doi:10.1017/S014976772200033X

Antonia Mercé "La Argentina" in the Philippines: Spanish Dance and Colonial Gesture

Idoia Murga Castro

> She has arrived. The Manila public has been anxiously awaiting the opportunity to witness her exceptional art, which has won her fervent homage and ardent admiration in the world's major cities, in Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, Brussels, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and in the East, in Tokyo, Osaka, Shanghai and Hong Kong. European and American critics have been unanimous in praising her to the skies. Her passage through these cities has been triumphant: a beam of light, a ray of Spanish sunshine before the astounded eyes of the world's most artistically sophisticated, cultured audiences, a vibrant and caressing echo of traditional Spanish music imbued with classical overtones thanks to the genius of Spain's great composers, given visible form through the incomparable expressivity of this magnificent artist. Antonia Mercé, *La Argentina*!! (Dorillo 1929)

With all the excitement and anticipation evinced by these words in the Manila newspaper *El Mercantil*,[1] the Spanish dancer Antonia Mercé Luque (Buenos Aires, 1890–Bayonne, 1936), known by many as "La Argentina," sailed into the Philippines aboard the *President Pierce* on February 18, 1929, the latest stop on her new international tour.[2] She would remain in the Philippines until the end of the month, before setting a course for Saigon—currently Ho Chi Minh City—in Vietnam, continuing her journey toward the West (Photo 1). This was a pioneering world tour by a Spanish dancer, one that made available the traditional stage circuits of the Americas, and included performances in cities in Asia and Oceania that extended the impact of this dance form to new audiences. Moreover, as part of her Asian tour, the case of the Philippines is particularly interesting in terms of analyzing the impact of her work in the former Spanish colony. As a result of this visit, La Argentina paid homage to Philippine culture by creating a piece inspired by its national dance, called the cariñosa—a Spanish colonial dance—which she incorporated into her international repertoire. La Argentina arrived in Manila almost thirty years after the Treaty of Paris of 1898, which transferred Spanish sovereignty over the Philippines, leaving it to the United States.[3] The use of the English language had spread under the American influence while aspects of Spanish culture gradually lost importance. The arrival of the famous dancer, therefore, would be seen by a sector of the population closest to the former colonial power—the historical elites and Spanish descendants[4]—as an

Idoia Murga Castro, Institute of History, Spanish National Research Council, Madrid, Spain.

Idoia Murga Castro is tenured researcher at the Spanish National Research Council. She received her PhD in art history from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and has a degree in classical dance from the Royal Academy of Dance and the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. She has curated and coordinated various exhibitions, directed R&D&I projects and written books and papers about Spanish dance history and the relationship between dance and the visual arts in the twentieth century.

Photo 1. Reproduction of the portrait of Antonia Mercé La Argentina in Bolero clásico *by Mme. D'Ora, dedicated to the journal* Excelsior*, Manila, February 1929. Legado Antonia Mercé,* la Argentina*, Biblioteca Fundación Juan March, Madrid.*

opportunity to revive and reconnect with those Spanish influences that were now arriving in the form of familiar dances, music, and songs.

How can we understand the place of Spanish dance in the West at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in relation to the collapse of its colonial system that immediately preceded it? What role did Spanish dance have in the diffusion and perpetuation of the colonizing logics of the former Spanish colonies, especially through emerging cultural policies such as Hispanidad? How did Eurocentric criticism condition the configuration and interpretation of La Argentina's "Hispanic" repertoire? I seek to address these questions by examining La Argentina's political motivations in deciding to include Manila in her international tour, offer a repertoire of Spanish dance, and create a new piece in homage to the mestizo Spanish legacies in the Philippines to be performed on her return to Europe. Her motivations shed light on the place of Spanish dance in Western cultural hierarchies, considering the aspects inherited from the romanticism of Spanish culture itself as exotic and Other within the European imaginary.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

In this article, I examine La Argentina's brief stay in Manila and the creation of her solo *La Cariñosa* as a case study of the ways that early twentieth-century Spanish dance functioned as a form of "colonial gesture," allowing us to understand Spanish dance as both *colonizing* and *colonized*. The solo stylized the Filipino national dance for Western audiences, supposedly paying homage to the Filipino people but in fact concealing a gesture that continued the exercise of colonial power under the guise of the search for the bonds of a shared Hispanidad,[5] a new instrument of cultural policies built on a fictive unity in postcolonial Philippines. The solo, therefore, exercised the symbolic and assertive power of a Filipino Creole dance from colonial times. Alternatively, the presence of Spanish dance in this context, signified and occupied a place of "primitive Other" to Europe, exoticized and racialized in relation to the canon of European ballet and the hierarchies of Western dance since Romanticism. Conditioned by the Eurocentric system of cultural hierarchies and unveiled through the intersections of race, gender, class, and nation, La Argentina's *La Cariñosa* therefore allows us to analyze the place of Spanish dance as both the subject and object of colonial gestures in the panorama of transnational Modernism on the basis of the cultural legacies of Romanticism.

A series of studies have analyzed La Argentina's life and career (Rodrigo 1988, 1990; VV.AA 1990; Manso 1993; De Soye 1993; Bennahum 2000; Alberdi Alonso 2018), studied her in the framework of the European vanguards of her time (Molins and Romero 2008; Murga Castro 2017; Murga Castro and Marinero Labrador 2021), and examined her interpretations within the representation of national identity (Murga Castro 2019) and its inflections by the notions of neoclassicism, modernism, and the folk (Franko 2020). Her Asian tour of 1929 has attracted the attention of scholars, especially in the case of her time in Japan, given the fundamental impact she had on a young Kazuo Ohno, which determined his dedication to dance and the birth of butō—to the point of creating his reenactment *Argentina Sho* (Soler Gallardo 2010; Franko 2020; De Naverán 2022). However, to date, no studies have been published on the work of this fundamental Spanish dance artist in light of the frictions between the colonizing and colonized, stemming from the legacy of the collapse of the colonial system.

This study is set during the first third of the twentieth century and within the framework of the nascent cultural politics of Hispanidad. In the years of severe internal crisis due to what became known as the "Disaster of '98," which caused serious doubts "about the virtualities of the national or 'racial' identity" (Álvarez Junco 2017, 171), different Spanish institutions launched initiatives to maintain cultural and scientific links with the former colonies based on shared history and language. Dance, as a language of the body, can be understood as an instrumentalized manifestation of these initiatives, as a soft and noninstitutionalized cultural policy, and as an alternative to the monumental petrification of the Columbian "discovery" statuary. Deriving from the idea of the "colonial archive"[6] (De Oto 2011, 167), dance becomes a living archive of Hispanidad, which many dancers ended up integrating into their repertoires as a distinctive sign. My analysis of colonial gesture in Spanish dance therefore offers an approach for understanding the place of dance forms associated with the bodies that dance them, which occupy intersections of national, racial, gender, and class identities.

La Argentina's initiative stood at the crossroads of these elements, centering the "modernized" interpretation of a colonial dance on a solo identified with the "mestiza ideal." This depiction of the Spanish mestizas from the vantage point of the Creole elites and their "María Clara dances" (named after the famous Filipino writer and politician José Rizal's heroine), became the perfect strategy for reinforcing the construction of La Argentina's artistic status as a Spanish dancer in the West—a souvenir from a supposedly nostalgic Spanish history in the Pacific. The differences in the practice of Spanish dance for diverse audiences—those in European cultural centers or former colonies, or on Spanish stages—are evidence of its unstable position within the taxonomies of traditional historiography. This situation pushed dancers such as La Argentina to apply strategies of legitimization and "westernization" of Spanish dance and to reinforce the colonial matrix of power

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

through both metaphorical and physical movements, actions, and facts.[7] In order to understand this colonizing and colonized double condition of La Argentina's dance production, I will now analyze the construction of the Spanish national identity associated with dance, the context of reception of her dance in the Philippines, her work of documenting folk dances, and her creative process of stylization in the West, with a view toward integrating the Filipino legacy into her repertoire of recitals as a danced archive of Hispanidad.

