera-Sobek describes in her introduction that, “She includes herself amongst those who perceive that much of our culture’s artistic work reflects a series of patterns to which we can profitably apply the term archetypal images and reformulate the concept of archetypes by scholars in the literary and psychology fields.” Carl Jung known for his theory of archetypes defines what they represent. He says, “It is impossible to give an exact definition of the archetype, and the best we can hope to do is to suggest its general implications by ‘talking around’ it. For the archetype represents a profound riddle surpassing our rational comprehension.” (Jung, 31) According to Lauter and Rupprecht(1985), in feminist archetypal theory, the archetype cannot be defined as an image whose content is frozen
but must be thought of as a process, a tendency to form and re-form images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences. (Lauter and Rupprecht, 16)

Herrera-Sobek (1990) argues that there is nothing inherently male in the corrido or its structure, which features female protagonists. It is only a fact of history, not of necessity, that the majority of corridos have been written by males. "I categorize the corrido not as a male genre, although many view it as such, but as a male dominated genre. The corrido encompasses three genres: epic, lyric and narrative, and is similar to the corridor known as the cancion de gesta. As for the corrido’s lyrical nature, it derives from the affective overtones found throughout the songs. (Herrera-Sobek, xiii) The corrido also generally recounts a story in either the first or the third person; hence its narrative character.” Jose Limon and Americo Paredes completely agree— the corrido’s protagonists are primarily male, the performer is typically male, the story is told from a male point of view and the western music harmony of dominant and tonic chords and masculine cadences.

Ballad scholar, John Beusterien(2007) explains in his article "Time for the Corrido and the Romance," that ballad critics have separated the romance from the corrido for ideological and stylistic reasons. Beusterien contends that the principle ideological reason has to do with nationality of the ballad. He says, “In an implicit or explicit maneuver to distance itself from Spain, many critics characterize the corrido as a distinctly Mexican creation. In turn, some critics cite unique characteristics that set the Spanish ballad tradition apart from other national ballad traditions, including the Mexican." (Beusterien, 672) For many ballad scholars, with respect to form, the romance typically tells its story through dialogue, while the corrido does so through formulaic
first-person narration. For Beusterien, "the most powerful stylistic characteristic that has kept the two apart has been the widely assumed belief that a true romance must be an temporal, universal mystique—that is a timeless quality and hence is averse to a diachronic sense of time." (Beusterien, 672). In turn, the first-person narrator of the corrido typically recounts events in a diachronic, temporal continuum.

Peña (1982) identifies the *corrido* of the Mexican Revolution as having turned Mexican ballad students to the folkloric collection and serious study of ballads. Mexican interest in balladry began in the 1920s, toward the end of the revolutionary period. The conquistadores arrived in Mexico when the romance tradition was still strong in Spain, bringing the romance- corrido with them and thirty years after the conquest of the Indians, people were composing romance-like ballads of their own. Vicente T. Mendoza, Mexico’s foremost ballad authority and musicologist published his monumental study in 1939 stating the opinion that the corrido went back to the earliest Spanish times. Mendoza defines the effective life span of the Mexican corrido as fifty years, from 1880 to 1930. Today, the *corrido* continues to sustain values, ethnic solidarity, and loyalty for causes that the masses see as important to their cultural survival. “*Corridos* are important ethno-historical documents providing a range of facts regarding the social environment. Their contents, poetic organization, musical form, and aesthetic history lead to an alternative interpretation of the nature of violence in Mexican and US American societies as seen through the Mexican’s sense of history, music, and culture. Movement in the American Southwest show a paradigmatic shift away from the heroic themes of older ballads toward victim subjects.” (Peña 1982b).

This is true of the *corrido* among Mexicans in the United States. Here too, the *corrido*
has functioned as a "collective diary," expressing symbolically the Chicano people's reactions to events vital to their self-interests. What ethnomusicologists and folklorists call “Post-Chicano corridos (following the Civil Rights Movement in the American Southwest) show a paradigmatic shift away from the heroic themes of older ballads toward victim subjects” (Peña 1982b). However, as John Beusterien reminds us, “the ballad continued to be a popular oral form that provided information and its existence in its newly-evolved forms attests to the fact that alternative historiographic methods remain alive—at least in popular histories—through the twenty first century.” (Beusterien, 677)

Herrera-Sobek(1990) contends that women may have written substantial works although many corridos are by unknown authors and that the representation of women tends to be from a patriarchal perspective. Her analysis of numerous corridos identifies four types of recurrent images in which women appeared: the Good and the Terrible Mother, the Mother Goddess, The Lover, and the Soldier. The Adelita therefore is the “soldier-woman” she serves as an archetype and representative of the women who have been omitted from history books. The Adelita represents the many battlefield heroines in the Mexican Revolution that not only joined the men on the frontlines, but who also supported them in a way that allowed the troops to succeed, by doing the many thankless tasks that go along with fighting during wartime. Unfortunately, because of the women’s lower class standing in military ranks, male historians have often omitted information about many of these spectacular women. The legends of these Adelitas have been popularized and romanticized by male storytellers, exaggerating their sexuality rather than their heroism.
Along both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border, the corrido had a different history than it did in the interior of Mexico. It became a popular form of expression among the Spanish-speaking population along the Lower Rio Grande border about the same time that its popularity was on the decline in Mexico. This increase in popularity was related to the increased immigration of Anglos from other parts of the United States into Texas after 1848. At this time corridos began to be used to record in song the increasing incidents of social conflict arising from Anglo social and racial oppression of the Mexican-American population. The corrido became a form of cultural resistance composed and sung in Spanish at a wide variety of public and private events. It clearly reflected the heightened tension, and occasional armed resistance, associated with the intercultural conflict between the Anglo population and Texans of Mexican descent.

Mexican-American folklorist and author, Américo Paredes determined that the most important popular element of these ballads were based on the historical events surrounding the life of Gregorio Cortez, a Texas-Mexican rancher who lived with his family in central Texas at the beginning of the twentieth century. As narrated in "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez", a simple misunderstanding between Anglo lawmen and Gregorio and his brother leads to gunshots and the death of his brother and a deputy sheriff. It is evident that the use of the corrido to express intercultural conflict along the U.S.-Mexico border continued well into the twentieth century.

*Creating Space*

In Elizabeth C. Ramirez’s, “Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre,” she discusses the emergence of Latinas in Theatre during the 1970’s and 1980’s and the development
of the female voice which was represented through male conceptualization, and the formation of Chicana/o alternative teatro groups and their objective which was to provide space and strong female roles. In order to explore the objective of providing space for archetypes such as “Adelita,” it is important to discuss Luis Valdez and his role as an early provider of women’s roles and voice of cultural nationalism in his piece entitled “Bernabe: A Drama of Modern Chicano Mythology (1969).” It is in this piece where he included the following women’s dual roles such as a “la soldadera (female soldier)” as mother earth and “la Madre tierra (dirt)” as the activist. Although his male conceptualization of these characters was his attempt to portray women as positive leading roles, these same roles created by Valdez also were viewed by the audience as the prostitute, victim and liberator. Although Valdez’s work addressed mythology, indigenous past and present it also persuaded the audience to view the roles of women as an idea of a mito (myth). Valdez’s early portrayal of women’s roles displeased women, impacting them and propelling them to “pick up the pen as a political act,” as Vicki Ruiz described in her 1998 piece entitled, “From the Shadows: La Nueva Chicana.”

Through the impact of Valdez’s early work teatros such as El Teatro Nacional de Aztlan(TENAZ) 1970, Teatro Racies (1971 ), El Teatro de Las Chicanas (1973), were created in order to bring feminism to the forefront and examine issues that affected women of color. This was important in the development of creating space for women playwrights, directors and the creation of strong female roles. In order to educate an audience on these types of alternative groups the formation of women’s caucuses were initiated in order to increase and garner support from Chicanas and influence those working in teatro so they could write, develop and control women’s roles. For example,
Cherrie Moraga, who broke away from Valdez’s theme of cultural nationalism and into a Chicana feminist perspective. While Moraga incorporated indigenismo, feminism, she differed from Valdez because she examined sexual politics and complex female characters as leading subjects in her work, in contrast to Valdez’ male subjects giving voice. The influence of Valdez’s piece entitled, “The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa,” based on power relations helped Moraga to develop community politics, language in text, and sexual and cultural identity in her work that extended beyond her poetry and autobiographical essays. An example of this is her teatro piece “Heroes and Saints,” where the female character who is a crippled child becomes a forceful character of action impacting how the audience views the issues of identity politics, body difference and assimilation. Part of what Moraga has attempted to do through her performance writing is to have the audience see her work as not only fictional but as reality. Moraga’s contribution is a political act because her projection of the female voice and role as a dominant subject in her work has allowed her to expand and actualize her concepts with other Chicana and Latina playwrights.

