

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF THEATRE

TANGO'S GLOBAL IMAGE, ITS CAUSES, AND ITS CONTINUING IMPACT ON
SOCIETY

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Spring 2012

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Biology
with honors in Dance

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ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the development of tango through the ages and how that has impacted the image of tango worldwide. Through my time in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Paris, France, and State College, PA, I have seen many differences in perception of this art, which are described in the following pages. The methods of research used for the development of this thesis were first-hand experiences, interviews and a compilation of information from journals and books. The differences in the perception of tango are shown to be due to the movement of the dance through social classes, the contents of the lyrics in the music, and the globalization of the dance.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“Tango is one of the rare symbolic clichés of a fight against the impossible. It is, at the time, pain of the lost, fury, winning, losing, individualism, communism; one can fill Tango with diverse emotions, but the Tango exceeds all of them because it isn’t only a rhythm for the body, but rather also for the mind, for the winners and the losers” (qtd. in Ochoa 154, translation by author). As seen in this quote, tango can represent many different images.

One leading reason for this quality of tango is its diverse history. Tango’s history and continuing exposure to global influence leads to the many different emotions and perceptions of tango. Its history hosts rhythms and dance from not just different countries, but distinct continents which all gave their own taste.

Tango incorporates dance, music, and lyrics, although in this essay, dance will be the primary focus, with the lyrics part of the supporting evidence. In the following section, a brief summary of tango’s history will provide a background for the subsequent sections, which will discuss in more depth the way tango developed its image.

Best known as a dance of Buenos Aires, Argentina, some claim more influence from Africa, others claim more influence from Europe. All groups have basis for their claims. Some of these are evidenced while watching a tango dance: The distinctive drumbeat of tango resembles that of African music and the couple dance resembles similar dances of Europe (Chasteen). In addition, the word *tango* could come from the African or Portuguese language, or could simply mimic the sound of a drumbeat (Nouzeilles 198).

Most likely, however, tango represents not just one origin, but is a mix of many cultures. Tango is a product of its surroundings and owes much to the unique cultural environment of Buenos Aires at the time of its development. Around the 1830s, when the tango was emerging in Argentina, the country displayed a mixture of cultural identities. Argentina was the second largest recipient of immigrants between 1821 and 1932 (Clark 25). This brought all different nationalities to the country. According to a census in 1914, 30 percent of Argentina's population had been born abroad and half of the population of Buenos Aires was immigrants (Collier 93).

Among the influences in Buenos Aires, there were Italian, Spanish, and African immigrants. All of these added to the dance. In 1836, almost a quarter of the population was of African descent (Hanon 7). Moreau Gottschalk, a piano virtuoso from the United States with Haitian influence from his mother's side, was incredibly influential in bringing African art culture to Argentina through numerous concerts in the 1850s and 1860s. By the 1870s, blackface performers filled Argentina (Chasteen). Clearly, Africans were making their mark on the arts scene. In addition to African influence, a large wave of immigrants brought a large European influence to Argentina. In this mixture of races and cultures, a new dance emerged. In the early years of tango, the dance was characterized by constant improvisation, lateral movement of the hips, flexibility in the connection between dancers, crossed steps, and swaying (Cuello 90).

In the early 1900s, although tango had become commonplace in Argentina, described as "monotony" in 1906, it was only beginning to make a large impact in many parts of the world (Giuspo 33). The first available film of tango, *Tango Argentino*, is from 1900 and was made in Argentina (Cuello 89). Evidence of the further spread of

tango was that in 1933, *Universal History of Dance*, published in Berlin contained a chapter entitled “The twentieth century/The age of tango” (Ochoa 43). Naming the chapter about the twentieth century after tango shows tango’s profound influence in the dance world. Europeans caught on quickly to this new form of dance and soon France was seen as the prime place to learn tango. “Tango is the most chic and also the most liked in Parisian salons...The main teachers aren’t Spanish. They are French,” states a newspaper article from 1913 (qtd. in Giuspo 39, translation by author). Even Argentineans went to Paris to teach tango rather than teaching it in their own country (Giuspo 37). 1913 was the year in which desire to learn tango overtook Paris

Tango was also brought to other European countries, although it did not experience as much popularity in these countries as it did in France. In 1913, tango teas started in London (Denniston). Tango gained some popularity in England, although the aristocracy resisted the dance. In Munich, tango was prohibited in public sites and theaters (Giuspo 39). Evidence of further spread of tango throughout the rest of Europe is the production of *Ekstase*, a 1932 Austrian/Czechoslovakian film that showed tango dance (Ochoa 51).

As tango moved from country to country, its style changed in each different location. Parts of the dance were lost and others added. At times, the dance was complicated more, such as for competitions. However, tango was simplified in common dance halls and Tango Liso, another style of tango, was created as a result (Cuello 91). As upper class *porteños*, or people from Buenos Aires, accepted tango, they made even more modifications, creating Salon-Style Tango, with much more fixed choreography (93). Eventually there were “as many tangos as dance teachers” (92).

The spread of tango in Europe was brought to an abrupt halt when the First World War began, in 1914. During this time, France prohibited dance and much of the tango fever was lost (Ochoa 22). In Argentina, however, tango continued to develop and at this time tango *pasos*, or moves, began to be recorded and formalized. In 1916, *El tango argentino de salón, Método de baile teórico y práctico*, a book with tango steps, was published (Cuello 92). After the First World War, tango once again gained popularity in Europe. Later, tango gained a brief popularity during World War II in Europe, especially when the Nazis prohibited the playing of jazz music.

In Argentina in the 1940s, Juan Perón was president and beginning to make large changes in Argentina. He established an Undersecretary of Culture and, in many ways, Argentina became a very isolated country. By this time, however, tango had truly taken root in Argentina and continued to be seen as a strong cultural force, even without interaction with other countries that had adopted the dance.

In the late 1940s, however, tango's brief rise to fame throughout the world was over, and tango was forced to remain underground and was mainly only be practiced in Argentina. Political agendas of the day forced a change in the public's perception of tango. It was no longer an intriguing dance, but rather a scandalous tradition (Guillen 23).

Around the 1970s through part of the 1980s, tango started to lose the attention of the people in Argentina and around the world. Rather, it began to be seen as a symbol of antiquity or a dance of old (Ochoa 166). As Argentina faced an economic crisis, foreign music gained popularity, forcing some of tango music's popularity to die out (Carretero 124). However, in the late 1980s and 1990s, tango once again gained popularity

following the show *Tango Argentino*. This revival has been compared to the “tangomania” seen in 1913, when tango was originally introduced to Europe (189). In the 1980s and 1990s, tango dancers became incredibly talented, raising the bar for the ability of future tango dancers and once again reviving the idea of professional tango dancers (209).

Today, electrotango, a version of tango music that uses electronic sounds, is gaining popularity and bringing tango more popularity in some locations. With new music comes new twists and additions to tango dance, as well. Dancers are learning to improvise with the steps that are now familiar, not just stick to the steps of traditional tango. In addition, tango continues to be portrayed in foreign films and productions and continues to make an impact worldwide.

Through this historical transformation, tango’s place in social classes, lyrics, and globalization have proven essential for the development of its image. This paper will now delve into those specific topics.

TANGO THROUGH THE CLASSES

One factor that has proven incredibly important in the image of tango is its journey through social classes. In this paper, primary sources describing tango dancers, movies analyses, and analyses of the social groups embracing tango will be used. Beginning in the lower classes, tango initially earned a reputation for being scandalous; subsequently it went through “purifications” and an entire geographic journey in order to gain repute again. Here, the history of tango as it moved through social classes will be described in order to shed light on how tango’s image developed.

Environment of origin

Between 1857 and 1880, at the beginning of tango's history, the population of Buenos Aires rose to 88,000 people, many of them immigrants (Carretero 23). This led to astounding class separation and, in this environment tango emerged. Evidence of this separation was in the distinct geographical separation between classes. Neighborhoods, or *barrios*, in Buenos Aires were more segmented than they are today. More than geographical separation, each *barrio* had its own unwritten rules for its inhabitants. Graceful, upper class girls would never be seen in the middle of the city, where the working class lived (Bergero 22). Social classes did not mix.

In addition, the sheer wealth of the upper classes was astounding. *Petits hotels*, mansions of the rich, sometimes occupied an entire city block (Bergero 26). Children would occasionally become lost in the statues and large pieces of art filling the houses of the upper class (31). Much of the upper class was a new upper class of *modernistas*. This upper class replaced the upper class with old money. An example of this was shown when the Jockey Club, a newly formed club with an impressive staircase and a strict dress code for servants, replaced Gran Aldea, a much older, elite club (16).

Meanwhile, immigrants had undesirable living circumstances. Most immigrants lived in La Boca, a *barrio* in the southeast part of the city close to the mouth of the river. If an entire immigrant family came to Argentina, their living quarters likely only consisted of one room. One of the houses would have housed more than one immigrant family. They painted their small houses the colors of the boats on which they arrived and often protested the high rents that prevented them from affording a suitable house for

their families. Two examples of traditional immigrant houses in Buenos Aires are shown in the index of pictures (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Also common among immigrant houses were common areas outside the families' doors. This encouraged immigrants to interact with other immigrants—whether they were originally from the same country or not.

Not only were their living conditions poor, but immigrants also dealt with a stigma from the upper class that caused more class separation. Immigrants to Buenos Aires were in danger of being kicked out if they were undesirable. According to a law of the time, an immigrant could be deported with only three days notice (Bergero 19).

Tango's development in La Boca among the immigrants caused the image of the art form to be linked with the image of the immigrants. In this way, tango originally was looked down upon and seen as a part of the lower class.

Besides La Boca, there was another important *barris* for the development of tango. This was Corrales Viejos, now known as Parque Patricos. This *barrio*, just slightly west of La Boca, was the slaughterhouse district. According to an article printed in 1913, in 1877, white *compadritos*, or street people whose grandfathers were gauchos, had imitated a new dance of the African Argentines, tango, and brought this dance to Corrales Viejos (Nouzeilles 199).