"The Epitome of Spanish Grace": La Argentina and the Imagination of a Danced National Identity

Accompanied by the pianist Carmencita Pérez and her manager, Arnold Meckel, La Argentina traveled to Manila to offer a series of performances promoted by Asway Strok, a local businessperson who had earlier organized tours of Asian countries by leading exponents of Western dance such as Anna Pavlova, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn (Scolieri 2020, 206). The description of the public reception of the ship upon its arrival in the Port of Manila published in *El Mercantil*, which opens this article, illustrates the esteem to which the artist was held among the population of Spanish descent under American rule, for whom she was considered "the epitome of Spanish Grace"[8] (Dorillo 1929). The perception of La Argentina as the epitome of "Spanishness" and the embodiment of national essence was a constant in her life. She encouraged this perception in programs distributed to audiences, and it was reflected in the reviews and interviews from the places where she toured internationally.[9]

La Argentina's Asian tour, like the Latin American tour before it, should be contextualized alongside other Western dancers of the time who were conducting "fieldwork," looking for artistic and documentary sources of different types in cultures exotic to Western audiences—mainly from India and Southeast Asia, but also with indigenous American influences.[10] This interest in non-European indigeneity would also be exploited by Spanish dancers, especially Tórtola Valencia.[11] In contrast to these approaches, La Argentina distanced herself from indigeneity as a source for her dance and embraced instead the legacy of the Spanish colonial powers on the islands. This approach, manifest in her incorporation into her repertoire of other pieces, developed as "homages" to dances from other former colonies: *Cielo de Cuba*, *Cuba (Rumba)*, *Jarabe mexicano*, and *Suite Argentina*. These were the only works within her repertoire that were not inspired by Spanish folk or imaginaries, and thus can clearly be interpreted as a desire to embody the nascent concept of Hispanidad.

By the time La Argentina reached the Philippines, the hegemonic circles of Western culture had already legitimated her artistic vision. Her critical and public success, especially following the founding of her company, Les Ballets Espagnols—a French name clearly replicating Diaghilev's Ballets Russes—in the autumn of 1927, and the acclaim of her peers, had transformed her into the leading international exponent of Spanish dance. La Argentina based her own artistic contribution on the idea that Spanish dance had emerged throughout history from the stylization and distillation of various elements of folklore, flamenco, and the bolero dance of the eighteenth century. She drew inspiration from an outstanding group of Spanish literary, musical, and artistic figures in constructing an image—as she observed in an interview—of "a Spain that for many educated people, including Spaniards, is 'more Spain' than the real Spain" (Olmedilla 1931, 9). This "imagined community" (Anderson 1993) was based on a modern repertoire that combined elements inherited from the exoticized, late-Romantic view of nineteenth-century Spain with other major components of the canonical account of Spain's cultural history. Thus, her repertoire projected a vision essentially based on the *casticismo* (the typical and "genuine" view of the country) of nineteenth-century Madrid, Andalusian culture, the Spanish Golden Age, and artistic references to Velázquez and Goya, and at the same time moved away from the *españoladas* popularized during the fin-de-siècle on European stages, which, in her view, distorted the true nature of Spanish dance.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

The same year as La Argentina's Asian tour, one of the main dance experts in Paris at that time, the exiled Russian critic André Levinson, published *La Argentina: A Study in Spanish Dancing with Thirty-Two Plates* (1928), which would condition and nourish her reception by other expert critics in Europe and the Americas. In this book, Levinson drew from the exotic conception of Spanish dance that was reinforced by Romanticism: "Her indescribable success has loosened a new onslaught of Spanish dancing, the oldest and noblest of European exotics" (Levinson 1928, 7–8). He proposed a reading of La Argentina's dance as the story of a new "Reconquest"[12] of Christianity against the invading "Arabs," the West over the East: "In her the spirit of the Occident triumphs anew over the lure of the Orient. She has once more reconquered Andalusia from the Arabs, and by that sign has triumphed" (Levinson 1928, 8). He also considered Spanish folklore to be "the first rude stammer of primitive instinct," which, through her education and cultivation, La Argentina had "disciplined into form, by inscribing it in movements of a pure and high-bred elegance and subduing it to perfection" (Levinson 1928, 8). As Mark Franko has analyzed, this view was conditioned by Levinson's formulation of neoclassicism and the idea that any dance associated with a national identity would be rooted in classical and academic principles (Franko 2020, 210). Moreover, from an ethnic perspective, Levinson was activating "colonial difference" (Mignolo 2012) such that, in order to achieve sublimation and purity, Spanish dance should shed its folkloric connotations and instead be stylized and modernized.

The bonds between dance and race would be part of the rhetoric of many other critics in the early twentieth century, who explained La Argentina's performances in relation to a history marked by the Islamic past and the Roma community, and less so by African and Latin American legacies.[13] In his book *Dancing in Spain*, Cyril Rice would state that La Argentina's art "is the product of her race—the national soul seeking to express half-realised urges and longings" (Rice 1930, 37). La Argentina herself would conclude her explanation of her body of work through technique and rhythm in her essay "Ce que j'ai apporté à la danse espagnole" by conferring a similar capacity to transmit the supposed spiritual and immortal substance of the whole Spanish people: "Spanish dance must be the mirror of the Spanish soul" (Mercé, n.d., "Ce que j'ai apporté à la danse espagnole)." Nevertheless, what is evident in these narratives is a certain whitening process, a masking that may remind us of racist policies of "purity of blood." Ángel del Río, then professor at the Department of Hispanic Studies at Columbia University, summarized this racist vision very clearly. He, together with Federico García Lorca, Gabriel García Maroto, and Federico de Onís, was responsible for the tribute and subsequent book *Antonia Mercé, "la Argentina"* (1930), in which he referred to the *cafés cantantes* where "gitanería triumphs and *jondo* and flamenco are enthroned.... All this is nothing more than picturesque, but with a little cleaning up and aesthetic dignity it can become something transcendental" (Del Río 1930, 7). This quotation reveals the vision of many of the writers and thinkers of the time who supported La Argentina's creative processes, in which they saw an intellectualization of Spanish dance that elevated it above the flamenco versions popularized by Roma dancers. In this sense, Rice pointed out how some Spaniards felt "that Argentina is unable fully to exploit the gypsy style, and there is no doubt that she is primarily a classic dancer" because she might have "certain inhibitions which prevent her from being completely possessed by the enraged fury and ardour which seizes the flamenco" (Rice 1930, 43).

La Argentina, her Ballets Espagnols collaborators, and the critics who supported her artistic contributions sought to sell the European public an "authentic" and "real" Spain, achieved by eliminating what they considered grotesque and crude movements and gestures, and distilling and stylizing them. This procedure was explained as wanting to "legitimize an intention. Mine was to preserve popular dance's essential character and sensuality while eliminating all crude elements.... I've tried to interpret them from a less crude perspective" (Mercé, n.d., "À propos de la danse espagnole"). In these texts, references to the café-concert dancer who performed "disorderly movements that she accompanied with the clatter of her castanets" (Mercé, n.d., "Espagne, jardin de la danse") or the "fast paced and spasmodic" (Mercé, n.d., "À propos ...") flamenco-stomping illustrate a negative characterization of certain types of Spanish dance as crude and primitive. Their approach

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

thus partially reflected this exoticized view of Spanish dance, whitening any trace of those "Other" agents—flamenco artists who came from the lower classes or were of Roma ethnicity—and thus carrying out an act of epistemic violence by "civilizing," an instrument of domination (Bhabha [1994] 2002). Some of the texts written by La Argentina in those years, such as the one already mentioned, as well as "À propos de la danse espagnole" and "La danse espagnole telle que je l'ai rêvée,"[14] evidence her quest to recover and use Spanish dance heritage as her creative basis, and she stated that she long "fought against the false or incomplete idea of Spanish dance that has been bruited about almost everywhere" (Mercé, n.d., "À propos . . ."). That false image included "music-hall performances" and "fast-paced, spasmodic dance with flamenco shoes" because "in most people's eyes, Spanish dance excludes classical dance, the *danse d'école,* and worse still, has no other merit than calling attention in the most brutal way possible to the spectator's sensitivity" (Mercé, n.d., "À propos . . .").

On some occasions, La Argentina expressed her surrender to colonizing logics: "We are like Orientals, no matter how much we civilize ourselves" (Olmedilla 1931, 9). However, at other times, she reacted against being seen as the colonized, claiming it was possible to transcend the representation of national identity: "It is perfectly possible to be human, and therefore international, without speaking any other language than that of your country" (Mercé, n.d., "Les danses d'Espagne"). She also tried to refute the colonizing perception of herself through invocations of classicism and by drawing on class differences, a strategy that she would resort to in her approach to Filipino folklore. She could not escape certain paradoxes that arose as a result of these conflicting readings of artistic hierarchy and ethnic origin, which created in her a double condition of the colonized and the colonizer: "Although its sources are essentially popular, or precisely because of that origin, Spanish dance can and must aspire to a nobler life; and we must not confuse what is 'popular' and what is 'low'" (Mercé, n.d., "La danse espagnole telle que je l'ai rêvée").