Cubana playwright Maria Irene Flores, who has also worked in collaboration with Cherrie Moraga has been an important influence to her and to Chicana/Latina theatre. In 1985 Flores wrote, “The Conduct of Life,” a piece that created the female leading character, “Leticia,” to be the protagonist. The male character in the play “Orlando,” strives to marry an older wealthy woman Leticia, in order to help him gain higher power and social class. Social class and the issue of an older Latina woman helping a man gain this status demonstrates how the woman has a dominant power in the play. The example of Leticia’s character differs from the typical roles of a Latina who is usually cast as the
girlfriend, housewife, sister, prostitute and victim. The male character in this play turns out to be the abuser of a young 12-year old female, he is later killed by Leticia, she then coerces the abused teen to take the blame for the murder of Orlando. Leticia the leading character gets away with the crime as she then becomes the oppressor and overall dominant character. Flores created a performance piece that allowed women to be viewed as the center of a situation or “dramaturgy.” The presentation of “a mind in a woman’s body” was an important feminist point to her as a writer. Valdez highly influenced the works of many playwrights such as Moraga and Flores. This influenced Chicana/o and Mexicana/o Teatro (Theater) material which was provided by its member’s personal experiences and written to critique a minority of women’s roles in plays that were written by men in the 1970’s and 80’s and to develop more meaningful roles for Chicana/Latina women. Contributions during this time in teatro only empowered the emergence of women playwrights and material to emphasize strong female roles and educate audiences on women’s issues.

Josefina Niggli’s play: Soldadera depicted the life of Adelita as a female soldier. Niggli herself was born in Monterrey, Mexico in 1910 and was sent to San Antonio, Texas because of the revolution in 1913, but spent time traveling to and from Mexico. This was a great example of not only what the female soldiers were really like, but also of the romanticizing of their archetype. Niggli won the approval of many Mexican literary figures, although she has often been criticized for writing it for an entirely American audience. (Arrizon, 8-10) The play by Niggli follows the lives of a group of soldaderas supporting the Villistas. In the story plot the women must guard the ammunition that is stored in their camp from the opposing soldiers. Each woman in the group has her
strengths; Concha, the leader, is strong, depicted as a "woman of the earth"; Adelita is depicted as somewhat naïve, yet very brave (Arrizon 13-14). The women then find out that the Federales will be arriving and they prepare to protect themselves and the ammunition. They realize the only chance they have is for one of the soldaderas to bomb one the Federales. This, however, will also result in her death. The woman who is to do it panics and screams that she does not want to die. Without thinking, Adelita, one of the youngest, takes the bomb and destroys the enemy by giving the ultimate sacrifice. The play ends with the rest of the soldaderas singing the song "La Adelita" in her praise. (Arrizon, 1-23) The music of “La Adelita” was adapted by Izaak Osipovich Dunayewskiy, who wrote the songs for one of the best known soviet comedies “Vesolye rebiata” (1934). The soviet composer never mentioned the origins of his song.

Adelita

At the top of a steep mountainous range
a regiment was encamped
along with a young woman that bravely followed them
who was madly in love with the sergeant.

Popular among the troop was Adelita
the woman that the sergeant idolized and
besides being brave she was pretty
that even the Colonel respected her.

And it was heard, that he, who loved her so much, said:
And if Adelita left with another man
Y si Adelita se fuera con otro
la seguiría por tierra y por mar
si por mar en un buque de guerra
si por tierra en un tren militar.

Y si Adelita quisiera ser mi novia
y si Adelita fuera mi mujer
le compraría un vestido de seda
para llevarla a bailar al cuartel.

I’d follow her by land and sea
if by sea in a war ship
if by land in a military train.

And if Adelita would like to be my
girlfriend
If Adelita would be my wife
I’d buy her a silk dress
to take her to the barrack’s dance.

According to Shirlene Soto, *The Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*: soldaderas, or galletas (“cookies”), as they were often called traveled with the revolutionary armies. These women fought, foraged for food, cooked meals, nursed the wounded, washed clothes, collected the soldier’s salaries, and performed a multitude of services not provided by the Mexican military. (Soto 43-44) Corridos (ballads) helped to establish and to maintain the fame of the soldadera. “La China Maderista,” “La Adelita,” “La Valentina,” and “La Reilera” were popular corridos during the Revolution. Some of the words of “La China Maderista” are: “If you love me as I love you, let us both go to fight for Madero.” Two heroines of the Revolution, Adelita and Valentina, were considered “the essence of Mexican feminity,” and the corridos written to honor them had widespread popularity. The song “La Adelita,” drew its inspiration from a Durangan woman who had joined the Maderista movement at an early age. Among Francisco (Pancho) Villa’s soldiers, “La Adelita” served as the battle hymn:

If Carranza would only marry Villa,

And Zapata marry Obregón,

If Adelita would only marry me,
Revolution would be dead as stone.

“La Valentina” was a corrido based upon the life of Valentina Gatica, a soldadera from Sinaloa who followed Obregon’s troops; the corrido achieved widespread popularity after the year 1914. Valentina attracted particular attention with her military—dress two cartridge belts slung across her chest and rifle hanging from her shoulder. In the corrido, a love—sick suitor portrayed Valentina in these lyrics:

A passion dominates me.
It’s what brought me here.
Valentina, Valentina,
I wish to tell you so.
They say because of your love
A bad turn will be done to me
I don’t care if they’re the devil
I too know how to die.

These courageous Adelitas were also spies, messengers, secretaries, journalists, munitions runners, to add to the many roles they portrayed. They were the logistics of the revolutionary army and its reserves although as female soldiers they did not receive the proper recognition for being the inseparable and very important part of the Mexican revolution. In fact the only recognition these great women got was in form of the folk songs that referred to the girl, Adelita that was in love with one sergeant and because of her feelings for him decided to follow him and the troops. This romantic portrait of the soldadera Adelita became a legend and eventually the term “Adelitas” epitomized all Mexican female soldiers. However, their recognition is vital because these brave
Mexican women existed and were important to the building of the role of “Adelita.” Let us not forget that they were also mothers of the Mexican revolution and heroines who fought in combat next to our male counterparts.

In a 1970 essay entitled “La participacion de la mujer mexicana en la educacion formal,” Mexicana novelist Rosario Castellanos argued that the theoretical equality of the sexes as set forth by the Constitution of 1917 had been clearly undermined and dissipated by the powerful grip of traditional culture. She explained that Mexican culture demanded that women be controlled by men, remain silent, and embrace matrimony and maternity. (Miller, 167) Two women who would seek an alternative lifestyle to traditional culture was Nellie Campobello and sister Gloria who both were born during the Revolution, orphaned and taken to live in Mexico city. Gloria Campobello was inspired by following Russian ballerina, Anna Pavolva’s dances as a youth and studied under the Russian Imperial Ballet and Eleanor Wallace and adapted dance theory and classic technique. Nellie Camponbello, in 1930 wrote Cartucho, that dealt with the upheaval and chaos of the Mexican Revolution which she experienced. Nellie’s autobiographical stories written in Cartucho, were “historic truth” as they were tragic happenings viewed as a child of the Revolution.

**Reflection**

Reflecting on my experiences as a Chicana, I’ve come to acknowledge how social categories and social location influence the formation of Chicana/os cultural identity and the concept of realist feminism. In Paula M. L. Moya’s article, “Postmodernism, Realism and the Politics of Identity,” she examines realist theory and how identity changes in the
lifetime of a Chicana. According to the realist theory of identity, “identities are not self-evident, unchanging, and uncontestable, nor are they absolutely fragmented, contradictory, and unstable. Rather, identities are subject to multiple determinations and to a continual process of verification that takes place over the course of an individual’s life through her interaction with the society she lives in. It is in this process of verification that identities can be (and often are) contested and that they can (and often do) change.” (Moya 84) After reading this passage I began to reflect on how my identity has developed through personal narratives and experiences as a Chicana. Did I identify myself as a woman first before being a Chicana/o or Mexican? Why was I always trying to answer the question of “identity” in all my work and in conversations with non-Chicanos? Have my personal narratives and Chicano experience helped create my cultural identity as a Chicana and how I interpret my portrayal of Adelita?

Maxine Baca Zinn touched upon the issue of “multiple identity” which I think is relative to many Chicana/os. At home with the family you are categorized as “Mexicana”, at work “Mexican-American” and in the community and in class “Chicana.” I do compare my gender experiences, ethnicity experiences and the experience of growing up in my residential community of Santa Barbara to other cultural groups. It defines who I am as a Chicana and how I have succeeded to where I am now. The multiple identity roles are changing for second generation children who are bi-racial and share the hybrid identities. My nieces, who are Mexican and German descent, are learning to identify with their ethnicity at home and in school. The identification of their German family name which is “Zell” and their social location which is Santa Barbara, will definitely be factors in their formation of their cultural identity. For upcoming
Chicano social scientists or theorists, their research on multiple identities, defining ethnic identity and gender will continue to change the way Chicana/os are perceived and the way my nieces will perceive themselves. In contrast to earlier times, many of today’s social scientists and theorists reflect diverse backgrounds and more insightful, informed approaches to Chicana/o culture and society. Who would have thought social scientists and theorists would strengthen Chicano academe and the development of the “Chicana/o” identity of Adelita.