As this example showed, another important social group in a different social class that influenced tango was Africans. Africans came to Buenos Aires already possessing strong music and dance traditions. They would use dance as a way to escape the reality of slavery, with all ages and social classes participating in the festivities (De Maria 318). In Argentina, all Africans were looked upon as second-class citizens and slaves. Around the second half of the nineteenth century, the government went so far as to force African

influence out of Buenos Aires in an effort to “improve” society. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, an author and president of Argentina, was of the opinion that different races had “developed at different rates,” with Africans and Indians among the last and, thus, among the least civilized (Graham 39). This shows the low opinion Argentineans had for Africans and for this reason, once again, tango was a dance associated with a low social class.

African influence was seen in tango as tango dance may have originally looked somewhat like African dance. During the “Manifestation” period of tango, between 1889 and 1904, tango was known for the “flexible” bodies and “marvelous” feet of its dancers. In addition, it was said that dancers could “sleep in a rhythmic movement during a beat or two” (Cuello 90). The idea of dancers following a prominent beat is reminiscent of African dance, where drums are an integral part of the dance. In addition, it is said that tango musicians often used their instruments in the same manners that Africans used drums, improvising with the instruments they had.

Today tango dance looks very little like traditional African dance. Instead of including many jumps and vertical movements, tango is taught to include the foot sliding along the floor. Instead of including bending of the torso, tango is danced in an upright manner. “Because I’ve been African dancing for so long, I want to arch my back and bend my knees. To me it feels very natural. If you’re dancing the tango they try and stop that a lot. They want you to have an upright torso,” says dancer Hillary Hoing (qtd. in Pfeiffenberger par. 11).

In addition, the city of Buenos Aires retains only a small part of its original African influence. There are very few *porteños* with African ancestors or evidence of

African ancestors. One of my fellow study abroad students, of African American descent, found this to be true, and found that at times his race attracted extra attention. In addition in 2010, for the first time, the annual census included a question asking whether a *porteño* has African ancestors. Before, this influence was simply ignored (Costantini). A recent study showed that, although it appears that there is little to no African influence in Buenos Aires, approximately 10 percent of the Buenos Aires population have African ancestors (Fejerman). This shows that this group of people, once integral to the production of tango, was largely oppressed and truly was a lower social class through Argentina's history.

Popular lore suggests that tango emerged in the brothels and adds to the image of tango as a loose dance; however, many historians have contested this and supported the idea of tango emerging among the immigrants and the lower classes. Although tango has roots in the working class, the brothels are likely not a true representation of the environment in which tango developed (Baim 20). Prostitution was rampant in Buenos Aires at the time, however most likely the idea of tango coming from the brothels is merely a reflection of a stereotype of the working class.

One refute for the theory that tango originated in the brothels is that, in this economically challenging time for immigrants, prostitutes could only afford to perform the services for which they were paid, not to engage in dancing, which earned no income (Denniston par. 4). In addition, in Buenos Aires, tango was not a part of prostitution, as dancing was prohibited for locations of prostitution (Giuspo 30). Although tango likely did not emerge in the brothels, one place where tango was danced, *casitas*, small houses or apartments, appeared like tolerated brothels.

Another environment where tango was danced, which shows the social class of the dancers, were the lower class dance halls. Here, the strongest, most influential tango was danced. As a contrast, even through 1910, elite *porteños* did not dance tango and, perhaps as a result, the high-class salons became the halls approved by foreigners (Cuello 91). However, in addition to these lower class settings, tango was also danced in restaurants and dance schools, more reputable locations (Giuspo 29).

Upper Class Influence

Although tango is most commonly associated with the lower classes and did not completely take hold in the upper classes until later, there was still some influence from the upper classes in the early choreography and formation of tango. Ezequiel Sora wrote about these times when “the young people from good families and bad families” danced tango (qtd. in Vega 198, translation by author). In addition, upper class young men were not afraid of associating with the lower classes in tango. Around 1900, two different types of tango could be seen: one that was bold and stayed in the brothels and another that was weak and could be seen in open places (203).

Later, the upper classes began to accept tango and the image of tango was thus changed, although very slowly. By 1900, it was recorded that tango was a part of the celebration of Carnival, showing the social diversity of tango dancers by 1900 (Giuspo 26). Carnival was a festival in which all social classes participated, with all *barrios* of the city taking part in the preparations (33). Furthermore, between 1880 and 1920, Carnival was beginning to become a tradition for the upper and middle classes, showing the dance was no longer confined to the lower classes (McCleary 6). In addition, not just

all the social classes from Buenos Aires, but also foreigners at Carnival enjoyed tango. “The audience of foreigners have been excited with the repertoire [of shows, including tango] and have asked later how to dance these dances, how to sing these songs full of grace and intention. It is impossible to satisfy their curiosity,” a newspaper article from 1910 says (Giuspo qtd. 35, translation by author).

Also, as tango spread through the city, different *barrios* and thus different social classes in these *barrios* encountered and influenced tango. An important *barrio* to the development of tango was La Recoleta, a wealthier part of town toward the north part of the city. As the tango spread through the city, *cafetines*, or small cafés, offered places for tango music, although there was rarely enough space for tango dancing in these locations (Carretero 69).

Although the upper class was beginning to warm to tango through the beginning of the 1900s, the upper class still did not fully embrace tango at this time. An Argentinean newspaper article dating from 1910 shows the disapproval of the upper classes in Argentina, saying that tango is “ours,” but “our bad thing,” and refers to Argentines blushing at the idea of tango being from their country (Giuspo 35). Leopoldo Lugones, an Argentine writer, wrote that “...the object of tango is to describe the obscene...tango forms the choreography of the brothel, being the fundamental object in a pornographic show...when women of the twentieth century dance tango, they know or should know that they look like prostitutes, because this is a dance of prostitutes” (qtd. 40). As a member of the elite intellectual class of the time, Lugones’ view shows the disapproval of the upper class. It also shows that the image of tango was still corresponding to the original social classes of its dancers for some.

Payadores, or wandering musicians, were another social class that influenced tango around the beginning of the 1900s (Taylor 275). These musicians often had strong *gaucho* traditions, as they came from the countryside, or *pampas*, of Argentina. By the beginning of the 20th century, payadores had begun to move to the Buenos Aires. Around the 1880s, there were already very few gauchos left in Argentina (Collier 94). The movement of payadores to the city is documented in literature. Domingo Sarmiento, an influential political writer and future president of Argentina, wrote of the singing gaucho moving to the city (Carretero 50). Although many of the payadores initially resisted tango music, some started to concede and write tangos.

Like other influential groups in tango's history, payadores were immigrants. For example, Santos Vega, one of the most popular payadores, had parents who came to Argentina from Spain (Obligado). The influence of the *gauchos* added a new image to tango. This image was a more rough, crass image of people who were comfortable in the country.

Worldwide Fame

As the tango spread to different parts of the world and was embraced by different social classes, its image changed. Around 1910, Argentina was the seventh richest country in the world. At this time, the wealthy of Buenos Aires began sending their children to study or to vacation in Europe. The students, of course, brought their own culture with them, one aspect of which was tango. Thus, tango went from the upper class in Argentina to the upper class in Europe. The year was 1911 when tango began to enter aristocratic salons in Paris (Giuspi 31).

In 1913, when tango was immensely popular in Paris, the upper class of Paris embraced tango. The first preoccupation of elegant woman was taking dance lessons from a professor (Ochoa 18). According to Vernon Castle, a North American dancer, it was best to take tango lessons in Paris because Parisians were the best dancers of those who can dance (Ochoa 16). This implies that tango was now being treated as a true dance technique, being danced by the best dancers. In addition, the elegant ladies embracing tango shows that it was accepted by the upper classes. This was a drastic change from its image in Argentina, where it was most commonly associated with the brothels and the dancers in the lowest social classes.

In addition, there was a constant flow of artists between Paris and Buenos Aires. The artists from France brought the tango back with them after encountering it in Argentina. “The most curious of the case is that it hasn’t been the Argentineans that have implanted their ‘tango’ in Paris. It has been, in reality, Paris that has been looking for the Argentine tango,” states a newspaper article from 1913 (qtd. in Giuspo 38, translation by author).

Interestingly, in France tango spread through social classes in the opposite direction as it did in Argentina. In the beginning of the 1900s in France, tango was truly embraced by the upper class. This could correspond to many factors. First, the people who introduced France to tango were not from the lower classes, but were either artists or young men from wealthy families. Thus, the natural relationships that would have formed between these peoples would have remained within their own social class.

In addition, this could be a result of the ideas, themes, and image of tango transported to Europe. In countries other than Argentina, the idea of tango did not

correspond with the image of a tough gaucho, as it did in Argentina, but rather with the image of an elegant Latin lover (Ochoa 26). This altered image may have been due to three circumstances. First, the Argentineans who brought tango to France were not gauchos, but rather students or upper-class citizens. In addition, in Paris, the stance of the dance was opened a small amount, allowing some space (19). This may have made the dance seem not quite as crude, but rather more elegant and fit for higher society. Lastly, the image of tango portrayed through foreign film encouraged the idea of a Latin lover. All of this added up to tango being portrayed as part of the upper class.

Nonetheless, the locations where tango was danced by the upper class in France in the beginning of the 1900s were not as elegant as the people themselves and served to taint the image of tango slightly. In this way, tango never completely lost the image it had obtained in Argentina, that of a lower-class dance. According to *Les Posedées*, a French publication,

“Isn’t it prodigious, the show of all these people in refined excess, saturated with luxury and comfort, parishioners of the Ritz and the Palace that accept to withdraw themselves every evening in this empty place, with systems less than modest, rudimentary, and where the service isn’t sure, but rather by a lowly, foolish servant of a simplicity truly evangelical?” (qtd. in Ochoa 21, translation by author)

Evidence of the change in tango’s global image when it moved to Europe was the production of tango films. Max Linder, a French Jew, was one of the first actors to use tango. In 1912, he played a professor of tango in a short film. Later, he performed a sketch that referenced tango in its title, *C’est le tango qui est la cause de ça* (It’s tango

that is the cause of this) (Ochoa 191). In addition, Charlie Chaplin, an English actor, performed *Tango Tangles* (Ochoa 191). Although this work references tango in its title and features dance, there are no recognizable tango steps, but rather simply the narration of two men fighting over the hat check girl (Ochoa 191).