As these examples illustrate, the tensions between crude and refined, vernacular and universal, and traditional and modern, and the links between modern and colonial[15] formed the backdrop of the approaches and influences that permeated La Argentina's work and its interpretations by critics and scholars. For as much as she sought to "distill" and "stylize" Spanish dance, according to the power relations that dictated the circulation of dance trends in 1920s Europe, and in accordance with the "logic of the dominant scale" (De Sousa Santos 2010, 23), Spanish dance's dependence on the local and the vernacular precluded it from anything but a marginal consideration. To sum up, in a European context, and primarily in relation to Paris as the center of Western cultural circuits in the 1920s, La Argentina's perspective and vision of Spanish dance reveal the position of a colonized subject in the vision of a romantic traveler. However, as I will discuss, at the same time, the processes she employed in her tour of the former colonies evince an opposite stance: that of a cultural appropriation that seeks to identify links with colonial heritage in the former colonies. Through the aforementioned processes of stylization, modernization, or whitening, she incorporated these colonial dances—those from the Philippines as well as other former colonies such as Mexico, Cuba, or Argentina—into her repertoire and her vision of what she believed so-called Spanishness and the Spanish national identity should be. Thus, the "colonial gestures" applied to her own dance in terms of "modernization" and "stylization" would, at the same time, constitute the appropriative strategy of the dance from the former colonies under narratives of Hispanidad.

Toward a Danced Archive of Hispanidad: Legitimization Strategies through the Fieldwork in the Philippines

After the Crisis of 1898, officially recognized cultural visits to the Philippines by prominent figures in the arts and literature were regularly organized with the objective of preserving the Spanish legacy (Luque Talaván 2013, 78–84).[16] Over time, the potential for cultural diplomacy offered by journeys such as these would become actual policies of Hispanidad, based on the narrative of maintaining

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

common cultural ties of a shared past. The work of La Argentina fits as a perfect precedent. She would be the first person to receive the *Lazo de la Orden de Isabel la Católica*, the highest award of the Second Spanish Republic, in December 1931, barely a few months after the proclamation of the new regime and the flight of King Alfonso XIII. The new left-wing government honored her for her role as "cultural ambassador," thus lending its support to countless performances throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas.[17]

Other Spanish visitors were invested in maintaining a dynamic in theatrical circuits that, for many years before the beginning of American rule, had brought Spanish companies and a tradition of Spanish drama to the Philippines. Although what was known as "seditious or nationalist theatre" (Lapeña-Bonifacio 1972, 1) was censored and persecuted by the American authorities after 1898, many Spanish plays and zarzuelas (Spanish operettas) continued to be staged in theaters such as the Zorrilla, the Cervantes, the Águila, the Comedia, and the Teatro Nacional, the latter of which converted into the Manila Grand Opera House in 1902 (Laconico-Buenaventura [1994] 1998, 60).[18] La Argentina's program in Manila consisted of tried and tested pieces that had always been a success. An analysis of newspaper reports (Anonymous 1929a; Dorillo 1929) and surviving programs[19] for various destinations on her Asian tour reveals that her performances included individual works from the bolero dance and solo dances scored by the most famous Spanish composers, comprising her iconic repertoire. Thus, La Argentina emerged as the incarnation of what critics considered "the pure art of the race," in descriptions replete with cliché (Anonymous 1929b). These qualities were associated with the stereotype of what is "Spanish," the existence of the exoticism of an "Iberian essence," the arbitrary connection between the Spanish dancer and Andalusian "grace," and the idea of "Castilian majesty": unquestionably an amalgamation of colonial elements that permeated La Argentina's reception in Manila. Many times, her shows showcased the veracity of her dance's roots not only through the choice of music with Spanish flavor but also in the authenticity of the costumes and accessories. Acquired on her travels and through her fieldwork, these elements simultaneously counteracted and legitimized the staging of her stylized and modernized choreographies.

The Spanish-Filipino society of Manila was very enthused by La Argentina, as shown by many articles and letters, such as the one that the Philippine Music Association addressed to Strok, thanking him for her visit.[20] The Spanish-Philippine Society of Manila paid homage to her at the Casino Español, an institution founded in 1866 as a center for Spanish culture and society (Photo 2).[21] In the photographs of this event attended by the Spanish Consul Emilio de la Mota, she posed surrounded by other personalities from Manila (Anonymous 1929c).[22] The warm reception that Manila society afforded La Argentina presented her with an ideal opportunity to learn about Philippine culture, an interest accentuated by her desire to build on the legacies of a shared past. She expressed her happiness at being in Manila, where everything seemed familiar to her: "I feel that I've come home, to my own country, that I'm among my people" (Dorillo 1929).

These familial ties, through which La Argentina sought connection, also prompted her to document folkloric and traditional Philippine dances of Spanish origin. In this study she was helped by the Philippine dancer Rosa G. Jiménez Rivera,[23] with whom she had occasion to share knowledge about different Philippine and Spanish dances (Gómez-Rivera and Villaruz 2017, 210). It seems that, from their exchanges, La Argentina learned of various examples of the diversity of Philippine dances: the cariñosa, considered the national dance; the binasuan (a popular dance on the sugar plantations, in which a woman dances with a glass of wine on her head and a glass of wine in each hand without spilling a drop); the Muslim singkil dance from the island of Mindanao; and the pandanggo and other dances from the Ifugao province and the Tinguian culture (Reyes Tolentino 1927; Alejandro and Abad Santos-Gana 2002; Namiki 2016).

An appreciation of the wealth of Philippine dances had already prompted incipient academic study, leading to a notable work of documentation undertaken by Francisca Reyes Tolentino, later known

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Photo 2. Antonia Mercé La Argentina and Carmen Pérez at her homage in Casino Español (Anonymous 1929c). Legado Antonia Mercé, la Argentina*, Biblioteca Fundación Juan March, Madrid.*

as Francisca Reyes Aquino. This physical education teacher at the Philippine Women's College published her book, *Philippine Folk Dances and Games*, in 1927. Her findings contributed to fostering knowledge and encouraging the conservation of intangible Philippine heritage for generations. However, as Declan Patrick notes, Reyes Tolentino produced knowledge about indigenous Filipino dances by assuming a "westernized" gaze and methodology (Patrick 2014, 402–403). Moreover, as a recent article by J. Lorenzo Perillo argues, Reyes Tolentino's work, which departs from the study of Louis H. Chalif's *The Chalif Text Book of Dancing* (1914) and Frederick O. England's *Physical Education: A Manual for Teachers* (1919), is crucial for understanding the construction of "authentic" Filipino identities and the "Filipinization" of the colonized body (Perillo 2017, 124). According to this study, although Reyes Tolentino's contributions defined the foundations of the "nationalist period of Filipino dance history" through her rescue of national folklore, her techniques—imported from Russian ballet as a form of "lingua franca"—continued to subordinate these materials to Western forms, thus maintaining similar colonizing dynamics.[24]

It was with Reyes Tolentino that Ted Shawn documented Philippine dances in 1927, two years before La Argentina's visit. Some of the American dancer's conclusions concerning his stay are striking. He began by warning: "To be quite frank—except for the Igorots—the Filipinos had never in any way stimulated my interest, and thus, unpatriotically, I had neglected our own protectorate in the Orient for those other places whose people seemed to be more fascinating, or more talented" (Shawn 1927, 34). Moreover, he stated that "there is no dance art among the Filipinos at all. They have no native drama or theater and apparently no interest among the people in dancing as an art. In the past they have depended upon such performances as came over from Spain and the dancers therein, and the only instruction in stage dancing in Manila is by Spanish teachers" (Shawn 1927, 36). Shawn also considered that "collectively, the Filipino is on a low scale artistically, both in creativeness and appreciation."

As part of his research in Asia and Oceania, Shawn had traveled to the Philippines with Ruth St. Denis and attended various performances by local groups, a function in the abovementioned

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

college, and two performances at the home of a young high-society lady in Manila, Victoria López, and her brother, which included a performance of the cariñosa. Shawn described this dance with Spanish colonial roots, illustrating the text with three snapshots of the López siblings' performance: "This dance has many attractive flirtatious movements in it—with fan and with handkerchief— . . . and is also danced to a waltz of Spanish character. It has more variety and charm than the group dances, but remains in the Folk dance class" (Shawn 1927, 35). It was precisely these dances of Spanish colonial origin that Strok—the manager who, let us recall, would organize La Argentina's tour two years later—advised Shawn to perform during his stay in the Philippines (Scolieri 2020, 217). However, the American choreographer's activity in the Philippines was mainly oriented toward the observation and study of local dances, and his testimony, published in the aforementioned article of 1927, was collected two years later in the book *Gods Who Dance* (Shawn 1929, 163–177).[25] Unlike Shawn, La Argentina attended to fieldwork with a respectful and dignified attitude to legitimize the authenticity of her approach to the Philippine legacy, though in this way she evoked certain colonial impulses.