Paula Moya discusses Cherrie Moraga’s concept of the “Theory in the Flesh” which says: “a theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives- our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings- all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity.” (Moya, 92). This theoretical approach Moraga describes is based on: family, political change and consciousness, link of social location, experience and body as a source of knowledge. I can relate to Moraga’s theoretical approach and concept of “anglocization.” Embodying the identity of Chicana was part of reinventing and reconstructing my identification as a Mexican-American and Mexicana in my teens. Outside school and in the community I was the Chicana because of my sociopolitical awareness and my involvement with Chicana/o issues. The anglocization laid at my feet each time I filled out a survey that asked what my ethnicity was or each time I would say the term “Chicana.” To a community of anglos I was the political Hispanic who should have just been the “quiet” Hispanic or Spanish student and not the self-identified “Chicana.” I could have given into the anglocization and assimilated to their anglo ways but instead I chose to define myself as a Chicana. Did I create a politic born out of necessity as Moraga mentions in her “Theory in the Flesh?” I don’t feel that necessarily
helped me identify myself but social categories such as gender and race did help me seek out political awareness and my inner “Adelita.” The term Chicana third world feminist was another identity I was exposed to as a youth and it has allowed me to reflect on the politics of gender, space and race. Had I always been a Chicana feminist? Was feminism something that has affected me along my pathway and guided me to where I am now? The answer is simply yes, I have always been the Chicana feminist deep down inside.

The issues of machismo, sexism and racism affected me as a woman, as it also affected my familia and the development of my community. It was up to mujeres (women) like me to bring these issues to the forefront and also as a youth for me to bring political awareness and activism to my community. Discussing these types of issues is vital in the deconstruction of oppressive ways. The women of the Mexican revolution were participants in the early feminist movement and led as soldiers and lead commanders. These political women and figures are our grandmothers and mothers who encountered sexism, racism, machismo and set the precedent for future generations. Their epistemologies and narratives are part of our cultural knowledge and how we are reconstructing theories and writing our epistemologies of feminism and race today.

Without reading and hearing these narratives on sexism, oppression and feminism how can we identify ourselves and tackle the oppressive issues that affect the Chicano movement and community? As Adelita I will continue to embody the archetype that I am building of her in my community of Calif’Aztlan. Let me shine my boots, prepare my verbal artillery and organize my vestuario---I’m ready to take stage.

Si Adelita se fuera con otro
la seguiría por tierra y por mar.
Si por tierra en un tren militar.
Si por mar en un buque de guerra
calma el fuego de esta mi pasión, Adelita, por Dios te lo ruego,
porque te amo y te quiero rendido
y por ti sufre mi fiel corazón.(2)

If Adelita should go with another
I would follow her over land and sea.
If by sea in a battleship
If by land on a military train.
Adelita, for God's sake I beg you,
calm the fire of my passion,
because I love you and I cannot resist it
and my faithful heart suffers for you.(3)

Soldaderas' and the staging of the Mexican Revolution.(Arrizon, 1998)
Chapter Three
Cuadro de Guada-Mestiza

Suddenly the political and religious images that I used to question as icons of authority and as artificial generators of *mexicanidad* began to transform themselves into symbols of contestation against the dominant Anglo culture. I also discovered that my Chicano colleagues had a very different connection to Guadalupan imagery. They had expropriated it, reactivated it, recontextualized it, and turned it into a symbol of resistance, something that Mexicans have never been able to fully understand. In the Chicano movement, *la Virgen* was no longer the contemplative mestiza Mother of all Mexicans, but a warrior goddess who blessed the cultural and political weapons of activists and artists.

-Guillermo Gomez-Pena, 1996

*Act 3: Movement Knowledge and Chicana Hybridity*

This chapter reflects how I depict the hybridity of the Guadalupana’ and Mestiza images and the impact both have had on the folklórico archetype of the “Chicana Mestiza” as experienced through the eyes of a Chicana folklorista. My own personal encounter with this archetype consists of a narrative that depicts the Guadalupana influence in folklórico, historical context, movement knowledge and dance ethnography. Various dances in Mexican folklore derive from the role of the Mestiza woman, sometimes viewed in a procession or through a ceremonial dance in her honor. The danzantes in this type of procession of *danza* can be seen holding a portrait of Guadalupe as they walk onto their sacred space of ceremony. This can be depicted as the cultural symbol of *mexicanidad* as well as a generator of symbolic devotion in honor of *Tonantzin* and *La Virgen*. The historical context of this chapter derives not only from the apparition, but narrative and modern view of how Guadalupe has influenced the *Mestiza* role in dance and the Chicana interpretation of her duality in dance.
The Guadalupe story appears to be a simple one, yet it is rooted in a socio-political and cultural history. The Mexican people are descendants of the pre-Columbian Olmecs who founded the first advanced civilization in Mexico around 1200 B.C.E. Because of their abiding influence on the other cultures of the region, the Olmecs are considered the mother of the Meso-American cultures. Through commerce and religion, the Olmecs exercised a deep influence on the cultures of the Toltecs, the Teotihuacans, the Mayas, the Aztecs, and the Zapoteacans, among others. Toward the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century C.E., seven Nahua tribes came to the valley of Mexico, one of which were the Aztecs. The Aztecs came from the north, west of Mexico, the land that was known as the mythic Aztlan. The people came under the leadership of their priest, Tenoch. According to the legend, the gods told the priest that the people would see a sign indicating that they had reached the ‘Promised Land.’ The sign was reportedly found in the middle of the seven lakes, and as is well known, Mexico City is built upon these lakes. (Rodriguez, 2008)

As a daughter of two Mexican born parents who migrated to the US in the 1960s from Mexico I was exposed to Roman Catholic faith. It was through baptism, first communion and confirmation that I became a member of the Catholic church. I didn’t know much about the religious Roman Catholic lineage that my grandparents experienced. All the information I had was that in Guanajuato, Jalisco and Yurecaro, Michoacan is where they also began to engage their faith as Catholics. As an active participant in communion and Sunday school during my youth, walking into a Roman Catholic church at the age of 18 years old was definitely a time of exploration. I would always find myself questioning the evolution of Guadalupe and how I came to embrace
this cultural icon. I began to question as to why she resembled a European version of the Indigenous Goddess of the Americas, “Tonantzin” who I have come to validate as an adult. I grew up in a Catholic home with the Marian image of Guadalupe that sat above my bed post, and was featured on wall calendars, lamps and wall portraits. I always believed that Guadalupe took care of me and was a symbol of safety, as she clasped her hands just as my family did when they would pray. According to my grandmother, Crescencia Vargas, she believed that with faith Guadalupe would be the one to protect me from future accidents and any danger that came into my path. She, Guadalupe was the first person I prayed to because she embodied the symbol of a mother and caretaker just as the maternal figures in my life did. The image of Guadalupe always reminded me of the female deity that I have always admired as my very own personal Goddess. My experiential knowledge during this religious journey evolved into constant analyzing of Marian images, and the spiritual knowledge of the numerous processions that I saw being performed during folklorico performances, danza Azteca ceremonies, teatro(theatre) at annual festivals. It was usually during the month of December which is the designated month to celebrate and pay homage to Guadalupe that I would see her image displayed on a banner or portrait during an indigenous blessing of Aztec dancers or danzas in her honor. My youthful curiosity about the world at a very early age helped me recognize that these particular cultural performances, rituals, and observances had extraordinary meaning for my culture, family and spiritual practices.

I’ve enacted my own embodiment of Chicana Duality by my individual portrayal of the Guadalupana in my daily life performances— usually in the morning through
prayer and various discussions in graduate classes. During a graduate Chicana/o art seminar I recall discussing my view on her symbolic identity through the sharing of a prayer card with the Guadalupana image. This was after some of the discussion in class got very intense with some of the students exchanging conversation and their views on her lineage and what she stood for. I began to be silenced by the opposition to Catholic religion and the discussion of how she was part of a religion that was forced upon the indigenous after the Spaniards arrival. What these classmates didn’t know is that I carried a Guadalupe prayer card in my purse because it was a token of remembrance from my grandmother Crescencia’s rosary after her death, and that this symbol made me feel protected. I would make it a ritual to acknowledge Guadalupe and my grandparents before I went on stage because she represented origin, tradition, *mestizaje* and a blessing for a great performance.

It is true, as we have seen in every case, that the experiences of identity generated by the dances reinvent the sense of origins, tradition, and ethnicity, but I consider, as Guillermo de La Pena(2001) put it, “that [t]o ignore the ethnic dimension of these groups is to deny them the possibility of constructing their own history, distinct from which has been written from the viewpoint of those in power”(de la Pena, 62). Jacques Attali(1999) reminds us that the memory of a path inscribes itself more effectively in the body than in the mind. “This is the beginning of the art of the dance, a strange place of meeting between a very ancient image and one of the major talents of the future, one of the paths of wisdom. To dance is to move along the lines of a labyrinth. All myths teach that the labyrinth is the origin of the dance.” (Attali, 88) Post(2006) contends that not all individuals engaged in activities that include “in-person witnessing, observing,
questioning, tape-recording, photographing, and in some cases performing” (Titon, 321) are involved in order to contribute to ethnographic studies that will enhance the scholarly understanding of performance. She says, “They might have aspirations as performers, as filmmakers, or they may be seeking their own individual musical experience or personal growth through extended participation and observation of one or more musical cultures. In fact, there is not always a clear distinction made in the popular literature between the fieldwork data of academically oriented ethnomusicologists and other musics created by musicians and producers for local audiences, tourists, and global music consumers.” (Post, 2)

Re-creating Identification

I always felt that my performance identity in the Catholic world became that of a “Chicana,” a Mexican-American female that was discovering her hybrid culture. I became acquainted with the term of Chicana and my evolving journey allowed me to embrace and dissect a diverse religious female archetype who has been highly debated in academia. My performance became that of a “cultural Catholic,” or Mestizaje identity. Describing this term to some colleagues became one of those rasquache or self-invented terms that I remember making reference to in my early college years. Armando Rendon's "Chicano Manifesto" published in 1971 describes how he was raised as a Latino in the United States as he was dealing with a complex personal heritage. For Armando Rendon, this entailed coming to terms with his own background. Rendon(1971) writes:

I am a Chicano. What that means to me may be entirely different from what meaning the word has for you. To be Chicano is to find out something about one’s self which has lain dormant, subverted, and nearly destroyed.
I am a Chicano because of a unique fusion of bloods and history and culture. I am a Chicano because I sense a rising awareness among others like my—self of a fresh rebirth of self and self—in—others.