These movies show that around the time of 1912, the idea of tango seemed to represent whatever the artists pleased, whether that meant fighting over a girl or teaching dance. However, more than simply been spread geographically and presenting tango in certain ways, the popular classes throughout the world were coming to know tango. In the 1910s, movies were extremely popular (“American Cultural History”). Thus, tango’s presence in the movies would bring its presence to many social classes.

Renewed Enthusiasm

After the First World War and the halt of the spread of tango, tango returned in Europe, although it lost much of its frenzied state and spread more to the middle and lower classes. This once again caused an alteration in the image of tango. “When all the restrictions on dance were removed by the authorities of Paris, the English dancers were surprised to know that tango was newly the most popular dance in the French capital,” stated a magazine in 1932 (qtd. in Giuspo 40). Obviously, tango still had a strong hold over the general population of France and carried an image that reflected the popular class of France. Additionally, the number of foreign tango orchestras multiplied in this time, reflecting the popularity of tango in foreign countries (Ochoa 44).

As a French tango professor of the 1920s said, “...tango still isn’t appreciated by all the social classes, but it is coming to them” (Ochoa 52). An evidence of tango

spreading to the middle class in Europe was a film that was produced in 1958. This film, *Les amants de Montparnasse*, looked back on the year 1919 and portrays tango in a bohemian restaurant, not in an elegant or luxurious setting (75).

However, it is also important to note that, although more social classes knew tango, it was still often portrayed as something of the upper class. For example, *Wonder Bar*, a 1934 movie of the United States, showed tango as a sophisticated and sensual. Although not all tango dancers were as elegant as portrayed, this movie still clung to that stereotype in order to solidify it (53).

As tango was spreading to the middle and lower classes in Europe, it spread in the opposite direction in Argentina. Once *porteños*, or people from Buenos Aires, found out that the dance had been embraced by the upper class and was changed to use a looser embrace in Europe, its image was changed in the minds of the Argentinean middle and upper classes. As a result, they began to dance tango as well. This occurred in the 1920s (Clark 26). Argentinean dance schools were faced with the decision of either accepting the “purified” dance from tango or closing their doors (Giuspo 37). In this case, not only did tango’s journey through social classes affect its image, but also its image affected its spread through social classes. Here you can see how intertwined these two concepts are.

In addition, the upper class sons who had learned to tango in earlier years began to spread the influence of tango themselves. By the late 1910s, many had gained government positions and brought the dance they had learned as boys to the upper classes (Nouzeilles 201). By the 1920s, tango became a “quintessential expression of popular culture.” Nonetheless, tango still seemed to have the strongest hold in the lower classes, with most tango singers coming from the lower classes (Collier 99).

In the United States

After being introduced to European society and being embraced by Argentinean society, tango made its way to the United States and adopted a slightly modified image as it was brought to the working class. Rudolf Valentino's movies, in particular, brought many tango ideas to the United States. Before his movies, tango had not truly caught on in the United States, even though some Americans, like Valentino himself, found great value in this dance. As Valentino said, "For me, there isn't any other dance equal in color and rhythm. The only reason why tango wasn't made truly popular in this country is because the public considered it difficult" (qtd. in Ochoa 39, translation by author).

Two other influential figures in the spread of tango to the United States were Vernon and Irene Castle. These ballroom dancers brought the steps of tango from Paris to the United States and, in their interaction with the dance, brought new ideas. They were prominent ragtime dancers and their dance was part of a "threat to social order" happening at the time (Washabaugh 133). In 1911, it was reported that the majority of dancers in New York City dance halls were teenagers from the working class (137). Thus, when tango was shown by Vernon and Irene Castle, it was brought to the working class and adapted characteristics and stereotypes from this class. Some such stereotypes were shown when dance, particularly ragtime dance, was talked of in pathological terms, like 'dance mad' (138).

Additionally, after being transported from Buenos Aires to Paris to the United States, much of the purity of the steps of tango was lost. As Vernon Castle admitted, "The tango as we dance now is very modified with respect to Argentinian tango" (qtd. in

Ochoa 57, translation by author). Thus, the image of tango in the United States was completely different from its image in other parts of the world, both because of its stylistic features as well as because of its place in the social class structure of the United States.

Another influential person in the spread of tango to the working class in the United States was Charlie Chaplin. He performed *Tille's Punctured Romance* in 1914, in which he danced tango (Ochoa 14). Later, Carlos Gardel and Chaplin became good friends, and Gardel said that Chaplin's tango was like Rodolfo Valentino, a perfect imitation of *porteño* (15). When Charlie Chaplin used tango, it was not only linked to the *porteño*, but to the common man in general. His character, the Tramp, was an ordinary man. "In fact, he is, with this film, establishing himself as one among the audience, one among those who are astonished by this new mechanical marvel, one among those who would like to be photographed by it, and—he would make the most of the implication later—one among those who are invariably chased away. He looked at the camera and went through it, joining the rest of us" (qtd. in "Chaplin"). Although at this time, the focus of the movies was not on the technique of tango, but rather on mere movement, Chaplin played a large role in bringing the idea of tango to the common people in America through his early silent movies.

Although the production of many tango movies in the United States shows that tango was widely accepted and embraced in the United States, there were also some who voiced discontent, perhaps partially in a reaction to its stereotypes resulting from its relation to the working class. One well-know example of this was the *Chicago Tribune* editorial from July 18, 1926, "Pink Powder Puffs." This editorial proposes negative

effects from introduction of more ballroom dance by calling men who dance “effeminate men” (Ellenberger 154). This is directly linked to tango, and Valentino in particular when the article asks, in reference to the supposed overwhelming, destructive power of dance in feminizing men, “Why didn’t some one quietly drown Rudolph Gugliemo [*sic*], alias Valentino, years ago?” (153).

The era of Perón

Around the end of the 1930s, the social climate in Argentina had changed and, along with that, the image of tango. The traditional middle class became a working class as industrialization prevailed and Argentineans continued to move from the countryside to the capital city, Buenos Aires (Carretero 122). In 1943, Juan Perón became President. Perón worked throughout his presidency to be a representation of the working class and connect with his people, making posters showing himself as a worker. At this time, Argentina’s lower social classes were given the opportunity to go on vacations, often to Mar del Plata, where many members of the upper class lived. This was a privilege that only the upper class had received at an earlier time. In addition, Juan and Eva Perón stood for the working classes, winning them more respect. Eva Perón, from a family of a lower social class, became an icon for the lower class, representing how far they could rise on the social spectrum. In many ways, social classes in Argentina were becoming more level during the time of the Peróns’ control of the government.

Perón himself also embraced tango, often photographed with a tango orchestra or at a tango festival (Clark 31). When he was shown interacting with tango, the idea of tango representing the working class was furthered. After one demonstration in Plaza de

Mayo, the demonstrators, mostly composed of the working class, danced in the streets. “The images of workers dancing in the streets traditionally monopolized by the upper classes served as a symbolic recreation of the ‘take over of the city’ and its symbols of power” (qtd. 33).

In Europe, some concentration camp orchestras were forced to play the “Tango of Death” when prisoners were forced to walk to the gas chambers (Katz par. 10). Tango in this case was said to represent “life and yearning for freedom by prisoners” (par. 9). Tango once again represented a lower social class, the social class of the prisoners in concentration camp, and fittingly adapted to its image.

After World War II, tango popularity began to lessen in Western Europe, but continued to prevail in Eastern and Northern Europe in the common class. This is evidenced by the Polish movies *Polowanie na muchy* (1969) and *Popiół I diament* (1958). Both show tango as a part of everyday life, not as a symbol of wealth or prosperity (Ochoa 131). This shows that in Eastern Europe, as tango remained a part of society, it became more commonplace and was associated with the middle classes.

Tango Revival

After losing popularity during the 1970s, in the 1980s and 1990s, there was a revival in tango interest in which tango resonated with both lower and upper classes. One force that caused the tango revival and reinforced the idea of upper classes performing tango was the Broadway show *Tango Argentino*. This show started in Paris, travelled to Venice, and then to New York. It was loved by many audiences and caused a large stir in interest. More than just interesting the general public, it caused a great deal of interest in

the dance community. Martha Graham, Bob Fosse, and Mikhail Barishnikov all saw this show. In this way, an interest in tango was once again brought back to the upper classes, which would attend Broadway shows, and to the dance community. Tango seemed to once again, as in the late 1910s, be seen as a prominent dance form.

Another example of tango gaining popularity in the dance world around this time was the production of the movie *Valentino*. It showed an imitation of Rudolf Valentino, the actor who had started the stereotypical image of a tango dancer with a rose in his mouth in *Blood and Sand* from 1922 (Ochoa 27). Notable in the movie was that the lead part was danced by Rudolf Nureyev, a famous Russian ballet dancer (37). This shows that even a famous ballerina was willing to imitate tango at that time.

Another prominent force in bringing tango back to the public's attention was *Tango mío*, a BBC documentary shown throughout the world that showcased tango in the lower classes. As a *New York Times* review from the time stated, "The point, of course, is that there is nothing slick and glamorous about the real thing" (O'Connor par 2). This documentary showed a nostalgic Buenos Aires, associating the tango once again with the lower class, putting it back in its place of origin. However, this time the lower classes were not seen as despicable, but intriguing, and tango gained popularity among many different social classes as a result. Thus, as tango gained popularity again, it carried the image of the lower classes.

Today's social classes

Today, stratification in Argentinean social classes prevails, much like the class differences when tango emerged. In many ways, the separation between classes is only

becoming greater and tango continues to be a part of Argentina's identity. The upper class continues to become richer and the lower class continues to become poorer as the middle class slowly disappears. Many previously middle-class Argentines are finding it incredibly hard to make ends meet in this time after the economic crisis from 1999-2002.