Thus, fieldwork became a fundamental base for the construction of a living colonial archive, the collection, and documentation of material and immaterial traces of dances of the former colonies. These included study with Philippine experts, filming dance examples, and the acquisition of traditional garments. Moreover, the choice of the cariñosa among the immense variety of Filipino dances evidences the interest in emphasizing the connection with the Spanish past in the islands. In the late 1920s, the most popular Philippine dances in Manila were marked by the influence of Spain and the other territories colonized by Spain since the imposition of colonial rule over the islands. This feature contrasted with the wide diversity of indigenous dances that had survived in the extensive territory of the country, composed of more than seven thousand islands. Colonial-period dances such as the minuet, the cachucha (called the katsutsa), the fandango (pandanggo), the habanera, the jota, the malagueña, the paso doble (initially known as the pasakalye), the paseo, the zapateado (pateado), and others of Western origin, such as the polka, the mazurka, the waltz (balse), and the schottische (escotis), among many others, enjoyed great popularity (Villaruz et al. 2017, 5). The mixtures and Philippine adaptations of some of these fragments were termed *Los bailes de ayer* (dances of yesteryear) (Reyes Tolentino 1993).[26] Thus, many of these dances are called *de ida y vuelta* (back and forth) and reveal the inherent transculturality and hybridization of the interconnections of colonial systems and the circulation of people between Europe, Africa, America, and Asia.

Nevertheless, most colonial-period dances of Spanish origin, which were associated with Manila high society and the *ilustrados*,[27] became known as "María Clara dances," in honor of the heroine of José Rizal's novel, *Noli me tangere*.[28] Unquestionably notable among the María Clara dances is the one that La Argentina eventually included in her repertoire: the cariñosa, considered to be the national dance. In this dance, one or more pairs execute a courtship dance in which they use a handkerchief and a fan to express flirtation: "*Cariñosa* means affectionate, lovable, or amiable. With the fan and a handkerchief, the dancers go through hide-and-seek movements and other flirting acts expressing tender feelings for one another" (Reyes Tolentino 1993, 82).[29] As with most María Clara dances, the movements are graceful and gentle, executed slowly—almost languidly—and elegantly (Villaruz 2017, 145). The traditional costume for women performing the cariñosa consisted of a long silk or satin skirt without an overskirt, a richly embroidered blouse made of piña and silk fabric with bell-shaped sleeves, a shawl folded into a triangle and worn over the shoulders, low-heeled mules and an ornamental comb in the hair (Alejandro Reynaldo 1978, 31). Men wore a barong Tagalog, a loose piña and silk fabric shirt with embroidered cuffs and collar, and black trousers and shoes. The music—"Count. One, two, three to a measure" (Reyes Tolentino 1993, 82)—was usually played by a *rondalla*, a string ensemble consisting of a bandurria, a lute, an octavina, a guitar, and a bass (Reyes-Urtula, Arandez, and Tiongson 2017, 33). The dance began in the following way: "Partners stand opposite and facing each other about six feet apart. When facing the audience, the girls are at the right of the boys. One to any number of couples may take part of this dance" (Reyes Tolentino 1993, 82).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Photo 3. Selection of stills from the footage of the Philippine cariñosa by Antonia Mercé La Argentina and Arnold Meckel, Manila, 1929. Public domain. Filmoteca Española, Madrid.

These traditional elements of dress, performance, and choreography in the cariñosa, which still persist today, are evident in a film of this piece shot by Arnold Meckel and La Argentina in February 1929, which has survived and can be consulted in the Filmoteca Española in Madrid.[30] During her international tour, they filmed various scenes of tourism and meetings with the celebrities who welcomed them at each destination. In addition, they recorded a performance by two young Filipino couples attired in their traditional costumes dancing the cariñosa in the entrance to a building, the door of which is decorated with a discrete curtain (Photo 3).[31] In order to identify the dance genre and study possible changes with respect to the documented versions, I carried out a comparative study based on written source and visual analysis between the cariñosa described by Reyes Tolentino in her 1927 book (1993, 82–87) and the dance filmed by La Argentina in 1929. Notably, the footage only captured short fragments of the various steps in a sequence lasting no more than half a minute. The version filmed by La Argentina in 1929 largely coincides with most of the movements detailed by Reyes Tolentino in her book of 1927, allowing for its identification in her collection at the Filmoteca Española as an exceptional source for the documentation and conservation of the Philippines' dance heritage and of the cariñosa as it was performed one century ago. In total, the symbolic power of all these primary sources—especially the choreography she filmed and learned, as well as the *ponyang traje de mestiza* she purchased—laid the foundation for La Argentina's narrative about the authenticity of her dances and enriched the living archive that nurtured her "Hispanic" repertoire.

La Argentina's Solo *La Cariñosa*: Subject and Object of Western Colonial Gestures

Using her process of stylization as applied to other dances, La Argentina created a piece based on the Philippines' national dance: a solo marked both by the deep imprint left on her by all her

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Photo 4. Antonia Mercé La Argentina performing La Cariñosa *at Aldwych Theatre, London, June 11, 1934. Legado Antonia Mercé,* la Argentina*, Biblioteca Fundación Juan March, Madrid.*

experiences in Manila, especially from her contact with Filipino dancers, and by a colonialist subordination to the tradition of European concert dances through the incarnation of a "non-white Other" and its interpretation. On her return to Paris, she premiered this solo, *La Cariñosa*, in her performance at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées between April 23 and 26[32] (Vautour 1929), continuing to perform it on Western stages in the following years. Thus far, no film of the solo has been located, so any approach to its study must be made through other secondary sources. Some traces of these movements and resources were found in photographs of her performances kept in La Argentina's collections in Madrid and Paris (Photo 4). My understanding of the dance and analyses are supported by the comments and descriptions in the theater reviews published wherever she performed during the following five years.[33]

From what I can tell from these materials, La Argentina's *La Cariñosa* featured elements taken from the vocabulary, the gestures, and the performing stances as well as appearance, costumes, and elements typical of the Philippines' dance, such as the use of a fan and handkerchief, the graceful

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

movements, and the elegant pose. Thanks to the analysis of the movement offered by Reyes Tolentino (1993, 82–87), and the seconds captured by the film shot by La Argentina, we know that, in the traditional Filipino cariñosa, the fan and, especially, the handkerchief are elements she uses to flirt with her partner by totally or partially hiding her face, to underline at certain moments the power of the gaze and to add to the courtship game in each of the roles played by the couple.[34] Despite the importance of this "flirtation" that defines the essence of the dance, the first striking aspect of La Argentina's piece is that the pair dance has become a solo. The male performance has been eliminated to become a ghostly presence, just like the colonial past to which the dance refers; we do not see it, but it is evoked by the dance of La Argentina. This strategy was not new in La Argentina's repertoire, or in the cases of other Spanish dancers who turned the folklore dances of different regions of the Iberian Peninsula—traditionally danced in pairs—into stylized solos. The aim was to achieve authenticity by wearing genuine folk costumes that were acquired in the respective places visited—as was the case with the traditional Philippine costume (Photo 5)—but the choreography was adapted for exclusive female representation and movement stylization in line with concert dance requirements in order to separate itself from the "roughness" and "coarseness" of the popular and thus approach "pure" art.

Photo 5. Antonia Mercé La Argentina dressed in a Filipino costume, Manila, 1929. Legado Antonia Mercé, la Argentina*, Biblioteca Fundación Juan March, Madrid, album no. 9, p. 28.*

In this regard, it is interesting to consider La Argentina's remarks on the type of energy she used when performing the choreography: "The Philippines are a bit like Spain, aren't they? In addition, their dances are exactly the same as ours, with the difference that for us, everything is energy and vivacity whereas for them, this becomes slowness and languor due to the hot climate" (Anonymous 1929d). The photographs confirm the soft and languid movement quality and show a body language motivated by a rather introverted attitude. The facial gestures are emphasized by sidelong glances and half smiles, which show a seductive, yet restrained and discreet intentionality that corresponds to the stereotype that racializes and exoticizes Oriental women and, in particular, mixed-race Filipino women.[35] The association of the cariñosa as the most iconic piece of *Las danzas de María Clara* directly links the interpretation of this piece with the imaginary of the mestiza ideal that La Argentina chose to evoke for Western audiences. Thus, in *La Cariñosa*, the female dancer, through affectionate and soft movements highlighted by the handkerchief and the smooth piña and silk fabrics, and in the absence of the male figure, embodies the mestiza ideal and flirts with the audience. Their colonizing gaze appropriates the body of the Filipino woman who performs the Creole dance represented by La Argentina.

Nevertheless, regarding the reception of the piece, it is worth reading the detailed explanation that appeared in the French newspapers, which underemphasized La Argentina's agency in interpreting this colonial dance as performed in Europe, as most of the responsibility was attributed to the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Photo 6. Antonia Mercé La Argentina in La Cariñosa *by Mme. D'Ora. Reproduced in the program of* Les Représentations de Madame Argentina avec sa troupe de Ballets Espagnols*, Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique, Paris, May–June 1929. Private collection.*

critics and the spectators. André Levinson's review in *Comoedia* is worthy of particular mention for the significance of its impact and its descriptive and evocative capacity, which illustrates the approach of Western critics—full of clichés, layer by layer, gesture by gesture—as that colonial gaze (Photo 6).[36] Levinson thus celebrated La Argentina's latest premiere as if the audience were actually witnessing a kind of "documentary, as they say in filmmaking"—the exact reproduction of this popular dance brought back as a tourist souvenir from the Philippines, rather than a newly created piece into which the whole mentality of the time was poured. Also striking is Levinson's recourse to underlining the aristocratic aspect of the dance as coming from the Filipino elites associated with Spanish ancestry by drawing a parallel between that mestiza ideal and its French equivalent, which he identifies in the Empress of France herself: "I do not know what aristocratic grandeur persists even in the little tricks of feminine coquetry. . . . The charm of a Joséphine de Beauharnais should be of the same kind" (Levinson 1929).