I am a Chicano because from this revived and newly created personality I draw vitality and motivation more forceful and tangible than I ever did or could have from the gringo world.

I am a Chicano in spite of scorn or derision, in spite of opposition even from my own people, many of whom do not understand and may never fathom what Chicano means.

I am a Chicano, hopeful that my acceptance and assertion of Chicanismo will mean a better life for all my people that it will move others into making the same act of will to accept and develop a newfound identity and power….

There is a mystique among us Chicanos, something that we have searched for and now have found. It draws us together, welds from insecure, disparate groups and viewpoints a common focal thought, experience, and power. For so many years we have disclaimed or claimed this or that label, sought leadership even from the Anglo, founded any number of organizations, worried over internal issues, fought for prestige and position within our little groups; and all the while the Anglo kept us in subjugation.

To be Chicano is nothing new; it is as old as our people. But it is a new way of knowing your brown brother and of understanding our brown race. To be Chicano means that a person has looked deeper into his being and sought unique ties to his brothers in la raza.

Renee De La Torre Castellanos article, “The Zapopan Dancers,” examines how current dance practices are able to re-create the memory of being identified with the tradition of being Mexican in order to link Catholic believers to the indigenous line of descent. De La Torre Castellanos, addresses the cultural mix between indigenous past and colonial Catholicism. She argues that in Mexico the dance is an expression of popular religion, originating in pre-Hispanic and colonial times, that has managed to stay alive up to the present times as a form of devotion associated with the central images of Catholicism. Until a few decades ago, the religious traditions of the dance seemed to be dying out or losing strength (Medrano de Luna 2001), but today there is a revival in this way of
paying homage to the Virgin by dancing, much as the indigenous peoples of Mexico used
to dance in honor of their dieties. (De La Torre Castellanos, 2001) With the
diversification of various dance styles, and dance companies and the young people
performing dances of the conchero of the Aztec have ceased to identify their religion
instead and are searching for their own symbols that connect them to their Mexicanidad.
The instruments used by Concheros dancers for singing at "velaciones" (nighttime
rituals) and for dancing at "obligaciones" (dance obligations) are string instruments that
consist of three variants: mandolino de concheros or mandolina conchera: with 4 double
courses (8 strings), vihuela de concheros or vihuela conchera: with 5 double courses (10
strings), guitarra de concheros or guitarra conchera: with 6 double courses (12 strings).
In their structure these instruments have a concha (armadillo shell), or a shell-like wood
body or a gourd as resonance box.

The Aztec dances, also known as the dance of concheros, portray the indigenous
past by re-creating the Aztec culture of the high plateau of Mexico. Their rituals are a
syncretic manifestation of the Mexican national sense and religious spirit, in which pre-
Hispanic rites combine with symbols of Catholic devotion. The key to autochthonous
knowledge is kept alive in religious syncreticism, by which the religious culture of the
ancient Mexicans lives on beneath the signifiers of Catholic culture. (De La Torre-
Castellanos, 2001)

La danza de los concheros y los valores culturales
Que en ella expresan poseen caracteristicas sincreticas
y reculturalizadas, entendiendone este ultimo termino
un movimiento de reconciliacion con las antiguas raices
The dance of the concheros and the valued cultures
That they express, possess syncretic characteristics
and re-culturalizations, understanding with this final one I conclude
a movement of reconciliation with the ancient races
of “mexicanidad”
-Anahuac Gonzalez Torres, 1996

El baile de los Concheros was performed before the Spanish Conquest, using an
instrument called, the concha. The Conchero dancers identify themselves as Los Apaches
and also claim a pre-Columbian origin, Queretaro, for both the dance and the concha used
in their performances. The dance involves men and women of all ages, elders and small
children that carry a banner with a long staff, with a Christian emblem. Attire used to
dance is a two-piece that includes a cape and skirt reaching below the knees. The analysis
of the dance style is that of alternate hop, taps and crouches and Russian like knee bends.
Toe touching is a feature of the Hornpipe and Sword Dances ritual that is influential to
the Jarabes of Jalisco and Michoacan.

Dance ethnologist Gertrude Kurath contends that the analysis of knowledge
movement of los Concheros as a style of being “utterly Indian,” in comparison to the
European influences of Russia, England and Spain; with a special quality of emphasis by
heel brushes, knee bends which were highly characteristic of the Sioux and Pueblo Indian
dances. She describes the movement as skips with back pulls, limping slides, grapevines
and toe touching. The northern Indians touch simultaneously with the hop, in even beat;
the Concheros alternate hop and tap in iambic metre. Examples are: The Sioux War Dances, the Hoop Dance of Standing Rock, North Dakota and Taos, New Mexico; the Horse Tail and The Eagle of Dances of Tesque; the Zuni Harvest Dance. (Kurath, 1946) She continues to address in her analysis the origin of the costume of the Concheros and their plumed coronet and that of the Dakota Indian headdress that is primarily compared to that of an Aztec plumage as shown in ancient codices. And what of the concha, the most distinguishing feature of the Concheros? Its provenience is a question for musicologists to decide- if it is pre-Columbian, it is the only native lute-like instrument ever found among Indians, producing the only vertically harmonized music aboriginal on this continent, music in diatonic major scales. But nowhere in Europe do dancers accompany themselves in quite the way the Concheros do. (Kurath 1946). Lastly, Kurath identifies that there was mixed evidence of costumes and dance not only being entirely indigenous but becoming hybrid due to the hybridity of origin. European importations, of Mestizo music and social dances that have been absorbed and expressed in their own native traditional styles that we have geographically attributed to but have imported into our own pilgrimage of how we interpret these types of dance origins.

*Mestizo Influence and Identification*

The northern region of Tamaulipas, Mexico has a specific dance called “La Picota” this a Mestizo influenced regional dance derived over hundreds of years and has been traced back to the Mayans who settled the Yucatan Peninsula in 2000 B.C. These traditional dances and “danzas” are identified by the region of la Villa de San Carlos, a high mountainous peak village and are performed by dance groups with the influence of Mestizo or indigenous roots. Defined as Mestizo ceremonial dances the “Picotas” have
been described as historically indigenous to the region of Tamaulipas and with European influence. The style reaches back to the earliest settlements of the Mayans and can be traced back to as early as 1519 when Spanish Conquistadors entered their state. The traditional dances and “danzas” are identified by the region from where they come from and are performed with the instrumental accompaniment of traditional drums and clarinet. The traditional drum is called the tambora and the clarinet suggests European influence, which is why “Picotas” is categorized as a Mestizo dance tradition. Reminiscent of Scottish folk dancing “chotis”, the movements of the dance, which are rhythmic, include jumping, leaping and swirling. Performed in a traditional “Picotas” one piece cotton dress for the women, the dress combines embroidered symbols of eagles, birds and cactus; while the men wear a long sleeved cotton shirt and pants. Dancers either wear sandals or no shoes to accompany the channeling of indigenous spirits for joyous events and celebrations such as weddings and blessings of space. This type of genre of danza, “Picotas,” is considered a traditional dance form that has evolved and can be categorized by folklorists as Danza, Mestizo or Mexican regional dances. With danza is considered to folklórico dancers and folklorists as the purest traditional dance with little outside influence, Mestizo maintains the original tradition but often contains the religiously inspired dance with outside influence.

Deidre Sklar published an oral defense for her doctoral dissertation entitled, “Five Premises for a Culturally Sensitive Approach to Dance,” based on her work on “movement ethnography,” of a religious fiesta performed in Las Cruces, New Mexico. She elaborated a list of working premises for an ethnographic approach to movement analysis. According to Skylar (1991) this is an important part of the way Mestizo dances
should be examined as they are always conceptualized and interpreted through the theoretical parameters and cultural context that they derive from. “To speak of movement as a way of knowing implies that the way people move is as much a clue to who they are as the way they speak. The postures and movements of people in a Episcopalian church congregation, for example, are not only different from the postures and movements of people at Pentecostal meeting, they embody different social and religious realities. Likewise, someone performing the body postures and moves of ballet embodies a piece of “cultural knowledge” that is different from the knowledge embodied by a performer of the hula. If I move in an Episcopalian church the way I would in a Pentecostal, or if I dance in a ballet with the moves and aesthetic appropriate to hula, I would immediately be recognized as “not belonging.” (Sklar, 30)

Sklar (1991) identifies in her article that the five working premises for an “ethnographic approach” are: 1) Movement knowledge is a kind of cultural knowledge, 2) Movement knowledge is conceptual and emotional as well as kinesthetic; 3) Movement knowledge is intertwined with other kinds of cultural knowledge, 4) One has to look beyond movement to get at its meaning and lastly 5) Movement is always an immediate corporeal experience. Although one must resort to words to understand the symbolic meaning of movement, talking cannot reveal what is known through the media of movement. The cultural knowledge that is embodied in movement and emotional experience depends upon cultural learning. Since we all inevitably embody our own very particular cultural perspectives, we must do more than look at movement when we write about dance.