My host mother provides one example of a typical Argentinean life. When she was younger, she lived on family money, living in a large house in San Isidro, one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Buenos Aires, playing tennis, skiing, and travelling to Spain. However, now, after the economic crisis, she has been forced to move to a much smaller apartment and cannot afford to travel. She tells stories of times when there weren't homeless people in Buenos Aires.

According to a recent article, there are 15,000 homeless (6.1 percent of the population) in the city of Buenos Aires and 30,000 people were evicted from their houses in 2009 ("Buenos" par. 3). Adding to this class stratification is a general unstableness throughout Argentina. During my four months living in Argentina, numerous strikes took place, one occurring for more than two weeks.

In such unstable times as these in Argentina, some of the people continue to cling to tango, sometimes as a way to escape the hardships of life. In *Scent of A Woman*, a 1992 film, the idea that tango is a way to escape from the mistakes and hardships of life is reflected in the dialogue between two characters. "There aren't errors in tango, Donna. It isn't like life. It is simple. This is the best thing about tango, if someone messes up, they only continue dancing" (Ochoa 250, translation by author).

Although tango continues to be embraced and loved by the entire country of Argentina, today's *milongas*, or places where is danced, require a cover charge. In this way, the lowest social classes are limited in their involvement with tango. In addition, tango shows in Buenos Aires are promoted with lights, flair, and high ticket prices, catering to the tourists and the upper class. Also, tango dancers are seen in parks that tourists frequent on a regular basis (Fig. 3). In this way, the image of tango in Buenos Aires is being promoted as something for the rich or the tourists, even though many other social classes had previously enjoyed this dance.

Comparison with other dance forms

Tango has shown various fashions of travelling through social classes: in Argentina, it started in the lower classes, in Europe it took hold in the upper classes, and in the United States it was presented to the working class. The dance can be compared with the histories of ballet and hip-hop. The comparison shows that dance can emerge in either the upper or lower class and still make a lasting impact on society.

Ballet, for example, began in the royal courts of France. Although entertainers who were of a lower class than the royalty performed, there was a definitive presence of the elegance of the royal court. It is noteworthy that when tango came to France, its development through social classes paralleled that of ballet. Perhaps this reflects a characteristic of French culture, that dance has always been of a significant importance to the upper classes.

Also, both tango and ballet now carry an impression of elegance to those in France. This image is something that only emerged when tango entered the upper classes

of France. This suggests that dances that begin in the upper classes of societies carry different stereotypes, or different images, than dances that begin in lower classes, even if the dances themselves are changed only minimally.

Hip-hop dance, on the other hand, started in the streets, with low class performers, and has risen through the social classes to the point where it is commonly offered in middle-class dance studios and is performed in many different theaters. This is the same development through social classes as that of tango in Argentina.

It is interesting to note that a shared characteristic of tango and hip-hop is the value of improvisation. In tango, the closeness of the dancers' bodies enables the dancer in the male's position to communicate the next step. Although there is a basic format for the dance and some basic steps, the essence of tango is contained in its improvised dance. "In effect, the essence of the dance resides, from an outline minimally previously known, in the choreographic improvisation by the man, conductor of the pair, and his transfer to the woman" (Martinez 169). This improvisation has been important in the dance since the beginning of tango's creation in the lower classes. Until 1904, tango dancers would not only improvise with steps they already had, but they would introduce new steps. "Each pair was inventing a new 'cut'" (Giuspo 27).

Hip-hop as well relies on the creativity and improvisation of the dancers. This could be a unifying theme in the dances that begin in a lower social class. The members of the lower classes, not bound by as many social rules as the upper classes, also are not bound to prescribed steps or sequences, but rather rely on improvisation. Contrasting hip-hop and tango is ballet, which relies on precisely choreographed steps and accordingly began in the upper classes of France.

Likewise, as hip-hop dance has become a staple in middle-class dance studios, it has lost much of its improvisational characteristics and some say this is causing it to lose its authenticity. “When you take it out of the clubs and put it in the studio, you lose some of the street element, which is spontaneity. You don’t get freestyle, you get 5, 6, 7, 8,” dancer and choreographer Ellie Burkey says (qtd. in Wisner). It seems moving up in social classes and losing improvisational qualities are linked in this case. This could correspond to tango.

Similarities can be seen between tango and both ballet and hip-hop, with correlations in the way these dances are perceived. This comparison adds to the discussion of social classes’ influence on dance and should be further explored in following research.

Gender Roles

Although gender does not define social class, it is another way of grouping dancers of different times that should be examined in this thesis. In films, tango was a way of communicating gender roles in films. *Si j’ose m’exprimer oinsi* (France) and *El tango en Paris* (Argentina) were both plays of 1913 that showed two women dancing tango. Likewise, *Die Büche der Pandora* (1929, Germany) was the first movie to feature two girls dancing a tango together (Ochoa 135). Later, *Some Like It Hot*, a 1955 movie produced in the United States used tango as a way to mix male and female gender roles (Ochoa 117). The idea of tango showing sexuality was also echoed in films where tango was used to signify a change of sex. Two such movies were *Victor/Victoria* (1982) and

Cambio de sexo (1977). It is especially interesting that gender roles became so important in tango since gender roles also played a large part in tango's history.

When tango emerged as a new dance form, the gender ratio was incredibly unbalanced. At the time, the ratio of males to females in Argentina was roughly 5 to 1 (Baim 20). This was largely because of the large number of immigrants who came from Europe to make money and desired to return home after accumulating wealth. Often, they came due to advertisement of ways to make money. Thus, they didn't bring families or wives, but rather planned to return to start a family after their time in Argentina (Denniston). Due to this imbalance, many men practiced tango with each other, at least until other women were available to practice (Baim 28). The validity of men dancing tango together is shown by the fact that, in 1916, the Mayor de Buenos Aires prohibited dance between two males (Giuspo 29).

Today, gender roles are sometimes switched from the normal roles. In Buenos Aires, there are a couple of gay milongas, where men and women can equally lead or follow. A photo from one of these milongas is in the Photo Index (Fig. 4). The change in gender roles during tango has spread worldwide, as well. The movie *Six Degrees of Separation*, produced in the United States in 1993, showed a scene in which a homosexual seduced someone using tango (Ochoa 242). In New York City, there is a Queer Tango Festival (Piepenberg). In milongas at these venues, men can be seen dancing with other men, women with other women, and men with women. It seems that, although tango as it is traditionally danced has very evident "typical" gender roles, these have been adapted to fit the beliefs and morals of the current population of Buenos Aires. In addition, some claim that tango dancing can become, in a way, genderless. "When

two men dance, it's kind of us showing each other what we know. Eventually it turns into this Ouija board, where there's no leading or following. It's just being," states Patrick Loughran (Piepenburg).

The acceptance of different gender roles than normal in tango partially reflects Argentina's willingness to accept different sexualities. In July of 2010, Argentina became the first country in Latin America to legalize gay marriage (Barrionuevo). This shows that, among their geographical neighbors, Argentina is one of the most accepting of nontraditional gender roles.

TANGO LYRICS

From the origin of tango, words have played a large part in tango and have formed a part of the image of tango. Originally, tango was a way past the absence of words that naturally was a part of life for immigrants from different countries. Although they could not communicate with each other through written or spoken word, they could communicate through dance. In this way, early immigrants used tango as a way to overcome the barrier of language. Later, the immigrants used the lyrics to communicate.

Themes in tango lyrics

Just as the immigrants could find commonality in dance, they could also find commonality in themes such as love, alcohol, and home. These themes were thus often used in the lyrics of the songs and formed the feeling and image of tango. One theme that has always carried through tango songs is the theme of love, like the song "Gricel," with lyrics written by José María Contursi.

Tango lyrics, though, have not always carried a positive tone. After an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, some tangos discussed this current event. Likewise, in 1966, a harsh reaction to Argentina's newly found capitalism resulted in guerilla attacks, first in the countryside, and then in the cities. Some tango lyrics of this time reflected these atrocities, speaking of death (Carretero 126).

Another popular theme in tango lyrics has been alcohol. Sometimes, alcohol is sung of as a means to forget past pains, especially in relationships. Sometimes, alcohol represents a way to celebrate, especially when champagne is mentioned. Other times, alcohol plays a part that has no particular reason, with the singer drinking for no reason (del Priore 17).

Also, tango lyrics discussed familiar locations. Sometimes, they would describe Buenos Aires, the city the immigrants had come to know. Tango lyrics often showed disappointment in the country where immigrants had hoped to become rich and own land (Taylor 276). The tone of tango lyrics reflected the *arrabales*, or outer poor districts of Buenos Aires, where the dance took root. Here, many immigrants lived, trying to make the most of this supposed land of dreams (Collier 34).

At other times, they would speak of a stereotypical house. One such image of a house often referenced is a *bulín*. This *bulín* can be associated with happy memories, humorous stories, or sad realizations of lost loves (del Priore 16).

The theme of nostalgia for places left was evident in the lyrics of tango. This theme of nostalgia was also evident in popular literature of the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly as Buenos Aires expanded and much of the small city feeling of Buenos Aires was lost. For example, Evaristo Carriego, a poet at this time, takes on a

nostalgic tone in his “El Camino de Nuestra Casa,” as he speaks of his familiar street that is changing. Payadores writing different types of lyrics not only changed the music, but also the perception and manner of the dance. In this time, manners, clothes, and music changed to fit the payadores’ themes (Carretero 51).

The nostalgia shown in tango lyrics also seems to be seen in the everyday lives of porteños. To my Spanish professor, who has lived in the United States and Europe for periods of her life, it seemed that there may be this may be an important distinction between different countries. According to her, Europe and Argentina are both reflect upon the past and continue to remain in the past, while the United States is a country of the present. Perhaps tango is merely one of the many ways porteños embrace the past and cling to what used to be.