After its premiere, *La Cariñosa* became part of La Argentina's repertoire and was performed on her tours through numerous countries in Europe,[37] the Americas,[38] and the north of Africa.[39] Its presence is recurrent in the *Suites de danses*, interwoven with three types of pieces: those taken from her

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

ballets or from compositions by famous musicians, such as *El amor brujo* by Falla, *Danza de los ojos verdes* by Granados, and *La corrida* by Valverde; dances from Iberian folklore, such as *Lagarterana*, *Seguidillas*, and *Jota*; and pieces from former Spanish colonies, such as *Cielo de Cuba*, *Jarabe mexicano*, and *Rumba*. Among these performances, it is particularly interesting to highlight that of *La Cariñosa* together with *Cuba (Rumba)* with music by Isaac Albéniz, which was directly related to the colonial past through the title *L'Espagne d'Outre mer* and *Tropical Spain*.[40] The constant inclusion of this piece in the program between 1929 and 1935, although not as frequent as other numbers related to the Spanish imaginary, such as *La corrida* or Falla's solos, shows that the formula of Hispanidad was a success with audiences as diverse as those in Europe, the Americas, and North Africa. Thus, the Philippine presence—through both the performance of the solo and the reproduction of the studio photographs by Madame d'Ora—became another resource to reinforce the Hispanidad narratives wherever she toured.

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of this Philippine dance heritage, La Argentina's desire to learn and perform *La Cariñosa* can be first viewed, in line with her own statements, as a tribute and homage to Spanish-Philippine culture. Her documentary approach to the sources of Philippine folk dance places her among the early twentieth-century pioneers who attempted to recover and recreate the living art and culture they came into contact with on their travels. However, in this gesture of homage, it is also possible to glimpse a colonial gesture. This gesture is first seen in the framework of the incipient cultural policies of Hispanidad, which attempted to recover and strengthen cultural links with the former colonies. Second, it can be seen in a wider transnational framework of Western/non-Western frictions, which is particularly complex because of the articulation that Spanish dance itself had in the canonical Eurocentric accounts of dance. Therefore, La Argentina's strategies toward Spanish dance in the former colonies could paradoxically be considered colonizing—given that they draw on the concept of Hispanidad and recover Spanish colonial dance to recall an influence in these territories—but also colonized—given that she applied strategies of westernization or modernization dictated by Eurocentric canons to Spanish dance itself and to the recovered Filipino dance (Photo 7).

La Argentina's choice of the piece with Spanish colonial roots illuminates emerging cultural interests in the use of art as a diplomatic tool in the cultural policies of Hispanidad. These interests mobilized ideologies evoking a shared past of the Spanish-speaking nations or cultures that had been part of the Spanish empire. In the case of the Philippines, these ideas had fundamental literary precedents, and in the theatrical context were to be understood within the framework of the theater companies' tours of the colonial period. La Argentina's work marked an outstanding milestone in this context, and she would shortly afterward be officially recognized by the government of the Second Spanish Republic. She embodied, in a nostalgic way, supposed national essences, thus personifying an imaginary and acting as a colonial archive—a living archive of historical dances of the former colonies, for whose legitimation, in the case in question, she did not hesitate to be advised by prestigious native personalities, such as Rosa G. Jiménez Rivera, and by dancers from Manila.

In contrast to what other dancers proposed—we have noted Tórtola Valencia's modernist exoticism and Ted Shawn's disdain for Philippine dance forms—La Argentina selected to adapt and perform the "loftiest," most sophisticated, and stylized dance from a Western perspective at that time, the cariñosa. In this way, she distinguished hers from other projects of recovery and dignification—although through certain westernized suppositions—of Philippine folklore, such as the case of Francisca Reyes Tolentino, who had also paid attention to the diversity of Filipino indigenous dance. However, the objective of her dances was to search for the "authentic" and "real" with which to build up this living archive of the danced Hispanidad. This would also lead La Argentina to document the Spanish popular dances in some Spanish regions like Salamanca, Mallorca, and Asturias, but also criollo and mestizo dances in Cuba, Mexico, and Argentina.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Photo 7. Antonia Mercé La Argentina with a Manila shawl, 1928. Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires.

Through such processes of appropriation under the colonial gesture, La Argentina created a repertoire of "Hispanic essences" that constructed a postcolonial "community," equivalent to the rock-hard monumentality of a Hispanidad—the commemoration through Columbus statues and colonial architecture—now celebrated from the body, its performativity, its symbolism, and its gesture, and that marked a turning point in the use of the political power of Spanish dance from the 1930s. While this was exploited by the leftist republican government, the narrative of a Hispanidad based on traditionalism, the Catholic substrate, and more conservative leanings was operationalized within the rise of Fascism. The work of Fascist writers such as Ramiro de Maeztu (1934) would eventually be exploited during the Franco dictatorship, and the Hispanidad policies would mark other avenues of international diplomacy with countries such as Perón's Argentina, when the regime was isolated from other surrounding countries in the postwar period. The recognition of La Argentina by the Spanish republic could thus paradoxically be understood as one of the first precedents in an emergent Spanish cultural diplomacy based on this Hispanic community, later taken to the extreme with the tours of the Coros y Danzas

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

de la Sección Femenina de Falange Española (Choirs and Dances of the Women's Section of the Spanish Falange), from Nazi Germany to Peronist Argentina. However, although La Argentina was distinguished as a "cultural ambassador," she was never very explicit in her political beliefs and managed to avoid the attempts to appropriate her figure, which would multiply after her sudden death at the start of the Spanish Civil War.

Additionally, the colonial gesture in La Argentina's maneuver with *La Cariñosa* should be understood as a complex process of simultaneously conforming to and differentiating Spanish dance as an exotic genre within the configuration of dances in the West, as leading voices such as Levinson or Rice identified. For this reason, it is worth insisting on the partial agency of La Argentina, subjected to a context of interpretations by critics and the audience that conditioned the reception of this and other pieces. She sought to modernize popular dances by stylizing, distilling, and thus eschewing the rude and impure. In doing so, she aimed to achieve civility and universality and leave behind all the hybrid roots of Orientalism for the European public: the prominence of the Roma community, the recognition of the popular, the transatlantic dregs of the African slave trade, and the subjugation of the American and Philippine colonies. This is clear from many of her aforementioned texts, in which she reiterates the arguments also defended by authors such as Levinson, Rice, and Del Río. Paradoxically, in this need to banish the "picturesque," a strategy that Del Río called "cleaning up," the performance of *La Cariñosa* by La Argentina before Western audiences on her return from the Asian tour was yet another instance within a long transnational tradition of white concert dancers embodying non-white Others. In this case, she embodied the mestiza ideal, the Filipino-Spanish woman who was upper-class but racialized, thus essentializing racial difference. La Argentina's strategy to "save" those popular dances from oblivion as an example of a living history of that "Spain of Goya surviving in the heart of the Pacific" actually redefined and controlled them from the West, rewriting them into the colonial narratives that longed for a shared past. In the end, although the term *cariño* is defined in Spanish as both "affection" and "nostalgia," the feelings to which La Argentina appealed when looking at the archipelago only masked the perpetuation of the logics with which she, a self-defined "Spanish dancer," sometimes played and other times attempted to circumvent.

Notes

This study is supported by the R+D+i projects: *Ballets Españoles (1927–1929): Una compañía de danza para la internacionalización del arte moderno* (Acciones de Dinamización Europa Excelencia, Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación/Agencia Estatal de Investigación, ref. ERC2018-092829); *Tras los pasos de la Sílfide. Una historia de la danza en España, 1836–1936* (MCIU/AEI/FEDER, EU, ref. PGC2018-093710-A-I00); and *Cuerpo danzante: archivos, imaginarios y transculturalidades en la danza entre el Romanticismo y la Modernidad* (MCI/AEI, PID2021-122286NB-I00). I would like to thank the support and assistance by several specialists in the history of the Philippines and Spain: María Dolores Elizalde, José Buenconsejo, Glòria Cano, Celia Cruz, Guillermo Gómez-Rivera, Benito Legarda, Carlos Madrid, Clarissa Cecilia Mijares-Ramos, Rocío Ortuño, Basilio Esteban Villaruz, and Fernando N. Zialcita. I extend my deepest gratitude to the members of the Philippine Baranggay Folk Dance Troupe (Marcia Carbonilla, John Paul R. Domingo, Arianne de Leon and their colleagues), who showed me the immense richness of Filipino dance when I travelled to Manila to do field work. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Dance Studies Colloquium, Institute of Dance Scholarship, Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University; I would like to deeply thank Prof. Mark Franko for the invitation and the participants for their valuable feedback. The final version of this study was shared with my respected colleagues Nell Andrew, Juliet Bellow, Michelle Clayton, Susan Jones, Felicia McCarren, Carrie Noland, and Lucia Ruprecht in a seminar; my thanks to them, as well as to the external reviewers and the *DRJ* Editorial Team, for their very useful comments. Translated by Eamonn McDonagh.