Sacred Space
The idea of *mestizaje* and how the Catholic Church was brought into my life has caused me to create a borderland myself. I would find myself questioning the skin color of Guadalupe in church and how the *mestizaje* of our people brought Roman Catholicism into many practitioners lives every Sunday. I sat there reading the scriptures wondering if God was a woman, animal or deity and how he or she would keep my family from harm if I prayed hard enough. Who would I pray to and was it fate that would create my destiny not prayer? Catholicism became a border that I dared not to cross after I soon realized that a sibling’s illness would affect my family’s life and turn me away from my Catholic faith. I was a believer in Catholicism, saints and prayer until my younger sister, who was 4 years old at the time, became ill with Leukemia. Although she is now a cancer survivor and is a beautiful 21 year old woman, I still held that resistance towards whatever faith I would follow. At the time of my religious limbo, I was an 18 year old, first year college student, who was devastated by the idea of how God or the saints that I prayed to would allow a child to become ill with cancer. It was during that time that I turned away from the church and began to question my faith. My mother felt just the opposite as she would say, “Mija, have faith and she will get better. Just pray.” I then became labeled as the “Atheist” and “Cultural Catholic” but I did see how my family’s faith had connected them to God through the patron saint of “Guadalupe.” I can still envision my grandmother and mother kneeling in front of Guadalupe asking her for her guidance for our family’s healing and strength of faith.

Elaine Pena’s article, “Guadalupan Sacred Space,” addresses that in many Mexican households there is a statue in the home, front or back yard garden where the Virgin de Guadalupe is placed in order to create a place of worship. My grandmother had
a Guadalupe lamp, statue and miniature water fountain as part of her shrine in her home which was her place of worship. She knelt in front of this sacred space every morning and evening with her rosario praying for her family’s well-being, health and for those who were in need of faith. I know she prayed for me all the time before her passing because she knew I had doubted the faith she raised me with. She always told me to pray and to create my own sacred space which I now have in my home. I today have pictures of loved ones who have passed, a rosario and a picture of Guadalupe in my own small shrine in my living room. It is amazing to think how nationally known spaces just such as the Basilica Antigua de Guadalupe in Mexico City has motivated my grandmother and other Guadalupanas who create their own shrines and sacred space for Guadalupe. I remember my grandmother’s stories about her travels to the Basilica in Mexico where she would bring back blessed rosarios for some family members. When she returned with these blessed rosarios she felt like a saint of God and Guadalupe herself as these religious gifts would allow those who received them to pray peacefully in their sacred spaces.

Pena (2008) refers to a 40 year old Guadalupana, Dolores de los Angeles, who was part of the pilgrimage to the Second Tepayac site in Chicago. Pena says, “She commented that the walk was cold and long, and she was tired, but her love for la Virgencita was greater than her discomfort. De los Angeles also spoke of the necessity of keeping and teaching “nuestra cultura, nuestra lengua”[our culture, our language] for our children. We cannot lose where we came from.” (Pena, 736). Just like the Virgen appeared to Juan Diego she appeared to me in a photograph. Seven years ago this December, I was in a terrible car accident and nearly died. I walked away from the accident without a single broken bone but it was due to my faith and prayer that night. I
remember asking God for help and praying, something I really had not done in years. When I got the car accident pictures back from a friend who took them of my damaged car, she noticed an imprint of dirt that formed the image of Guadalupe on my passenger door seat. I tell my friends that the accident renewed my faith in god and of the Guadalupana that has been with me throughout my journey. My mother took me to a Catholic church, “Our Lady of Guadalupe,” that Sunday in our hometown of Santa Barbara after the accident to speak to a priest. I had tears in my eyes as the priest said, “That my faith helped me.” I look at my pilgrimage and my restored faith as part of who I am and I consider myself as the proof as to how spirituality has been essential to my journey. It has allowed me to portray the Guada-Mestiza figure in dance interpretations and the hybrid lineage she derives from. My accident that night changed my life and has helped me become who I am today. I see myself the proof a Chicana who not only has faith in angels, saints and in the patroness of the Americas Guadalupe, but who has great faith and devotion to this spiritual deity of an unknown God, myself and my rediscovered Guada-mestiza identity.

In Luis D. Leon’s article, “Metaphor and Place,” he quotes a woman by the name of Senora Ines de la Cruz who maintains a home altar of Guadalupe. She says, “My altar for me, and to have the Virgen de Guadalupe there is like having a blessing in my home. This is a belief that perhaps those who are not Mexican Catholics will judge and call me crazy, saying, crazy woman how is that picture going to help? But, that is my faith, that is the belief and faith of my family. I never get up without going first to the Virgen.” (Leon, 547). This is reminiscent of my mothers and grandmothers homes that both have a shrine or altar dedicated to Guadalupe, a woman who sees no borderlands and can travel to the
U.S. and Mexico without having to show her papeles. The symbolism behind this “mother of all mothers” was that she was their patron saint from Mexico who guided them to safety when they themselves crossed over to the United States to start their lives as Americans. This cultural and religious icon was bigger than the church to them because she was their guidance, help and blessing that has continued their infinite connection to God and their faith.

Anzaldua (1987) contends that Guadalupe unites people of different races, religions and languages, Chicano protestants, American Indians and whites. “Nuestra abogada siempre seras/Our mediatrix you will always be.” She meditates between the Spanish and the Indian cultures (or three cultures as in the case of Mexicanos of African or other ancestry) and between Chicanos and the white world. She meditates between humans and the divine, between this reality and the reality of spirit entities. La Virgen de Guadalupe is the symbol of ethnic identity and of the tolerance for ambiguity that Chicanos/Mexicanos, people of mixed race, people who have Indian blood, people who cross cultures, by necessity progress. Viewing Guadalupe’s counterpart her inner Mestiza and traditional role in danza azteca is something that can be viewed as a link to corporeal recuperation or embodied knowledge. Huerta (2008) writes in her work that embodied knowledge of danza Azteca provide important spaces for community building and personal identification, two aspects that influence many danzantes to enter a danza group. As each dance corresponds to a particular philosophical-scientific principle within Aztec/Mexica thought, the practices within belonging and cultural performance communities are part of the transnational imaginings.
Learning danza Azteca as a Chicana has contributed to my view of the Guada-
Mestiza archetype that I consider, an embodiment and hybridity of a ritual devotion to
Guadalupe and my inner Mestiza. It is not only being political and socially aware of my
dancer’s Chicana identity it is also the continuance of traditional danza. As a maestra of
a new legacy and representative of “Nuevo Chicana/o” folklórico dance,” I see myself as
someone who is practicing and performing what I have been taught by maestros
artesanos. When performing as the danzante on stage I will take into account the drum
beats and instruments and become part of a traditional ritual of a community of people
who are transnational and represent an indigeneity that has been reinvented and
reinterpreted through the eyes of a director and his/her dance group. In Elisa Diana
Huerta’s (2009) article, “Emodied Recuperations,” she addresses Benedict Anderson’s
notion of imagined communities (1991) and how it is useful in thinking about how
Chicana/os and Mexicana/os in the United States imagine themselves as indigenous and
how they imagine their relationship with other communities. He suggests that the nation
is “an imagined political community” and “communities are to be distinguished, not by
their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.” (Anderson, 6) He
continues with elaborating that the implication of such a model is that it breaks
conventional notions that communities are easily identifiable and recognizable to
everyone. Thus for some groups, like Mexica dancers, a different type of imagining takes
place. Not only are they in conversation with contemporary danzantes transnationally,
they also imagine and understand themselves as the carriers of the legacy of Azteca-
Mexica cultural, political and social practices.
Turning to Guadalupe or “Bailando para La Guadalupana” allows Chicanas an opportunity to better comprehend their contradictory mestiza/o origins and heritage and the colliding religious perspectives. Although today’s Chicana/os remain critical of Catholic dogma and its role in the conquest, their inventing an indigenism based on Aztec-Mexica fantasy heritage remains problematic. Dance plays a huge role in these “imagined communities” and keeps an active role. However, as Arturo Aldama (2012) observes in *Comparative Indigeneities of the Americas*: Chicano/as must look beyond the Aztec fantasy heritage of the Chicano movement and reclaim their true indigenous origins and family history. Likewise, Chicana/o Studies needs to continue developing classes in mixed spirituality and religion at the same time acknowledging the role of padres in the Chicano movement and the central role that “la iglesia” (church) continues to play in Latina/o communities.