Social groups influencing lyrics

Many social groups formed the lyrics of tango and added a unique flavor to the image of tango. Italian immigrants were one such group that left its mark on early tango lyrics. Eventually, the lyrics were said to be “italianized Argentine Spanish” (Taylor 275). It’s not surprising that Italian made an impact on lyrics, as Italian seems to have made an impact on other parts of the language as well. The accent of a porteño is said to be “Spanish spoken with an Italian accent” (“Paris of the Pampas”). Research suggests that some of the characteristic sounds of Argentinean Spanish emerged at the beginning of the 1900s, when Italian immigrants, and thus the Italian languages, came to Argentina (Colantoni 107). Today, it is estimated that up to 60 percent of the population of Buenos

Aires has Italian ancestry, while only 30 percent have a Spanish ancestry (“Paris of the Pampas”).

Another group that influenced tango lyrics and subsequently changed the image of tango were payadores, or wandering musicians. Many times, when payadores are described today, they are described as “poets,” not lyricists or songwriters. Simply by observing this fact, we can see that the lyrics of payadores’ tangos were important to the substance of their music. When payadores began to write tango lyrics, around the beginning of the 20th century, they developed their own tone for tango lyrics. Their lyrics were not like the cheerful tango lyrics of the time, but rather were nostalgic for the life they had left on the countryside. Sarmiento references this when he talks about singing gauchos moving to Buenos Aires and singing of their heroes on the plains or the Indians who took their children (Carretero 54).

Tango lyrics often use *lunfardo*, the slang of Argentina, often associated with the lower classes and criminals and shows that this social group also had an impact on the lyrics of tango. Although the lyrics of tango songs were originally written in *lunfardo*, it has been observed that the particular words used were not the harshest of *lunfardo* or the words true criminals would use (Baim 35). In this way, tango language showcased the lower classes without truly showing criminal lifestyles. In addition, *lunfardo* today isn’t merely reserved for lower classes, but is used by upper class Argentines as well. In addition, *verse*, another type of slang, is also used in tango lyrics. This slang reverses the syllables of words. For example, *tango* in *verse* is *gotán*.

Other words showed influence from Argentinean gauchos.

As tango music developed into music with words, the lyrics took on a free form (del Priore 8).

Tangos without lyrics

From 1917 to 1920, many tango songs did not showcase lyrics, but rather focused on the instrumental. “Mi noche triste,” sung by Carlos Gardel, was an exception to this rule (del Priore 8). This was the first *tango-canción* and set a standard for sung tango songs. After this famous tango, many other tangos, including many more sung by Carlos Gardel, included and emphasized lyrics. In 1920, Delfino and Linning started an age later called *cancionísta*, when lyrics were written just for tango without losing their rhythm (Martinez 172).

As tango music became more popular and emerged from the lowest classes, tango lyrics began to take on a different tone. They would denounce injustices or serve political motives (Carretero 52). One such example was seen often in the communist era in Russia and East Europe. In this time, protest tango was popular. One song, “Cambalache,” written in 1935 and protesting again the lack of economic opportunity in Argentina, was so outrageous that it was prohibited in Argentina during the military dictatorship from 1976-1983 (Ochoa 223).

Between 1920 and 1930, the jazz and melodic compositions provided lyrics written in other languages, especially English (Carretero 68). This was seen in some tango songs as well. At this time, new forms of poetry began to emerge in tango lyrics (123). Typically, there would be three parts to the lyrics, with eight verses for each party. After singing through these lyrics, the second verse would often be repeated. Many times

the first and third verse would have the same rhythm, with 11 or 12 syllables (del Priore 8).

In the 1940s, tango orchestras expanded. Tango songs subsequently started with an orchestral development, followed by the singer singing the first and second verses, followed by an orchestral section, and then the second verse again (del Priore 9). In this way, the tango songs of the 1940s combined both the value of mere instrumentation with words. One important distinction in the 1940s was that from 1943-1946, tango lyrics were, in essence “purified.” Radio stations were prohibited from broadcasting songs that used incorrect *castellano*, or Spanish language, or spoke of themes such as alcohol or a cabaret (del Priore 9).

Around the 1950s, some tango lyrics began to take on a humorous tone. In Europe, lyrics were written that showed tango as “nostalgic humor” (Ochoa 117).

However, other tango lyrics continue to discuss mere everyday experiences. One example of this was at the end of the movie *París Tombuctú*, or Paris Timbuktu. The lyrics of a tango song in this movie, from 1999, mention the change of the millennium (Ochoa 99).

As tango spread worldwide and tango movies were developed in the United States, they showed a completely new type of tango lyrics. Just as tango became a sexual, elegant image, some lyrics of tango, especially tangos in other languages, became excessively romantic. One example of this is shown in the movie *Flying Down to Rio*. In the tango scene in this movie, Julio (Raul Roulien) tells Belinha (Dolores del Rio) “The words [of the tango] are romantic, too, and dangerous. In the moonlight, on a

tropical island, they might make any woman fall in love with any man.” The lyrics, written by Edward Eliseu and Gus Kahn in English, truly speak of romance.

Another effect of the globalization of tango was that sometimes the lyrics changed to better describe the locations in which they were sung. For example, when tango spread to Finland, its lyrics began to take on new themes. One was the separation of lovers, especially due to a war and particularly World War II. Another common theme was of the melancholy of the scenery in Finland (Ochoa 108). Also, Finnish lyricists began to use lyric formulas of Russian and Finnish waltzes (Gronow). All of these themes are reflected more commonly in the daily lives of those in Finland than those in Argentina.

Today, walking through the streets of Buenos Aires, visitors can hear tango by the Gotan Project in excess. These tangos include few lyrics in total, focusing much more on the instrumental. However, the name of the tango group itself pays homage to verse, using the verse of tango, *gotán*. The music of the Gotan Project that uses very few lyrics and many electronic sounds reflects the most recent fad in tango music: *electrotango*. In these songs, the focus seems to be on the instrumental parts of the music.

GLOBALIZATION OF TANGO

Tango is ingrained in Argentina’s identity. Many Argentines find themselves obsessed with any scrap of tango news they can find if they relocate (Savigliano 2).

Tango dancers are found in parks, entertaining any local passerbys. Milongas still offer tango lessons multiple times a week, encouraging Argentines’ tendency to keep late hours on a regular basis. Tango is advertised on buses, in tourist guides, and on

billboards, giving the impression that everyone in Buenos Aires is a tango dancer. An entire part of the city is devoted to Carlos Gardel, the famous tango singer, with murals of his face and depictions of his music on buildings. A picture of one such depiction is in the Photo Index (Fig. 5). At the World Festival of Tango, Argentineans can be found singing along to their favorite tango recordings. At a popular tango show in Café Tortoni, crowds of Argentineans join in the chorus of the most famous tango as foreigners watch in amazement.

However, tango's influence reaches much further than Buenos Aires. Foreigners travel to Buenos Aires to catch a glimpse of the tango. Although not all foreigners may enjoy tango, many are fascinated by its unique characteristics. Some takes many lessons, learning to dance the tango with precision. This is documented in *Tango y Cine Mundial*, where it is said that "Today, it is difficult to differentiate, in a milonga, between a good native dancer and a good foreign dancer" (Ochoa 193, translation by author). Tango in Buenos Aires truly is a tourist attraction. "I believe that it is [still popular] because it's a business," states Vicente Costantini (Costantini). Seventy percent of the tourists who come to Buenos Aires come to learn tango (Ochoa 254). Many are dancers who come

"...only to perfect their steps in the national ring. And they return, the majority of them come back, and some repeat the trip, three, four, or seven times. They are sentimental in a world that appears equal and uniform. The tango has identity, nostalgia, and human contact" (qtd. in Ochoa 255, translation by author).

The obsession of some foreigners, which is sometimes seen as confounding to natives, is a result of globalization of the dance. Tango information and opportunities to dance tango are now available worldwide. One place where tango is popular is in the

United States. In 1983, *Tango Argentino* in New York started a “cultural industry of tourism, lessons, and fashion” in America (Guillen 43). Recently, in September 2010, National Public Radio broadcast a biography of Carlos Gardel (Barco). Many parts of the United States now host their own subcultures of tango. American movies, such as *Rent*, *Evita*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Chicago*, and *Shall We Dance?* continue to use tango as a stereotypical smoldering, sexy dance. There is an international tango festival in Denver, Colorado. Even in a small college town like State College, PA, the ballroom dance club hosts its own tango classes once a week and people attend a show by Tango Buenos Aires.

In addition, milongas can be found in many other parts of the world, including Paris, France. On a recent trip to France, I visited a milonga, hoping to catch a glimpse of the tango culture in another country. The setting was more informal than milongas in Buenos Aires, appearing more like friends dancing in a rented dance studio than a mixture of tourists and tango fanatics in an upscale locale. The formality of dancing to tango songs and then sitting during a break song seemed to be replaced by dancing to tango and then merely passing the time talking on the dance floor before starting again with the same partner. However, the essentials were still the same. The tango steps were basically the same, the same type of clothing was worn, and the music was familiar. A photo of this milonga is in the Photo Index (Fig. 6).

However, although tango is a popular source of tourist revenue and many foreigners come to dance tango, not all milongas in Buenos are for tourists. Many continue to primarily host local dancers. “[When I danced tango] I was going to a place

that wasn't at all touristy, in a very local place, with people from Buenos Aires, people older, 60, 70 years old," explains Laura Duberti, a 39-year-old *porteño* (Duberti).

Globalization through movies

One notable way in which the image of tango has been changed and has, at the same time, spread throughout the world, is through movies. These movies showcased many themes that would soon be associated with tango. *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* has two tango scenes. First, Rodolfo Valentino, dressed as a *gaucho*, dances tango with a girl in a neighborhood similar to La Boca in Buenos Aires. The tango is portrayed as a sexual dance. The image of tango across the United States, where this movie is primarily viewed, develops according to the images portrayed in this movie (Ochoa 23). This scene has been shown to be incredibly unrealistic, as gauchos in full attire would not have danced tango (24). The second scene, in a cabaret in Paris, is more realistic, showing the elegant upper class that danced tango in Paris (Ochoa 25).