1. *El Mercantil* was a newspaper founded in 1902 by José María Romero Salas, director of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Manila and member of the Academia Filipina. It was an influential conservative publication, the most widely read newspaper in the Spanish colony in Manila until its closure in 1930 (Checa Godoy 2015, 27, 33, 37).

2. I henceforth refer to Antonia Mercé by her stage name, "La Argentina."

3. The Spanish sovereignty over the Philippines had begun in 1521 with the invasion of Fernando de Magallanes in the name of King Carlos I. After receiving a sum of $25 million, the United States ended the Spanish-American War by annexing the Philippine archipelago, a fate also shared by Cuba and Puerto Rico (Elizalde and Huetz de Lemps 2017). It was not until 1946 that the Filipino people achieved their independence from the United States following Japanese occupation during World War II, a time during which Spanish colonial influence was gradually lost.

4. The pyramid of power in the former Spanish colony had been distributed in terms of race and *mestizaje*; the percentage of Spanish mestizos in relation to the total Filipino population was very small compared to the American colonial precedent, and the positions in the administration were monopolized by citizens from the Iberian Peninsula (Inarejos 2015, 548, 531). Thus, during the colonial period, "in contrast to the rigid division established between the different races (peninsulars, natives, Chinese or Sangleyes), the Spanish *mestizos*—a category in some cases difficult to classify and determine in practice—became a decisive condition for controlling municipal power.... In theory, first-generation Spanish *mestizos*, known as 'Filipino-Spaniards,' were equal in rights to 'Europeans' or 'peninsulars.' Sangley Indians or mestizos were barred from exercising political rights of citizenship or entering the upper echelons of the colonial administration" (Inarejos 2015, 548). See also Camacho (2002).

5. The *Real Academia de la Lengua Española* dictionary still defines *Hispanidad* as the "general nature of all the peoples of Hispanic language and culture" and "the whole and community of Hispanic peoples." *Real Academia Española*, s.v. "hispanidad," accessed June 15, 2021, https://dle.rae.es/hispanidad. References to *one* "general nature" and *one* "community" made up of those peoples who suffered Spanish colonization between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries had pervaded the discourses that shaped the cultural and economic policies structured since the early twentieth century.

6. See also the study by Ospina, in which she states how "on the receiver and the protagonist parts of its historical evolution, the dance of the stigmatized peoples of the Colony ... constitutes itself and is constituted by the other" (2015, 105). These issues are also argued in Murga Castro (2022).

7. We could understand it based on the antithesis of the definition of "decolonial gesture" formulated by Walter D. Mignolo (2014). See the solid studies of gesture focusing on its migrations, rereadings, and appropriations (Noland and Ness 2008), as well as its interrelations between the dance and the everyday (Launay, Doat, and Glond 2012).

8. The reporter's mention of the "fire in her big, black, unfathomable eyes" is striking given that La Argentina had green eyes, which shows a tendency to racialize the Spanish dancer by linking her genuine physical characteristics to brown-skinned, dark-eyed Roma features, a practice found in similar chronicles.

9. This identification reached its highest levels after her sudden death on July 18, 1936, the same day that the Second Spanish Republic suffered a coup d'état that provoked the Civil War of 1936–1939 and, after the victory of General Francisco Franco, four decades of dictatorship.

10. Besides this, many artists of supposed indigenous origins exploited the stereotype assigned to them (López Arnaiz 2018). Dancers such as Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Nyota Inyoka, and La Meri, among many others, sought a renewal of the vocabulary of Eurocentric concert dance evoking those "Other" dances. In some cases, they evinced interest in building a vocabulary based upon knowledge derived from fieldwork.

11. Tórtola Valencia included pieces inspired by Native American cultures, ancient Greece, and Hispanic folklore in her repertoire, such as a *Danza de Hilo-hilo*, which most probably refers to Iloilo, the Philippine island, whose colonial sugar plantations had created strong trading links with Spain. Dressed in a costume made of leaves and bamboo, she exploited the indigenous cultural

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

practice in an approach that appears to have had nothing to do with the rural dances of the island of Iloilo (Reyes-Urtula, Arandez, and Tiongson 2017).

12. The term *Reconquista* refers to the supposed process that took place over eight centuries by which the Christian kingdoms regained power from the Arab invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 to the capture of Granada by the Catholic Kings in 1492, the year in which, under their rule, Christopher Columbus arrived in America (Ríos Saloma 2010).

13. See Goldberg (2019) and Steingress (2006).

14. All these writings, most of them unpublished, are preserved in typewritten form in French in the Fonds Argentina, pièce 37, Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (hereafter BMO, BNF).

15. We apply here Mignolo's reflection about Western modernity and colonialism (2012).

16. Notable among such visitors before the arrival of La Argentina were the writers Salvador Rueda (1915), Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1923), Adolfo Bonilla San Martín (1924), and Federico García Sanchiz (1925); the aviation pioneers Eduardo González Gallarza and Joaquín Loriga (1925); the journalist and poet Luis de Oteyza (1926); and, that same year, the singer Miguel Fleta (Ortuño Casanova 2018, 226).

17. The Spanish Republic continued to organize official cultural missions in the Philippines in the following years, such as those of the physicist Julio Palacios and the poet Gerardo Diego, supported in 1935 by the Governing Board for Cultural Relations (Luque Talaván 2013, 83; Ortuño Casanova 2018, 223–243).

18. This wooden theater was precisely where La Argentina performed, on a street called Cervantes (now Rizal Avenue), which hosted operas, Spanish and Tagalog zarzuelas, a few pieces in English, and various civic and social events. However, by the late 1920s, the building was habitually criticized for its shabby appearance, and the public and experts alike demanded the remodeling of other theaters, such as that promised by the mayor, Tomás Earnshaw, which opened in 1931 as the Metropolitan Theatre (Laconico-Buenaventura [1994] 1998, 73).

19. Programme: Imperial Theatre, Tokyo, 26 and 28 January 1929; Town Hall, Shanghai, 8 and 10 February 1929; Royal Theatre, Hong Kong, 15 February 1929; Théâtre Municipal, Saigon, 1 and 3 March 1929, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, PRO.A.19. The chosen works included the following: *Serenata*, with music by Joaquín Malats; *La corrida*, by Quinito Valverde; *Danza del fuego* from *El amor brujo*, by Manuel de Falla; *Danza V* and *Goyescas*, by Enrique Granados; *Córdoba*, by Isaac Albéniz; and *Bolero clásico*, by Sebastián Iradier.

20. Letter from R. Valdés Pica to A. Strok, Manila, February 20, 1929, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, pièce 6.

21. This, since 1917, had been located in a building in the same block on Taft Avenue as the headquarters of the Consulate General of Spain and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce.

22. To complete the picture of the social impact of La Argentina's visit, it is also worth mentioning the snapshots in which she appeared posing beside Pacita de los Reyes Ongsiako and Mary Katherine Campbell, respectively winners of the Miss Philippines beauty contest—a recently awarded title, on the occasion of the carnival—and Miss America, in 1922 and 1923. See the photograph accompanying the article by Carol Berard, "Apología de la Argentina," press cutting, Legado Antonia Mercé, *la Argentina*, Biblioteca Fundación Juan March, Madrid. It is interesting to compare the dressing of the three women and how La Argentina positions herself in the Western tradition. However, the symbology of the dress would not have passed unnoticed by her, who subsequently donned the traditional dress, known as *terno*, for photographs and film.

23. Jiménez Rivera had been born in the late 1880s in Iloilo, to parents from Seville, where she was later known as "La Filipina." As a child, she lived in Spain and trained to be a dancer.

24. In the early twentieth century, the Philippines welcomed numerous foreign performers and companies, including the Russian Baroufski Ballet Circus (1902), Anna Pavlova's company (1922), and the Russian-Polish dancer Luva Adameit (who arrived in 1927 and settled in Manila) (Villaruz et al. 2017, 6). With the end of Spanish rule in 1898 and the inauguration of United States' rule, modern American dances gradually began to arrive, and vaudeville, foxtrot, cakewalk, Charleston, and tap dancing were all warmly received. The combination of a rich, diverse heritage

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

of dance and the stimulus of other traditions from elsewhere led to the emergence of new hybrid genres of Western ballet language influenced with their own vocabulary. An example is that of the Filipino dancer Anita Kane, who in 1939, after seeing Pavlova, choreographed *Mariang Makiling*, with music by Ramon Tapales, which is now considered to be the first long Philippine ballet.