Maria Teresa Cesena’s (2009) article, “Creating Agency and Identity in Danza Azteca,” touches upon the introduction of danza Azteca and how for some Chicanos it is viewed as an adaptation of the material culture that was given to them by their maestros, allowing them to feel as if they were uncovering how their ancestors might have been and who they were as Chicanos. During her interviews with two folklórico groups: a community group and university student group she found that the student group claimed ties to the political and spiritual indigenous identity; while the community group was tied to the spiritual and cultural fulfillment of danza. Cesena’s findings included that danza teaches *danzantes* the importance of leading life in a balance with the rest of the universe. “Regardless of each group’s ideological differences, both achieved balance through sacrifice and fulfillment of obligations, whether those obligations were to one’s own
family, the group, school, or wider community, or to the Creator. Resulting in a pride for their indigenous heritage and a strong desire to express, rather than suppress, their heritage.” (Cesena, 92-93)

Inninanztin in huelneli Teotl Dios: Mother of the True God.
Inninanztin in ipalnemohuani: Mother of the Giver of Life.
Innianzatin in Teyocoyani: Mother of the Inventor of Humanity
Inninantzin in Tloque Nahuaque: Mother of the Lord of Near and Far (this is in fact the name of the omnipotent, invisible Supreme Creator known to the pre-Conquest Mexicans.)
Inninantzin in Ilhicahua in Tlalticapaque: Mother of (the lord of) Heaven and Earth.
-Five names given to the Supreme God of the Nahua People (Castillo, 1996)
Chapter Four
Chuca’ Suave

"The Dancer believes that his art has something to say which cannot be expressed in words or in any other way than by dancing... there are times when the simple dignity of movement can fulfill the function of a volume of words. There are movements which impinge upon the nerves with a strength that is incomparable, for movement has power to stir the senses and emotions, unique in itself. This is the dancer's justification for being, and his reason for searching further for deeper aspects of his art."

-Doris Humphrey, 1937

Act 4: Choreographing Chicana Dance Identity through Promotion and Preservation

Presenting my performative auto-ethno-choreographic cuadro as an active participant in folklórico is a vital part in creating a discussion and final analysis of how the archetype of the “Chuca Suave,” will be expressed in this chapter. Deriving from the Mexican American generation and fashion of the 1940’s Pachuca/o era, I am the Chicana who lives in the community, and is working toward a higher education degree in a field of Dance studies that has not fully acknowledged her folklórico dance genre. I consider myself to be a descendant of the “Pachuca” and the classy and smooth fashion style of my archetype “Chuca Suave,” who has been influenced by vintage fashion, consisting of a 40’s era pencil skirt and button up short sleeve blouse. Her character is rarely viewed on stage in a dance suite, unless the costuming used in a performance derives from the play “Zoot Suit.” The fashion of “Chuca Suave,” differs from what she practices with during dance rehearsals. She can be seen wearing her gym clothes, hair up, and
folklórico shoes as she stands in front of her students weekly, teaching a Mexican folklórico class that is offered as a specialty dance course. She is interested in developing a space to express identity, culture and linking the relationship of *mexicanidad* and *chicanidad* that will also invite others to contribute to the up and coming genre of *Chicana/o* folklorico. She feels that dialogue can be created by a dance recital and written thesis that will expose her *artesana* (craftswoman) skills from within the cultural frame of a Chicana with a methodology of creativity, preservation, practice and documentation such as a reflexive narrative. She has ties to newspaper print as she holds two bachelor’s degrees, one in Chicana/o Studies and the other in Journalism. As a high school student she discovered that print journalism would give her a Chicana voice and reach many in her local community of Santa Barbara. She sees cultural diversity as a necessity for students who contribute to their high school newspapers. This final archetype serves as a conclusion to her journey and fusion of identity as a Chicana, dance scholar and journalist. She has become the “Chuca Suave,” who is preserving her identity and presenting it on stage through an archetype that is a reflection of her role as a Chicana in dance.

Macias (2008) contends that “Latinidad” became essential to the Mexican American generation that sought representation in the Latin music scene by creating music oriented social spaces. The influence of the 1930’s Spanish language radio and the production of mambo, jazz and rumba styles emerged as a popular culture. The increase of “holiday” themed events that were produced by promoter and trombonist Chico Sesma were essential to the development of society bands, social status, economic opportunities, and challenging stereotypes and the mojo of Mexican Americans who attended Latin
dance ballrooms and tardeadas. Through the fusion of Mexican and Afro-cuban influenced styles, legends such as Perez Prado, Miguelito Valdes, Tito Puente, Eddie Cano and Beny More transcended the mambo music genre and contributed to the expressive culture that has influenced and transformed the rich sounds of Latin music and dance often called “salsa” today.

While looking at folklórico and the time frame of the Chicana/o movement, I felt that I needed to conclude this testimonio by developing the archetype of *Chuca Suave*, and making a comparison of how the creation of a Chicana musical and dance space has allowed me as a folklórico student and teacher to create dance suites and performances that are relevant to the Chicana/o and Latina/o folklórico dance communities and have timeless boundaries. Chicana/o scholarship opened up new ways of thinking. When I first began the Chicana/o studies graduate program at CSUN I first titled my thesis work, “The Chicano Movement & the Evolution of Chicano Community Newspapers.” I contacted Dr. Karin Duran, Chicana/o Studies faculty and head librarian about research leads on Chicana/o community newspapers and journals. Dr. Duran informed me that there were not many community newspapers that had been researched or indexed so I would need to deal with primary sources or newspapers themselves. I began to look at how the contributions of past academic journals were an example of how Chicana/o scholars found a way to preserve and promote a field of academic content. A scholar in Chicana/o studies can be reinvigorated by creating a new framework that would challenge scholars in this field to transcend a traditional approach to Chicana/o academic content (Pizarro, 2004). Chicano scholars founded publications as a way to voice their interpreted theories on nationalism, identity and social change (Arroyo; Gomez-
Quinones, 1976). The historical assessment on the contributions made by Chicano historians and how Chicano studies became an academic agenda for advancement in scholarship within Chicano publications was essential in creating vital space for Chicana/os (Arroyo; Gomez-Quinones, 1976).

Russell Rodriguez (2009) discusses in his article, “Folklórico in the United States: Cultural Preservation and Disillusion,” that “it is important to ask what the relationship is between mexicanidad and chicanidad, specifically within cultural expression.” He asks, “Why was it that in folklórico, collecting, preserving, and promoting mexicanidad was the ultimate aim of the expression? Why wasn’t dance seriously developed as an expression that could represent the Chicano community or a U.S. experience? Does the expression of dance have the same possibilities of contributing to a politics of identity as other cultural expressions? Also how does the notion of context fit in the method of preserving and promoting mexicanidad in the United States.” (Rodriguez, 337) Preservation and promotion of Chicanidad/Mexicanidad has allowed me to create my own voice and variations when creating a dance suite and in documenting folklórico dance. I have experienced as a folklórico teacher that my role as a Chicana has allowed me to create an alternative voice and sacred space for cultural expression and identity. In the syllabus that I have developed for my East Los Angeles community college dance specialty course in Mexican folklórico dance, I require that students keep a journal in order to document their progress. In addition they are required to attend two Latin or global dance or music events and identify: dance terminology, regional costuming, history, and cultural origins of folklórico dance.
Jose Esteban Munoz (1992) explains that disidentification is the work at a side between identification and counteridentification. “While identification registers a subject identifying with the dominant culture, counteridentification finds a subject imagining that he or she outside ideology or in opposition to the dominant culture. These have been the two poles for examining identity formation (resistance/capitulation or assimilation/opposition). Disidentification, Munoz posits, is not simply the identification against, but a process of crafting and performing the self for subjects outside the dominant public spheres. A process that enables politics, it is a third mode of dealing with dominant ideology. “One that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology.” (Munoz, 12)

When the body dances as an object of history it produces meaning against and within and to the discourses that form identity. The dancing body speaks a language irreducible to words, and the dancing body acts in relation to interpellating categories of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexual identity. The act of stylization and restylization of dance by the dancer as well as the self-instruction—learning are the techniques of cultural production by Chicana/o youth during the early and mid-1960s. Additionally, the acts of watching and participating, a relation between spectators and participants, provide a structure for producing community identity. If examination of subcultural style requires looking at a culture not as the “study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life” but thinking about the culture as “the study of relationships in a whole way of conflict,” then the dance provides a way of exploring identity in a local context. (Miranda, 67)
**Exploration of Feminism**

Segura and Pesquera (1990) conducted a survey of 101 Chicanas and their perspectives on Chicana Feminism. They found that Chicanas identified with their identities through views on cultural nationalism, feminist issues and historical subordination. Analyzing the perspectives of Chicana feminism was necessary when examining how Chicana feminist scholarly journals influenced the thought and writings of Chicana/os in the movement. The Chicanas surveyed were in higher education and identified themselves as professors, graduate and undergraduate students. The majority of these women had been exposed to the concept of feminism through their educational systems and had experienced gender based oppression which led to their identification with feminism and empowerment. Analyzing these types of perspectives on Chicana feminism is necessary when examining how early Chicana scholars structured their concept of feminism and created a voice through their analysis and movement.