Through these two differing scenes, the idea of a "Latin lover" began to develop. This idea of the same tango dancer being able to be a rough gaucho and an elegant Parisian was monumental (25). This idea of a tango dancer being rough but elegant at the same time continues is still a large part of North American's perceptions of tango. More than anything, the idea of a rose in a tango dancer's mouth, portraying sexuality and elegance, makes up a large part of the stereotypical image. Valentino provided this in his next movie *Blood and Sand* from 1922 (Ochoa 27). However, this movie did not truly show tango dance at all. It appeared like the scene from *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, but yet the steps were different dances (27).

In this way, *Blood and Sand* confused those from the United States about what truly distinguished tango steps. *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* also added to public confusion about tango steps. In *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, in a different scene from the ones previously described, tango is mentioned in referenced to a Spanish tango. Although these are completely different dances, many North Americans naively grouped these dances together (26). This confusion was even evidenced by professional dancers. Vernon Castle, a dancer from New York, claimed that tango came from Spain and subsequently Argentineans changed the steps (30).

In 1929, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, or *Pandora's Box*, brought a new theme to tango dances. This movie introduced the idea of a “modern woman” who uses tango as a way of making her own decisions and shows energy, happiness, and a lack of concern (Ochoa 46). Another idea shown in this movie and many movies of the 1920s and 1930s was “la costurerita que dio aquel mal paso” or “the seamstress to whom something bad happens.” Typical of this concept is the concept that tango causes some of a woman’s downfall (47).

One movie that showcased many tango perceptions of the United States was *Dance, Fools, Dance*, produced in 1931. This movie showed not only Ballroom Tango, with a style far different from Tango Rioplatense, but also a tango that was very happy. In this movie, it represented a time when a family had enough money to enjoy luxuries, a time before the stock market crash (Ochoa 58).

In 1972, the movie *Ultimo tango a Parigi* (Italy/France) furthered the theme of sadness in tango by showing tango leading to death. This theme soon became popular among foreigners. According to Sally Potter, the director of *The Tango Lesson*, “Tango

is sad, because it is born of love and implies death” (qtd. in Ochoa 140). This theme was then repeated many times in subsequent movies and films, notably in an episode of *The Simpsons* entitled “Last Tap Dance in Springfield” (140). This theme, once again, is not a major theme the people of Buenos Aires associate with tango and so, once again, the tango has a different foreign image than its image in its birthplace (141). *Ultimo tango a Parigi* also made the association between tango and sex explicit (139).

More than tango leading to death, many times tango was shown to simply change someone’s character. This is seen in *Naked Tango*, when dancing tango changes the main character into someone with more freedom and more confidence to live in the way she wishes.

Although *Flying Down to Rio* (1933) is a movie that is no doubt more remembered more for Fred Astaire and Ginger Roger’s dance, it also showcases another stereotype of North Americans: that tango is from Brazil, rather than Argentina. This movie, based around a trip to Rio de Janeiro, shows a scene with Fred Astaire and Dolores del Río tango to the song “Orchids in the Moonlight.” However, tango is not from Rio de Janeiro or Brazil at all. The idea that Americans typically confused Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with Argentina is also displayed in the story *Una Historia del Tango*. In this Argentinean story, an American comes to visit his friend in Buenos Aires and tells his friend “...we [those from the United States] believe the Rio de Janeiro is the capital of Argentina” (203).

As is noted in *Tango y Cine Mundial*, it is interesting that when tango is showcased in countries other than Argentina in movies, it historically showed an elegant,

luxurious environment. However, at the rare times when tango is shown in Argentina, it shows a very crude, gaucho style dance (67).

However, foreign films showcasing Buenos Aires have not always displayed false perceptions of Argentinean society. From the late 1950s to 1970s, many more movies represented the Buenos Aires perception of tango. For example, *El ultimo cuplé*, or The Last Torch Song, from Spain, showcased a song, “Fumando espero,” which was very well received in Argentina (Ochoa 98). This shows that the Argentinean society was ready to accept this song as a legitimate tango.

In addition, Latin American films, even those not from Argentina, have tended to represent Argentinean tango in an authentic manner. These movies showed a “representation of character emotive of the lyrics and the music with a hint of nostalgia” (100, translation by author).

In the 1940s, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in the United States started to fund movies with South American themes in order to promote friendliness between South America and the United States. However, the movies produced were received with hostility in South America. For example, *They Met in Argentina*, a 1941 production, required police intervention to calm the crowds’ hostility (Ochoa 120). This movie was a flop, losing twice as much money as it cost to produce (“They met in Argentina”). Obviously, the stereotypes North Americans had for South America did not align with South Americans’ self-perceptions.

However, this was likely only a small part of the belligerent reaction to this American movie. In the early 1940s, as World War II took place, the government of the United States showed no reverence for Argentina in foreign relations. The United States

government ignored an Argentinean proposal only to later follow the procedures suggested in that proposal, made an attempt to overthrow the Argentinean government, and boycotted Argentinean goods starting in 1942 (Escudé 5).

More movies of the 1940s continued to show a North American ignorance of true South American culture and tango. The movies *Anchors Aweigh* and *On the Town*, both featuring Gene Kelly, display “tangos” that only bear a slight resemblance to Buenos Aires tango (Ochoa 122).

Another time tango was used as a diplomatic symbol was in the 1970s, when a North American version of “Libertango,” one of Astor Piazzolla’s songs, was used for the co-production of a movie between the United States and France (Ochoa 156).

In the 1980s and 1990s, when tango was once again catching the interests of the public worldwide, many important films were made, many with different themes. *Alice* (1990) uses tango to signify a woman looking for liberty. *Scent of a Woman* (1992) shows a blind man dancing tango. *Schindler’s List* (1993) uses tango as the music of choice for the time during the Nazi’s occupation of Poland (Ochoa 213).

One movie that many foreigners associated with Argentina, and therefore tango, is *Evita* (1996). This movie shows a relatively accurate picture of Buenos Aires in the 1940s. The tango dancers in the movie emphasized feelings, just as *porteños* do. “The steps don’t have to be more important than what you feel,” the choreographer, Vincent Paterson, told the dancers. However, in addition to showing a realistic picture, it reinforces the perceptions of foreigners: that tango can be associated with death or young lovers (Ochoa 220).

Perceptions of Foreign Exchange Students

After talking to some fellow study abroad students who had taken a couple of tango classes, I found that many from the United States think the tight embrace of the tango is too close for them. Many feel it is uncomfortable and awkward. After about 10 classes of tango, one said “I think it’s the connection that surprises me the most,” referring to the communication between dancers, facilitated by close stances (Castejon).

It seems this is not just a perception of those from United States, but those from other countries as well. “And I tell you from experience that when a Japanese leaves to dance tango, you feel that they tremble when you embrace her. We, in Argentina, are accustomed, and we don’t realize what the embrace signifies, but the Japanese tremble,” explains Carlos Copello, who helped with the production of *The Tango Lesson* (qtd. Ochoa 256, translation by author). This quote not only shows the way the embrace is perceived with discomfort in Japan, but also shows how Argentineans are accustomed to the embrace and it is perceived differently.

It is possible that the routine nature of the tango has taken the abnormality of the close hold out of the dance for porteños, thus taking away the perceived focus on romance. This would allow a focus on the other characteristic elements of the dance, such as the nostalgia present in the lyrics

Perhaps the difference in perception of the close hold is a reflection of the difference in perception of personal space between Argentina and the United States. Just as Argentineans have no fears giving kisses on the cheek even when first meeting someone, they have no fears of dancing close, face-to-face, with one another. In the United States, however, handshakes are used to meet people, maintaining distance and

dancers stay further apart in most face-to-face social dances. In addition, Argentines have no fears about sharing mate, a traditional drink that is passed around to all the members of the group, whereas those from the United States harbor fears of germs when they attempt to share a drink with others. All of this leads to the suggestion that personal space is much closer in Argentina. This may be a contributing factor to the comfort with the close hold of tango.

Another possibility for this difference in the perception is that those from the United States and those from Argentina perceive closeness to represent different ideas. Many in Argentina see closeness as a way of caring for someone, while occasionally those in the United States see it as creepy. Laura Duberti, a 39-year-old *porteño* reinforced this idea by stating that, to her, tango was about caring for the woman. “It appears to me it is a dance where the man cares for the woman,” she states (Duberti). Also, Mathilda May, a French actor who came to see Buenos Aires milongas first hand, found that the closeness showed great communication. She said, “I believe that it is an intimate dance, not erotic, and that there isn’t humiliation for the woman. It is a great method of communication, because while one dances tango he or she is always improvising” (qtd. in Ochoa 195, translation by author).

Also, tango carried a much more nostalgic tone than expected by most of the foreigners with whom I talked. This was echoed in a French publication that says that in tango, there is “never a laugh, never an explosion of voices, no rumor of a party” (qtd. in Ochoa 76, translation by author). While studying abroad, I constantly had to remind myself that tango was not a blissful dance, but rather nostalgic and sad. For example, my

professor, who maintained that most Argentines do not see tango as a happy dance, had to correct my reference to the joy of tango in a creative writing assignment.

Another interesting misperception of many foreigners is the choreography of tango. For many, the improvisation needed for tango is surprising. One student I talked with, Kendra O'Connor, talked of "how much it is literally improvisation." She talked of how much this was different from her perception and added, "'I'm still mystified about how everything falls into order'" (O'Connor) However, another student, Charlie Lidard, I talked with provided the exact opposite opinion, stating that the lack of improvisation surprised him." One of the defining characteristics of *tango criollo* was not a major part of his perception. However, "For me, I think what defines tango are the garnishes," he said (Lidarad).

The choreography of tango was also surprising when Sally Potter came to learn tango for her movie *The Tango Lesson*, although in a very different way. She was surprised by the pauses, which are integral to the structure of the dance. "I learned that the dance, the most physically active and demanding of the arts, consists especially in the immobility. That the music in, in its core, a form of describing silence. That the interpretation talks more of the invisible interior than the visible exterior" (qtd. in Ochoa 253).