25. In the same book, Shawn included a chapter titled "Dancing in Spain," the only one that dealt with European dance. The volume also included other texts dedicated to Japan, China, Malaysia, Myanmar, India, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Java, Cambodia, and North Africa. The choreographer justified this by arguing that the imprint of the Moorish conquest remained in Spanish art and life, and that East and West met in Spain (Shawn 1929, 194–205). Shawn thus sees Spanish dance as colonizing and colonized.

26. They included the use of traditional accessories, such as fans, handkerchiefs, parasols, canes, wraps, and Manila shawls, together with others with local modifications to adapt materials, such as bamboo, coconut, or shell castanets. Some of these dances also evidenced a Mexican influence, since between 1565 and 1815, all communications with Spain had depended on the Acapulco-Manila galleon trade route. It was not until 1869, when the Suez Canal opened, that the route to Spain was halved in length, and exchange became more direct or presented different influences (Reyes-Urtula, Arandez, and Tiongson 2017, 28; Villaruz 1989, 12–15).

27. The *ilustrados* were Filipinos who had been educated in Europe and had returned to the Philippines, where they espoused independence movements.

28. Some scholars have pointed out that the character of María Clara, a good and self-sacrificing woman who loves the protagonist and ends up entering a convent when she believes that he has died, represents an allegory of the Filipino nation, which gives María Clara dances a link with the colonial past and the "*ilustrados*" claim for independence (Casas 2001, 121–140).

29. For this study, the author has consulted the 1993 edition of the original 1927 publication in which *La Cariñosa* remains unmodified.

30. The fragments corresponding to footage of La Argentina's visit to the Philippines are contained in the extended version of the film by José Mercé Luque and Paravicini (1941), held in the Filmoteca Española, Madrid.

31. These scenes were accompanied by a few brief seconds in which La Argentina appears leaning on the balcony of a colonial building garbed in traditional Philippine costume.

32. Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Program, Paris, from April 23 to April 26, 1929, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, PRO.A.19.

33. In terms of the choreography, although the lack of an audiovisual source or notation makes analysis particularly difficult, some texts describe figures "of extreme simplicity; three small *pas glissés*, a *pas frappe* with some energy; all accompanied by beautiful hand gestures, sideways movements, haunted looks.... sometimes she drops to the floor, on her knees; and we see the same small, rhythmic gestures, the same murderous glances, one could say, but the venom is slow" (Levinson 1929).

34. This is especially evident in figures IV and VI: hide and seek with a fan and a handkerchief (Reyes Tolentino 1993, 85).

35. Their characteristic features have been studied by Hazel M. McFerson (2002, 27) in her identification of the mestiza ideal derived from the aforementioned María Clara character: "She is beautiful, demure, modest, patient, devoutly religious, cultured, submissive, pure, and fair-skinned." According to the study by Emma Blair and James Alexander Robertson in volume 40 of their book *The Philippine Islands 1493–1803* (1903–1909), dedicated to "Native Peoples and Customs," the Mestizo girls, descendants of Spanish fathers and educated in convents, would be known for their beauty, grace in form and figure, "with soft olive complexions, scarlet lips and teeth white as pearls; long, wavy, jet-black hair, and dark languishing eyes that glow with the subdued passions of the tropics." The sources underlined their distinction, refinement, and culture, "equal to that of the best American and European society" (McFerson 2002, 21).

36. "We think we see the flirt, the light-hearted coquette, through an iridescent mist of humid heat.... Dressed in pink, she raises a handkerchief ... that, anachronistically and exotically, simultaneously evokes a distant country and past, tropical charm and 'the grace of faded things.' The

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

game of the creole in Manila renders her a hybrid being. Down to the waist, she is an elegant lady from Malaysia.. . . Below, she is a *Merveilleuse du Directoire*. . . . It is truly the Spain of Goya surviving in the heart of the Pacific, in this former colony—a subtle perfume and unforgettable souvenir marked by indigenous customs. In returning to Europe this example of a genre previously unknown to us, the great Spanish dancer has not transplanted it: she has repatriated it" (Levinson 1929).

37. Paris: Salle Rameau Program, March 27, 1931; Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, December 5, 1932, and May 18–23, 1933; Théâtre National de l'Opéra, April 15, 1934; and Théâtre National de l'Opéra Comique, April 26, 1935. Berlin: Bachsaal Program, October 24, 1931. Madrid: Teatro Español Program, December 1, 1931, and May 5, 1932; Sala Capitol Program, December 22, 1933. Barcelona: Teatro Barcelona Program, January 19, 1934. Brusells: Grande Salle du Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, May 17, 1934, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, PRO.A.19.

38. Boston: Symphony Hall Program, November 23, 1929. Buenos Aires: Teatro Colón Program, September 4, 1933, and September 13, 1934; and Teatro Cervantes Program, August 30, 1934. Santiago de Chile: Teatro Municipal Program, September 30 and October 11, 1934. Mexico: Teatro del Palacio de Bellas Artes Program, Mexico, November 11, 1934. San Diego (California): Savoy Theatre Program, November 24, 1934. San Francisco (California): Veteran's Auditorium Program, December 4, 1934. Toronto: Massey Hall Program, December 12, 1934. New York: Great Hall of the New York Junior League Program, December 20, 1934. Montevideo: Teatro Solís Program, September 11, 1935, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, PRO.A.19.

39. Alger Program, [1934]. Tunis: Théâtre Municipal de Tunis Program, [1934]. Cairo: Théâtre du Jardin de l'Ezbekieh, February 23, 1934, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, PRO.A.19.

40. Aldwych Theatre Program, London, from June 11 to 15, 1934, Archives of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Titled *Espagne d'Outre-Mer*, the work appeared at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, June 5, 1934, BMO, BNF, Fonds Argentina, PRO.A.19.

Works Cited

Alberdi Alonso, Ana. 2018. "Manuel Fernández, padre de Antonia Mercé." In *Danza, investigación y educación. Danza e ideología(s)*, edited by Ana Maria Díaz Olaya, África Calvo Lluch, and Concepción Pedrero Muñoz, 147–163. Málaga, Sp.: UMA, Libargo Investiga.

Alejandro, Reynaldo G. 1978. *Philippine Dance: Mainstream and Crosscurrents*. Manila: Vera-Reyes.

Alejandro, Reynaldo Gamboa, and Amanda Abad Santos-Gana. 2002. *Sayaw: Philippine Dances*. Manila: National Bookstore.

Álvarez Junco, José. 2017. *Dioses útiles. Naciones y nacionalismos*. Barcelona: Galaxia Gutemberg.

Anderson, Benedict. 1993. *Comunidades imaginadas. Reflexiones sobre el origen y la difusión del nacionalismo*. México City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Anonymous. 1929a. "La Argentina, in dans *Bolero Classique*." *Graphic*, February 23, 1929.

———. 1929b. "El Arte Puro de la Raza: Antonia Mercé 'La Argentina.'" *La Vanguardia*, February 19, 1929.

———. 1929c. "'Champán' de honor dado por el Casino Español de Manila a la eminente artista española Antonia Mercé 'La Argentina.'" *Excelsior*, February 28, 1929.

———. 1929d. "Théâtre. Après son tour du monde." *L'Intransigeant*, April 1929.

Bennahum, Ninotchka Deborah. 2000. *Antonia Mercé "La Argentina." Flamenco and the Spanish Avant Garde*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) 2002. *El lugar de la cultura*. Buenos Aires: Manantial.

Camacho, Marya Svetlana T. 2002. "Race and Culture in Spanish and American Colonial Policies." In *Mixed Blessing: The Impact of the American Colonial Experience on Politics and Society in the Philippines*, edited by Hazel M. McFerson, 43–74. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Casas, María Lourdes. 2001. "*Noli me tangere*: María Clara o la imposibilidad de construir una nación filipina." *INTI Revista de Literatura Hispánica*, no. 54, 121–140.