Dicochea (2004) found that the analysis of *Regeneracion* and *Encuentro Femenil*, two Chicana publications, were an important factor of how Chicana scholars were vital in the development of discourse, publications and exploration of Feminism. Dicochea’ focused on the analysis of the Chicana Critical Rhetoric and recrafting “La Causa” in the Chicano movement discourse of the 1970’s because it allowed Chicanas to be viewed as agents of change. During the years of 1970-1975 the role of “traditional” values and acceptance of “changing roles,” were the basis of providing new theoretical approaches to Chicana issues and history. Dicochea suggests that “La Causa” was an important factor that influenced the writings of Chicanas and the purpose of their publications. The emerging
roles as Chicana scholars and the acknowledgement of Chicana issues were vital in leadership and development of the Chicana movement discourse and publications.

Garcia (1997) takes into account the historical importance of Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, a late 1960’s Chicana newspaper and the prestige of evolving Chicana literary works that were influenced by feminist thought. The examination of Chicana feminist discourse created a platform that would address the Chicana paradigm and issues of racism, sexism and machismo through academic journals. Chicana feminist thought is vital when discussing the Chicano Movement of the 1960’s and the evolution of academic journals of color. Chicana academic journals and their content make it evident that self-archiving and credible research can create a deeper understanding of literary outputs. Furthermore, Cuadraz (2005) explores the historical account of three decades, 1960, 1970, 1980 and the contributions that Chicanas have had on higher education. Their positive influence in Chicana literature and historical journals such as Encuentro Femenil have contributed to the development of Chicana studies and feminist thought. The development of “print culture” as a sign of gained entry into scholarship for Chicana pioneers was a force to shape Chicana scholarship.

In order to create an expanding space for the exploration of Chicana Feminism and Chicana scholarship the influences of both the Chicano movement and modern feminist movement through literary works and dance performance will still need to be continually explored. Present dance suites and production choreographed by Chicanas are a vital source to refute concepts and myths on early perspectives on Chicana identity, gender roles and discourse. By examining the evolution of Chicana/o folklórico it allows for academe to view Chicanas’ contributions to higher education and dance studies and as a
tool of empowerment for future scholars. Through the emergence of early writings by Chicanas and their contributions in collective publications, ethnographies and historical narratives, feminist dialogue has been identified and empowerment developed. The creation of a vital space for Feminist exploration and growth of Chicana Studies is an important part of the evolution of Chicana/o as a discipline.

**Accessibility and development of Chicana/o folklórico**

Lastly, the accessibility and development of Chicana/o folklórico is vital to the empowerment of Chicana/o scholars and to the expansion of Chicana/o studies. Loeb’s (1980) case study deals specifically with the difficulty of accessing Chicana sources such as books, periodicals and film in present library collections. The invisibility of Chicanas in library periodical collections is important to identify because they are a relevant voice of scholarship in Chicana/o studies academe. In a related study Vega Garcia (2000) examines the issue of diversity in library collections and the necessity of broadening access to Latino periodicals and coverage of ethnic diversity in research libraries. The development of research periodical collections is an important factor in the expansion of Chicana/o studies.

Similarly, Macias (2005) focuses on the success that Chicano scholars have in creating space through Chicano programs and development of research. He argues that scholarly journals such as *Aztlán*, were about intellectual space and *El Grito* about voice. The accessibility of journals like that of Chicana/o folklórico dance productions today has contributed to the empowerment of Chicana/o studies as an academic discourse. It is important for cultural studies programs and libraries to add dance production media
which will allow assessment of “Chicano identity” and the discipline. The unfortunate circumstance is that many Chicana/os folklórico dancers who published work in the early 1960-1980 are difficult to locate. It would be feasible to hire bibliographers knowledgeable of Chicano literary resources, Chicana/o librarians, Chicana/o library collections and accessibility to ways of viewing publications that are now ceased, out of print or only viewable by microfilm. Accessibility to folklórico dance journals and works would allow scholars to create a Chicano paradigm, future developments in research and empower the academe of Chicana/o Studies. The writings and dance productions of past and present publications in Chicana/o Studies will allow us to reflect on our consciousness as Chicana/o scholars and call for information to explore the spirit of the Chicana/o dance movement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the influential research and scholarship of the Chicana/o folklórico movement is very present today in Chicana/o Studies academe due to the vital academic space where students will continue to investigate and pursue voicing their narrative in dance. However, in order to represent the Chicana/o voice through dance productions and topics of self-identification with race, class and oral histories, the auto-ethnographic narratives of folklórico dancers need to be examined. The struggle to create a place for dance scholars in future Chicana/o publications is necessary in order to have academic material viewed as a voice of the Chicana/o experience. In further exploring the dialogue on Chicana/o Folklórico Dance Interpretation, the exploration of present day Chicana/o literature, epistemology, gender, and identity investigation would allow for a new period of research and increase of scholarly contributions. Chicano representation in academe
has proven to be a strength and needs to be represented in Dance studies which is now a space for advocacy scholarship for future Chicana/o dance scholars.

In addition to the written component of this thesis I also produced and choreographed my very own “creative project,” which was a live dance recital that was video recorded. The dance production embodied the four cuadros/chapters from this thesis entitled, “Performative Testimonio,” that took place at Cypress Music Recital hall located on the Cal State Northridge campus on April 23, 2014. The production, staging and choreography for this 45 minute production included recorded music, voice overs (quoted text in each chapter introduction), costume production, original choreography and an 8 member cast of dancers. The style and genre of each original dance performed by the female archetypes presented included: Guada-Mestiza (Picotas/Danza), Adelita en Aztlán (Jesusita en Chihuahua/Norteno), Chicana Poblana (Jarabe Tapatío/Mariachi) and Chuca Suave (Chucos Suaves/ Pachuco Boogie). This recital took a year to plan creatively and also to produce it for stage with costumes, choreography and rehearsals was quite a task. The recital itself is a Chicano and Mexican folklórico dance production which I am extremely proud of. I feel this production is a result of Chicana/o Studies empowerment, folklórico dance research and academia. Empowerment through political consciousness and higher education is what has continued to motivate Chicana/os and the development of their own voice and perspectives through an intellectual alternative space that we can identify as the Chicana/o paradigm built through folklórico dance, creative projects and auto-ethnographic narrative works. Chuca Suave is the title of the last cuadro(suite) because she is a “fused” identity, that is not past or present but the future. She embodies not only folklórico but all genres of global dance and the field of cultural and dance
studies. She just like her counterparts derives from Chicana/Mexicana hybrid identities and co-exists wherever there are regional attire and Mexican ballet, modern, folk, regional, indigenous or popular mestizo dance traditions performed. Within a global and transnational world dance scene she is part of a medium of Mexican folkloric dance that is presented in the Spanish Caribbean, Central and South America and hemispherically along the U.S. Latina/o borderlands.

Royball (2004) addresses some of the current academic debate about how folklorico dances derived from Mexico. He concludes that many of these dances have transcended into the United States because choreographers are sent from Mexico. He argues that, “many Chicanos sought their own cultural renaissance, as did Mexico during its revolution, and therefore began to participate in cultural activities such as Mexican folklórico dance. In some cases, choreographers and dancers were brought into the United States to teach folklórico; in others, people were sent to study folklórico in Mexico and then returned to teach. The many instructors who found themselves in the United States represented a sizable cross section different styles and philosophies of folklórico that were still developing in Mexico.” Royball’s questions regarding “authenticity” are important because he identifies how there isn’t an original step that defines folkloric dance because as it transcended many choreographers expressed the dances in their own style. “There never been a complete, uniform set of step and choreographic technique compiled and accepted across Mexico. There is some agreement on research methodology that is borrowed from the academic world, but the manner in which researched material may be synthesized and presented on stage is still fervently debated throughout Mexico and the United States.” (Royball, 54)
This written thesis and creative project was produced in order to expose my auto-ethnographic experimental narrative viewpoint so the reader could better understand my exploration and journey as a Chicana in a Mexican folklórico dance troupe. Exploring Mexican folkloric archetypes, identifying them and bringing them to life in an original Chicano influenced dance *cuadro* (suite) was historical. I became the first Chicana to produce a dance recital based on a written thesis in the department of Chicana/o Studies at CSU Northridge. I would like to conclude that this type of folkoric work should be viewed in a larger national, transnational and global perspective along with other hybrid (folk/ballet) Chicana/o dance traditions- including European and indigenous influenced dances. As an emerging dance genre, folklórico needs to be documented in order to reinforce the need for extensive research and development in methodology, dance aesthetic and hybridity. While folklórico dance advocates continue to practice and perform this cultural art form, what is proven is that the development and interpretation of folklórico and Mexican female archetypes in dance are evolving every time they are performed by the dancers participating in the hybrid medium. Ultimately the authenticity of the dances presented will be determined by the embodiment of the concepts of tradition, the historical development, the participation in a Mexican folklórico troupe, the accompaniment of music and dance movement, the stage presentations, the regional attire, and finally the artistic and interpretive dance style of the performer. Through my own interpretations of the folkloric archetypes in folklórico dance performance I am contributing towards the establishment of the identification of Mexican/Chicano folklórico as a growing dance genre, and also as a producer of hybrid and borderland performances and folkloric archetypes.
REFERENCES


Dyson, Clare. ”The ‘Authentic Dancer’ as a Tool for Audience Engagement.” *Dance Dialogues: Conversations across cultures, arforms and practices*. Queensland University of Technology, 2008.