Other dances neglected

However, it is important to remember that, although tango represents a part of Argentine culture, it is really only a small part. Many other facets are important and it is somewhat presumptuous to think that a foreigner can understand the culture of Argentina

or the characteristics of Argentines simply by looking at tango. I was reminded of this during my interview of Costantini. “It [judging Argentines by their tango] is the same as saying that Brazilians are very happy because they have happy music...Tango is a reflection of Argentina, but when you think of the image of Argentina, it is only a part.” (Costantini). Among the other parts of the image of Argentina, there is at least one other part that deserves to be mentioned, particularly because it is another prominent dance: folk dance. This is the dance most practiced by the residents of the countryside of Argentina and forms a large part of the image of Argentina’s dance apart from tango. To see a picture of a folk dance at an *estancia*, or ranch, outside of Buenos Aires, see the Photo Index (Fig. 7).

Disinterest among Argentines

Similarly, although foreigners come year-round to learn tango in Buenos Aires, not all Argentines understand obsessions with tango. After mentioning I was planning to take tango classes while in Argentina, a couple of *porteños* asked me why foreigners are obsessed with tango. This took me completely off guard, as I assumed everyone in Buenos Aires enjoyed tango and regularly went to milongas. However, they told me that, although they enjoyed tango music, they did not like to dance tango themselves.

It seems that many just never took the time to learn to tango. As Costantini pointed out, many who dance tango today have family members involved in tango (Costantini). Vale Tetti, a 40-year-old *porteño* who grew up in Patagonia, a part of Argentina to the south of Buenos Aires confirmed this in her case. “My parents dance tango and they influence me because in my house, when I was young, we always were

listening to tangos. For me, [it is] something that was present in my life,” explained Tetti (Tetti). Duberti agreed, stating, “...from my childhood, I have many memories of my grandparents and the people who took care of me singing tangos” (Duberti). Thus, a family connection to tango is instrumental in an Argentinean learning the dance, and the absence of a family connection could be one reason why a *porteño* never becomes involved in tango. Another reason why some Argentineans don’t dance tango is because of its association with the elderly. The majority of the tango dancers at the milongas I attended were older dancers, not young people. This is shown in a picture in the Photo Index (Fig. 8). “It appears that young people identify more with rock or with the *cumbia* [music and dance of Columbia],” says Costantini (Costantini). At a dance shows on an *estancia*, or ranch, I visited, when the dance floor was opened to all visitors and a tango played, the majority of the dancers were older couples. They seemed to be reliving the dance of their youth. “In a certain time, I think that tango was associated with a certain age,” states Costantini when explaining why he, as a *porteño*, does not dance tango.

The idea of tango relating to the elderly was showcased in some movies. In movies from the United States, tango became a symbol of ancient traditions. One example of this was *Sunset Blvd*, from 1950. This movie shows an older couple in a mansion dancing tango and, in order to give a contrast, shows young people dancing, but in a style that is not tango (Ochoa 114). This shows that tango at that time was seen as not a dance for the young people, but rather for the older. Tango reflecting a past time was seen again in the 1992 United States movie *Chicago*. However, this time tango represented the jazz era of the United States (Ochoa 241).

Today's young people of Argentina are more often found at clubs or bars and seem much more interested in foreign music than traditional tango music. In this way, young people are another Argentine group who do not seem to fully enjoy tango. This seems to be somewhat true in America as well. At a February 2011 show by Tango Buenos Aires in State College, PA, although the performance took place on a college campus, the majority of the audience was the elderly.

In addition, it is possible that tango seems so natural it has lost its flair, that only some find enjoyment in the dance, or that the loss of interest in tango in the 1940s has permanently affected some Argentines. There are many reasons why one particular Argentinean may not dance tango.

Interestingly, the enthusiasm of those from the United States and other foreign countries may end up impacting those from Buenos Aires as they travel. At one milonga in Buenos Aires, I met a young man who, although he was raised in Buenos Aires, didn't start to enjoy tango until he moved to the United States. He told me that he had a tango partner in Rochester, New York who would dance with him. At the time when I talked with him, he was back in Buenos Aires, visiting the milongas for the first time, taking pictures just like I was. He had asked his parents for suggestions of which milongas to attend and was experiencing everything for the first time.

The impact of globalization: Good or bad?

As numerous cultural dances continue to be spread worldwide through television shows, university classes, and internet how-to videos, opinion is split on whether this globalization will have a positive or negative impact on the dance. Some say the purity

of the dance will be lost. "I fear that in going global, tango will lose its identity and cease to belong to the Rio de la Plata," says Anita Monteagudo, the director of a tango academy in Argentina (qtd. in Termine).

This argument seems valid, as evidenced by the change in tango style when it traveled across oceans. In the United States, England, Russia, and Japan, Ballroom Tango was much more prevalent than Argentine tango from the 1930s to the 1980s. This was an adaptation of Argentine Tango (the tango style from Buenos Aires) and had a more open position, with more sudden movements and more extended arms (Ochoa 54). As Nicandor M. Lima said,

"It is necessary to put items in their location, and consequently, to tell Europe which is our true tango, since in the other hemisphere, and even in our own country, in an effort to create many and diverse figures, we haven't hesitated in applying to our beautiful dance whatever fanciful or imaginary nonsense, making fun of the position of the pair and consequentially the dance." (55, translation by author)

Even in Paris, where tango was kept more pure and the style was closer to Tango Rioplatense than that of the United States, some of tango's style was changed. In 1912, a newspaper article from *El Diario* in Argentina stated "...the tango that is danced in Paris isn't ours more than the name and the music...it isn't more than a rough imitation of 'our' tango" (qtd. in Giuspo 37). Jacque Boulenger in 1920 said, "The tango that was executed in the salons of society, including the public dance of Paris, were more or less toned down, if not as much in the steps, then at least in its' character" (Ochoa 56, translation by author). In the 1930s, tango in France took on another style entirely, that

of Tango Liso (78). This shows that tango's style changed historically when the dance moved globally.

Another supporting argument for the loss of character with globalization is the impact of World War II on tango in Argentina. In the 1940s, tango experienced a "period of glory," largely due to the rest of the world being distracted by the ongoing war. At this time, the tango was kept pure (Paz 12). This shows that, in a time with fewer global influences, the tango was able to more closely resemble its original form. The other reason for this was the government of Juan Peron in Argentina (Ochoa 111). Both of these factors caused the flow of artists between Paris and Argentina to slow, causing tango to flourish without global influences or contaminations.

I observed the effect of the globalization of tango when I attended a show by Tango Buenos Aires in State College, PA. Although the steps performed were incredibly familiar, some of the dances showed pieces featuring jazz dance or incredibly showy tango, including high flying legs and many more jumps than would be seen in tango in a milonga. Although many of the dancers of this show were from Argentina, they still showed the effects of the dance spreading globally as they attempted to entertain people from the United States.

Furthermore, in a college ballroom dance course in the United States, the image of tango has changed from its form in Argentina. Although the dance is presented as the American style of tango and not as Argentinean tango, after coming back from a semester in Argentina, I found the dance barely recognizable as tango. The music and the movements were completely different, with the dance being presented as similar to foxtrot. Interestingly, foxtrot was spread across the United States by two of the same

dancers who spread tango, Vernon and Irene Castle. This may have led to the increase in similarity between tango in the United States and foxtrot. Nonetheless, in this ballroom dance class, the style of tango was affected by the fact that the dance had travelled long distances from its point of origination.

In addition, not only is tango affected by its own globalization, but also it is affected by the globalization of other art forms. The globalization of rock shows another way in which cultural diffusion did not help to refine the tango, but rather hindered it, both in Argentina and abroad. With the addition of rock music from the United States around the 1950s, people stopped dancing in close holds anymore, but rather embraced a different type of dancing. “The cheek to cheek didn’t exist any more” (qtd. in Ochoa 112, translation by author). Thus, tango lost much of its popularity at this time and suffered from rock becoming a global phenomenon.

The popularity of other art forms, and further inching out of tango is seen today in Buenos Aires. As one walks into a popular bookstore, El Ateneo, in Buenos Aires, all kinds of music and videos from the United States are on display throughout the store. There are Disney displays, books about U2 and the Beatles, and Nat King Cole songs play over the loudspeaker. While there is still a tango section of books, it seems that if there were less influence from the United States, there would be much more space for traditional Argentinean books and music. Many locations fitting for tango music have disappeared, and CD recordings replace them for the avid fan (Carretero 143).

The detrimental effect of globalization has also been seen in many worldwide movies, even from the 1930s. “The appearance of resounding cinema [Hispanic Hollywood in the 1930s] was traumatic in many aspects.” Before subtitles were popular,

often, different casts would be used with the same set and storyline in order to bring a movie to a different country. This, however, caused a general lack of authenticity when Hispanic films were reproduced using foreign actors (Ochoa 106).

Others, however, feel that the global spread of tango will benefit Argentina, representing the country to the world. “Any recognition of a cultural treasure of Buenos Aires like the tango is good,” says Omar Viola, chair of a milonga association (qtd. in Termine). This seems to be the perspective of the government, as Uruguay and Argentina recently stopped fighting over the true origin of tango in order to receive recognition from UNESCO (Termine).

Some see tango as a true symbol of Argentina that should be spread through the world. “...tango continues being our best ambassador,” states Pedro Ochoa (Ochoa 268, translation by author). As tango travels to different countries and is an ambassador for Argentina, it brings with it some of the feelings of Argentina. “It [the globalization of tango] doesn’t appear to me something bad because I heard a bandonist, I believe from Switzerland, playing tango and I believe that his feelings are Argentinean,” says Tetti (Tetti). In addition, sometimes the struggle to prevent globalization is seen as arbitrary, as the dance will continue to evolve, even if widespread globalization is avoided.