Checa Godoy, Antonio. 2015. "La prensa filipina en español entre dos guerras (1899–1941)." *Revista Internacional de Historia de la Comunicación* 4 (1): 22–51.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press

De Naverán, Isabel. 2022. *Envoltura, historia y síncope*. Bilbao, Sp.: Caniche Editores.
De Oto, Alejandro. 2011. "Aimé Césaire y Frantz Fanon. Variaciones sobre el archivo colonial/descolonial." *Tabula Rasa*, no. 15, 149–169.
De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. 2010. *Descolonizar el saber, reinventar el poder*. Montevideo, UY: Trilce.
De Soye, Suzanne. 1993. *Toi qui dansais, Argentina*. Paris: La Bruyère.
Del Río, Ángel. 1930. "La Argentina en la historia del baile español." In *Antonia Mercé, "la Argentina,"* Ángel del Río, Gabriel García Maroto, Federico García Lorca and Federico de Onís, 3–12. New York: Instituto de las Españas.
Dorillo. 1929. "Charla relámpago con La Argentina." *El Mercantil*, February 18, 1929. Press cutting, Legado Antonia Mercé, *la Argentina*, Biblioteca Fundación Juan March, Madrid.
Elizalde, María Dolores, and Xavier Huetz de Lemps. 2017. *Filipinas, siglo XIX. Coexistencia e interacción entre comunidades en el imperio español*. Madrid: Polifemo.
Franko, Mark. 2020. "Danser l'identité nationale espagnole à Paris et à New York (1928–1930): Antonia Mercé, La Argentina, entre néo-classicisme, modernisme et expression populaire." *Perspective*, no. 2, 207–218.
Goldberg, K. Meira. 2019. *Sonidos Negros: On the Blackness of Flamenco*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Gómez-Rivera, Guillermo, and Basilio Esteban S. Villaruz. 2017. "Spanish Dance." In *Dance*, 209–210. Vol. 8 of *Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of the Philippine Art*. 2nd ed. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
Inarejos, Juan Antonio. 2015. "'Nacido en el país al amparo de la hidalga Nación Española.' Los usos del factor racial en el control del poder local en Filipinas a finales del siglo XIX." *Revista de Indias* 75 (264): 529–554.
Laconico-Buenaventura, Cristina. (1994) 1998. *The Theatre in Manila 1846–1946*. Manila: De La Salle University Press.
Lapeña-Bonifacio, Amelia. 1972. *The Seditious Tagalog Playwrights: Early American Occupation*. Manila: Zarzuela Foundation of the Philippines.
Launay, Isabelle, Laeticia Doat, and Marie Glond. 2012. *Histoires des Gestes*. Paris: Actes Sud.
Levinson, André. 1928. *La Argentina: A Study in Spanish Dancing with Thirty-Two Plates*. Paris: Editions des Chroniques du Jour.
———. 1929. "La Danse du Concert." *Comoedia*, April 1929.
López Arnaiz, Irene. 2018. "La impronta de las danzas 'indias' en Francia. El encuentro de las artes plásticas y escénicas, entre el exotismo y la modernidad (1838–1939)." PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
Luque Talaván, Miguel. 2013. "Como *meteoros incandescentes.* Mensajeros de ciencia y letras españoles e la Filipinas de principios del siglo XX." *Perro Berde. Revista Cultural Hispano-Filipina* 4 (December): 78–84.
Maeztu, Ramiro de. 1934. *Defensa de la hispanidad*. Madrid: Gráfica Universal.
Manso, Carlos. 1993. *La Argentina, fue Antonia Mercé*. Buenos Aires: Devenir.
McFerson, Hazel M. 2002. "Filipino Identity and Self-Image in Historical Perspective." In *Mixed Blessing: The Impact of the American Colonial Experience on Politics and Society in the Philippines*, 13–41. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
Mercé, Antonia. n.d. "À propos de la danse espagnole." Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (hereafter BMO, BNF). Fonds Argentina, pièce 37.
———. n.d. "Ce que j'ai apporté à la danse espagnole." BMO, BNF. Fonds Argentina, pièce 37.
———. n.d. "La danse espagnole telle que je l'ai rêvée." BMO, BNF. Fonds Argentina, pièce 37.
———. n.d. "Les danses d'Espagne." BMO, BNF. Fonds Argentina, pièce 37.
———. n.d. "Espagne, jardin de la danse." BMO, BNF. Fonds Argentina, pièce 37.
Mercé Luque, José, and Monique Paravicini. 1941. *Antonia Mercé "la Argentina"* (film). Filmoteca Española.
Mignolo, Walter D. 2012. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2014. "Looking for the Meaning of Decolonial Gesture." *Emisférica* 11 (1): 1–26.
Molins, Patricia, and Pedro G. Romero, eds. 2008. *La noche española. Flamenco, vanguardia y cultura popular, 1865–1936*. Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.
Murga Castro, Idoia, ed. 2017. *Poetas del cuerpo. La danza de la Edad de Plata*. Madrid: Residencia de Estudiantes.
———, 2019. "Embodying Spanishness: La Argentina and her Ballets Espagnols." In "Dance under the Shadow of the Nation," edited by Arshiya Sethi and Tani Sebro. Special issue, *Conversations across the Field of Dance Studies* 39:12–17.
———, 2022. "Bailar coloniza(n)do: danza española e Hispanidad tras la decadencia del imperio." In *Tras los pasos de la Sílfide. Imaginarios españoles del ballet romántico a la danza moderna*, edited by Idoia Murga Castro, Carolina Miguel Arroyo, Alejandro Coello Hernández, and Irene López Arnaiz, 205–220. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte.
Murga Castro, Idoia, and Cristina Marinero Labrador. 2021. "Antonia Mercé La Argentina and the Moving Image: Attractions and Frictions between Cinema and Dance." *Dance Chronicle* 44 (1): 1–25.
Namiki, Kanami. 2016. "Dancing in the Margins: The Politics of National and Local Identity among the Maranao and Kalinga in the Philippines." PhD diss., National University of Singapore.
Noland, Carrie, and Sally Ann Ness, eds. 2008. *Migrations of Gesture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Olmedilla, Juan G. 1931. "Antonia Mercé, la insuperable 'Argentina,' pasa por Madrid y nos dice." *Crónica*, April 5, 1931, 9.
Ortuño Casanova, Rocío. 2018. "Embajadores culturales: recepción y trascendencia del viaje de Gerardo Diego a Filipinas en el archipiélago asiático." *Revista de Literatura* 80 (159): 223–243.
Ospina, Martha. 2015. "Cuerpo y danza: Archivos sensibles del poder colonial." *Corpografías. Estudios críticos del cuerpo* 1 (1): 92–109.
Patrick, Declan. 2014. "Filipino Folk Dance in the Academy: Embodied Research in the Work of Francesca Reyes Aquino, Sally Ann Ness, and Benildanze." *Asian Theatre Journal* 31 (2): 399–476.
Perillo, J. Lorenzo. 2017. "Embodying Modernism. A Postcolonial Intervention across Filipino Dance." *Amerasia Journal* 43 (2): 122–140.
Reyes Tolentino, Francisca. 1927. *Philippine Folk Dances and Games*. New York: Silver, Burdett and Co.
Reyes Tolentino, Francisca. 1993. *Philippines National Dances*. Quezon City, PH: Kayumanggi Press.
Reyes-Urtula, Lucrecia, P. M. Arandez, and Nicanor G. Tiongson. 2017. "Hispanic Traditions and Transformations in Philippine Dance (1565 Onwards).". In *Dance*, 28–41. Vol. 8 of *Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of the Philippine Art*. 2nd ed. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
Rice, Cyril. 1930. *Dancing in Spain (Argentina and Escudero)*. London: British-Continental Press.
Ríos Saloma, Martín F. 2010. *La Reconquista: una construcción historiográfica (siglos XVI–XIX)*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
Rodrigo, Antonina. 1988. *Mujeres de España. Las silenciadas*. Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores.
———. 1990. "Antonia Mercé *Argentina*. El genio del baile español." *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 484 (October): 7–28.
Scolieri, Paul A. 2020. *Ted Shawn: His Life, Writings, and Dances*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Shawn, Ted. 1927. "Dancing in the Isles of Fear." *Dance Magazine*, February 1927, 34–36, 59.
———. 1929. *Gods Who Dance*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.
Soler Gallardo, Joan Carlos. 2010. "La contribución del butoh a la nueva danza del siglo XX. El vínculo entre Antonia Mercé Luque y Kazuo Ohno." In *Japón y el mundo actual*, edited by Elena Barlés and David Almazán, 963–977. Zaragoza, Sp.: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza.
Steingress, George. 2006. . . . *Y Carmen se fue a París. Un estudio sobre la construcción artística del género flamenco (1833–1865)*. Córdoba, Sp.: Almuzara.
Vautour, Henry. 1929. "Chez Mme Argentina." *Le Soir*, April 1929.

Villaruz, Basilio Esteban S. 1989. *Sayaw: An Essay on Philippine Dance*. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
———. 2017. "Courtship and Wedding Dances." In *Dance*, 145–148. Vol. 8 of *Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of the Philippine Art*. 2nd ed. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
Villaruz, Basilio Esteban S., Rosalie S. Matilac, Clarissa Mijares, Senecca Pellejo, and Ruth Jornada I. Pison. 2017. "Philippine Dance." In *Dance*, 5–27. Vol. 8 of *Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of the Philippine Art*. 2nd ed. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
VV.AA. 1990. *Antonia Mercé "La Argentina." Homenaje en su centenario, 1890–1990*. Madrid: INAEM.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014976772200033X Published online by Cambridge University Press