Appendix A: Creative Project/Performative Testimonio Flyer

Dance Recital entitled “Performative Testimonio”
Welcome

I want to thank all in attendance this evening, family, friends, fellow folkloristas and CSUN community, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Peter J. Garcia, who has been a patient mentor and supportive of me throughout my studies. His guidance and contributions to this thesis project and the field of Chicana/o Studies, folklore, music, and dance performance are very inspiring. It was his seminars in Chicana/o Studies that advanced my knowledge and interest in the field of Dance performance studies.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Mary Pardo and Profesora Yreina Cervantes who were gracious enough to come on board for this creative thesis, and whose areas of expertise have contributed greatly to this project.

In addition, I’d like to thank the Padilla family and my parents, Angel and Juana, for their love, guidance and support throughout my studies. Also to my grandparents and guardians angels Jose and Crescencio Vargas, who have inspired me from the other side of the moon with their gifts of music, dance and folklore. I would also like to acknowledge the cast of Performative Testimonio for taking part in this historical recital and for their amazing talents as dancers and collaborators.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ballet Folklorico Aztlán de CSUN, BFA alumni and folklorico dancers past and present, whom I have collaborated with and my dance mentor and maestro, Miguel Angel Diaz, who has taught me that with humility, passion, dedication and a solid zapateado anything is possible. Adelante! C/S

Cindy Padilla
M.A. Candidate-Chicana/o Studies

#performativetestimonio2014

(Please add to my online IG photo gallery under this hashtag)
Chicana Poblana

"China Poblana/Las Sombras"
Sanara Cardosa, Erika Cardosa & Marcel Cardosa

"Jarabe Tapatío/Mariachi Vargas"
Sanara Cardosa

Chicana Poblana alongside her siblings transforms into her hybrid identity on stage and concludes with dancing Jarabe Tapatío, as a solo. Originally the Jarabe Tapatío, known as Mexico's national courtship dance, included singing in the original composition that was created in the nineteenth century by Jesús González Rubio. The instrumental version of the Jarabe Tapatío, was adapted and choreographed by Felipa López in the early 1920s to help celebrate the successful end of the Mexican Revolution. It is important to identify the significance behind the song and courtship dance. Jarabe translated as sweet syrup and the natives of Guadalajara, Jalisco, where the Jarabe dance originated, identified themselves as tapatíos. The word jarabe also derives from the Arabic word harab, which means a mixture of herbs and other ingredients. Thus the courtship song and dance is about and represents the sweet mixture of people from Guadalajara, Jalisco.

Chicana Poblana stands dressed in a silk three-quarter sleeved high V-necked blouse with colorful embroidered flowers. As the tri-colored theater stage lights hit her skirt containing Asian and Spanish-influenced embroidered and colorful sequins, she looks down to view her attire, and sees her inner mestiza—highlighted in a fabric that is made only in the cities of Puebla and Mexico City. The regional outfit she wears as the Chicana, China Poblana, originated from Puebla, Mexico in the early 1800s and is worn to embody her inner hybrid identity on stage. Her plural identity on stage transforms her into the Mexiciana and Chicana Poblana; she becomes the archetype of the lover, and Asian enslaved domestic servant who resided in the city of Puebla in 1620, who was courted and fell in love with a Creole man. Chicana Poblana, transcends herself into a folklórico performer and female juggler of cultural identities and hybridity in a Mexican-American choreography that is part of a growing Chicana/o folklórico genre and era of de-colonizing performance.

Chuca Suave

"Mambo S/Perez Prado"
Diana Cabral & Carlos Fariaguire

"Chuca Suave/Lola Guerero"
Diana Cabral & Carlos Fariaguire

Chuca Suave's favorite dance genres are the mambo and the danzón. She considers herself to be a descendant of the "Fachuca" and the classy and vintage fashions of her archetype "Chuca Suave," whose fashion style consists of a 40's era pencil skirt and button up short sleeve blouse. Her character is rarely viewed on stage in a dance suite, unless the costuming used in a performance derives from Luis Valdez's play "Zoot Suit." The fashion of "Chuca Suave," differs from what she practices with during dance rehearsals.

She can be seen wearing her gym clothes, hair up, and folklorico shoes as she stands in front of her students weekly, teaching a Mexican folklorico dance class. She is interested in developing a space to express identity, culture and linking the relationship of mexicanidad and chicaniad that will invite others to contribute to an up and coming genre of Chicana/o folklorico. She feels that dialogue can be created by a dance recital and written thesis that will expose her artesano skills from within the cultural frame of a Chicana with a methodology of creative, preservation, practice and documentation such as an auto ethnographic narrative.

The influence of the 1950's Spanish language radio and the production of mambo, jazz and rumba styles are influential to her "Chuca" dance style. The increase of mambo and rumba themed events that were produced by promoter and trombonist Chico Serna were essential to the development of society bands, social status, economic opportunities, challenging stereotypes and the mojito of Mexican Americans who attended Latin dance ballrooms and tordadas. Through the fusion of Mexican and Afro-Cuban influenced styles, legends such as Perez Prado, Miguelito Valdez, Tito Puente, Eddie Cano, Berry More and Lalo Guerrero transcended the mambo music genre and contributed to the expressive culture that has influenced and transformed the rich sounds of Latin music and dance today.
Guada-Mestiza

“Revestida-Ficaras”

Cindy Padilla

Guada-Mestiza depicts the hybridity of the Guadalupana and Mestiza identities and the impact both have had on the folkloric archetype of the “Chicana Mestiza” as experienced through the eyes of a Chicana folklorist. This archetype is told through a narrative that depicts the Guadalupana influence in folkloric, historical context, movement knowledge and dance ethnography. Various dances in Mexican folklore derive from the role of the Mestiza woman, sometimes viewed in a procession or through a ceremonial dance in her honor. The dances in this type of procession dorada can be seen holding a portrait of Guadalupe as they walk onto their sacred space of ceremony. This can be depicted as the cultural symbol of mestizaje as well as a generator of symbolic devotion in honor to Tonantzin and La Virgen. The historical context of this archetype derives not only from the apparition but narrative and modern view of how Guadalupe has influenced the Mestiza role in dance and the Chicana interpretation of her duality in dance.

The northern region of Tamaulipas, Mexico, has a specific dance called “La Ficata.” This regional dance derived over hundreds of years and has been rooted back to the Mayans who settled the Yucatan Peninsula in 2000 B.C. These traditional dances and “doradas” are identified by the region of La Villa de San Carlos, a high mountainous peak village and are performed by dance groups with the influence of Mestizo or Indigenous roots. Defined as Mestizo ceremonial dances the “Ficatas” have been described as historically indigenous to the region of Tamaulipas with European influence. The style reaches back to the earliest settlements of the Mayans and can be traced back to as early as 1519 when Spanish Conquistadors entered their lands. The traditional dances and “doradas” are identified by the region from where they come from and are performed with the instrumental accompaniment of traditional drums and cymbals. The traditional drum is called the tambora and the clarinet suggests European influence which is why “Ficatas” is categorized as a Mestizo dance tradition. Reminiscent of Scottish folk dancing “clots,” the movements of the dance, which are rhythmic, include jumping, leaping and swirling. Performed in a traditional “Ficato” one piece cotton dress for the women, the dress combines embroidered symbols of eagles, birds and cactus while the men wear a long sleeved cotton shirt and pants. Dancers either wear sandals or no shoes to accompany the channeled energy of indigenous spirits for joyous events and celebrations such as weddings and blessings of space.

Adelita en Azión

“La Adelita/Lucha Moreno”

Marita Roldes

“Jesuita en Chihuahua”

Aileen Ruiz & Danny Rosales

Adelita stands tall as her sombrero rests on her head, with artillery wrapped around her heart and torso. Her black boots have traveled the endless roads of “Aztlán,” her native Chicana homeland. The sounds of her marching can be heard from afar as she presents herself on stage with a knife in hand and serious demeanor. She is revealed to her audience as an Adelita—the female soldier who identifies with Carl Aztlan, where she was born and raised. Adelita lives within the border states where women battle to represent themselves and their individual battlegrounds of hybrid identities, gender and academia. She likes to describe herself in dialogue, walking and in folkloric performance dances of a Chicana because it allows her to identify with her indigenous lineage of Mexicanidad. The archetype of “Adelita” is represented through her eyes as a hybrid identity who writes and performs to her story as a Chicana scholar and performance artist. Her genre of music can be identified as the Mexican corrido and mariachi sound and her life’s tribulations can be identified as that of a Chicana. She embodies the role of the soldadera (female soldier) and student that allow her to embrace her true identity as an activist, heroine and historian.

Corridos/palettes helped to establish and to maintain the fame of the soldadera. “La Chiva Maderista,” “La Adelita,” “La Valentina,” and “La Rellana” were popular corridos during the Revolution. Some of the words of “La Chiva Maderista” are: “If you love me as I love you, let us both go to fight for Madero.” Two heroes of the Revolution, Adolfo and Valentina, were considered “the essence of Mexican femininity,” and the corridos written to honor them had widespread popularity. The song “La Adelita,” drew its inspiration from a Durango woman who had joined the Maderista movement at an early age. “La Valentina” was a corrido based upon the life of Valentina Cárdenas, a soldadera from Sinaloa who followed Obregón’s troops. The corrido achieved widespread popularity after the year 1914. Valentina attracted particular attention with her military—dressed two cartridge belts hung across her chest and rifle hanging from her shoulder.