Countries adopting tango

As tango has spread worldwide, some countries have clung to the dance more than others. With each different country comes a different perception of tango. Interestingly, tango became popular in Finland and continued to be a strong force, even when the rest of the world would come to forget about tango. Here, tango was a part of

everyday, common life, finding a place in the common middle class. This was seen in many films from Finland. One such movie was *Ariel* (1988), which showed tango as a part of everyday life (Ochoa 184).

Recently, tango has been catching interest in the Middle East as well. After Paris and Buenos Aires, Turkey is one of the largest tango festival organizers in the world, Syria held its first tango festival in 2010, and practicás are offered at least once a week (Hamdan). In addition, tango has found popularity on the other side of the world from Buenos Aires, in Japan. Here, though, it is viewed as a scandalous dance.

“In Japan, salon dancing is judged with much distrust. In the country where married pairs don’t leave with arms taken, the idea that a spouse embrace and dance in front of others goes further than embarrassment. To go to dance with another person would be understood in a bad way and would have a shy result. Nonetheless, including for the Japanese, there exists a secret astonishment on the happiness that the dance can give.” (qtd. Ochoa 238, translation by author)

Tango provides an example of globalization and can be examined to show factors influencing which countries adopt a dance. First, there is a necessity of an exchange of people. This was an influential factor when Paris caught tangomana, as artists were constantly travelling between France and Argentina. However, a country catching on to a dance does not seem to correspond to proximity of countries, as Chile, on one side bordering Argentina, didn’t seem to catch on to tango as much as France, on the other side of the ocean, which couldn’t get enough of tango.

Also, there is a necessity for the interest and captivation of the people. Tango was the first partner dance to successfully insert varied steps into the embrace and, for this

reason, it caught the attention of many (Vega 199). Another reason for tango being widely accepted in Europe in the early 1900s was because of its close stance, a novelty. It was the first dance *embrazado*, or hugging, which caught the attention of the European society. Also, tango was accepted because of its speed of movement and variety of steps (Ochoa 18).

In addition, there was a fascination with the exotic in Europe at the time of tango's introduction. Dance teachers who were dark skinned were more valued than those with light skin (with the exception of Africans), showing this fascination (Giuspo 38). A newspaper article from 1912 states that "...the fashion has imposed the exotic dances of voluptuous character...tango represents the exact dose of vulgarity and liberty that can be permitted in the upper class in the year 1912" (qtd. 37, translation by author). All of these factors combined show that in the early 1900s, Europe was a prime place for tango because of its peaked interest in tango's characteristics.

A natural interest in the steps of tango seems to have been amplified due to an absence of captivating dances in the early 1900s in Europe. In the years leading up to the genesis of tango, partner dances were becoming so simplified that many were finding conversation during dancing more important than the steps of the dance (197). Thus, when tango inserted interesting steps into the partner dance that had started to becoming boring, it caused dancers to take notice. "The love of dancing has been almost disappearing in the elegant salons little by little...This time it hasn't been the ceremonious 'Minuet' nor the showy 'Pavana,' nor the English 'Boston' which has performed the miracle. To the suggestive Argentine tango corresponds the glory of

having restored the prestige of the dance!” states a newspaper article from 1913 (qtd. in Giuspo 38, translation by author).

Also, it seems that sometimes tango dancing is used as a way to escape the harsh realities of life. The Middle East provides a place where it would seem unlikely for tango to take root. It’s interesting that this dance, though viewed in some parts of the world as scandalous, has caught on in one of the most conservative parts of the world. “We do have men and women whose families are kept in the dark about their dancing; it’s understandable considering the region, and we’re all working on it,” explains Dareen Khoury. “But people need this escape” (Hamdan).

Even in Argentina, the place where tango was born originally, tango seems to be a way to escape the hardships of life and embrace nostalgia. It is possible that tango has been able to remain a part of Argentinean culture because Argentines have been able to identify with the nostalgia of the dance. Through Argentina’s history, there have been many hardships, from a military dictatorship to a recent economic crash. At least in my four months in Argentina, there seemed to continually be a feeling a disappointment in the government and nostalgic view of the past. Argentina may continue to cling to tango because its social environment has reflected tango’s central themes.

CONCLUSION

Truly, as tango has already spread through social classes, adapted lyrics, and spread worldwide, the dance has continued to evolve and change. This likely will continue far into the future. Just as other dance styles have morphed and taken on new facets and styles as moving through social classes and countries, other cultures will be

allowed to influence tango. As Michael Radford explained, “I chose this [tango song] because it has the precise combination of nostalgia and happiness that I want to give in the movie. It isn’t important that the people are Italian or Chilean, because tango, like poetry by Skármeta, pertains to who needs it” (qtd. Ochoa 266). If tango is allowed to change with the influence of other cultures, it will reflect the true global environment of Argentina, with its mix of immigrants and indigenous people. It will also reflect a characteristic that is vital to tango: improvisation. No tango can be the same, because every time the tango is danced, it is improvised in a different way. Just as the steps are adapted and changed every time they are danced, so will the style of tango change. With the change of style, tango’s perception throughout the world will continue to change.

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Fig. 1. This picture shows one traditional immigrant house in La Boca, painted with the bright colors of a boat.



Fig. 2. This picture shows the common area outside immigrants' homes, now shops.



Fig. 3. These tango dancers were seen on a sunny day in the park, catering to tourists.



Fig. 4. In a gay milonga in Buenos Aires, traditional gender roles of tango are not necessarily preserved.



Fig. 5. This picture of Carlos Gardel in Buenos Aires is one example of the prevalence of tango images and icons in Buenos Aires.



Fig. 6. A milonga in Paris, showing the more informal, but still incredibly similar tango.



Fig. 7. Folk dance forms another large part of Argentina's image, especially Argentina's dance image. It is mostly danced in the countryside of Argentina.



Fig. 8. Confiteria La Ideal, a famous milonga in Buenos Aires, shows a number of older visitors.

Appendix

“El Tango es uno de los raros clichés simbólicos de una lucha contra lo imposible. Es, a la vez, dolor por la perdida, furia, ganar, perder, individualism, anarco-comunismo; se puede llenar el Tango con diversias emociones, pero el Tango las sobrepasa a todos, porque no es solo ritmo para el cuerpo y el alma, sino tambien para la mente, para los ganadores y perdedores.” (Ochoa 154)

“No es prodigioso el espectáculo de toda esa gente en exceso refinada, saturada de lujo y de confort, parroquianos de los Ritz y los Palaces, que acepta encerrarse regularmente todas las tardes en ese local vacio, de instalacion menos que modesta, rudimentaria, y donde el servicio no esta asegurado sino por una humilde servienta atolondrada, de una simplicidad verdaderamente evangelica?” (Ochoa 21)

“[...] el tango aun no es apreciado por todos los grupos sociales, pero se esta llegando a ello.” (Ochoa 52)

“Para mi no hay ninguna otra danza que la iguale en colorido y ritmo. La unica razon por que el tango no se hizo verdaderamente popular en este pais, es porque el public lo consider dificil.” (Ochoa 39)

“El Tango tal como lo bailamos ahora esta muy modificado con respecto al primer Tango Argentino.” (Ochoa 57)

“En Japón el Baile de Salón se juzga con mucho recelo. En un país donde las parejas casadas no salen del brazo, la idea de que un esposo y una esposa se abracen y bailen delante de otros va mas alla del bochorno. Claro que ir a bailar con otra persona seria entendido de mala manera y resultaria vergonzoso. Sin embargo, incluso para los

japoneses, existe un asombro secreto sobre las alegrías que el baile puede brindar.”

(Ochoa 238)

“No hay errores en el tango, Donna. No es como en la vida. Es sencillo. Eso es lo que hace tan grande al tango, si usted se equivocal, o se enreda, solo sigue bailando.” (Ochoa 250)

“El tango es triste, porque nace de amor e implica a la muerte.” (Ochoa 140)

“Le pedi a Piazzolla que no ilustrara musicalmente las imagenes, sino que compusiera piezas segun sus propias asociaciones independientes.” (Ochoa 154)

“hoy me parece que este es uno de mis caminos equivocados. La musica de peliculas es un mundo con muchas limitaciones para un musico.” (Ochoa 160)

“Hoy en día resulta dificil diferenciarr, en una milonga, un buen bailarín native de uno extranjero.” (Ochoa 193)

“...solamente para perfeccionar sus pasos en las pistas nacionales, ir cada noche a la milonga, y llevarse zapatos a medida. Y vuelven, la mayoría de ellos regresa, y algunos repiten el viaje, tres, cuatro o siete veces. [...] ‘son sentimentales en un mundo que parece todo igual y uniforme. El tango tiene identidad, nostalgia y contacto humano.’” (Ochoa 255)

“...y te digo por experiencia que cuando una japonesa sale a bailar Tango, vos sentis que tiembla cuando la estas abrazando. Nosotros, en Argentina, estamos acostumbrados, y no nos damos cuenta de lo que significa el abrazo, pero las japonesas tiemblan.” (Ochoa 256)

“Creo que es una danza íntima, no erótica, y que no hay humillación para la mujer. Es un gran medio de comunicación, porque mientras se baila tango siempre se está improvisando.”

(Ochoa 195)

“...nunca una risa, nunca un estallido de voces, ningún rumor de fiesta.” (Ochoa 76)

“Aprendí que la danza, la más físicamente activa y exigente de las artes, consiste esencialmente en la inmovilidad. Que la música es, en su núcleo, una forma de describir el silencio. Que la interpretación habla más de lo interior invisible que de lo exterior visible.” (Ochoa 253)

“Es necesario poner las cosas en su lugar, y por consiguiente, decirle a Europa cuál es nuestro verdadero tango, pues en el otro hemisferio, y aun en nuestro propio país, en su afán de crear muchas y diversas figuras, no han vacilado en aplicarle a nuestra bella danza cualquier disparate imaginario o antojadizo, ridiculizando la postura de la pareja y por ende el baile.” (Ochoa 55-56)

“El cheek to cheek no existe más.” (Ochoa 112)

“...el Tango sigue siendo nuestro mayor embajador.” (Ochoa 268)

“Eso lo elegí yo, porque tiene la precisa combinación de nostalgia y felicidad, de tristeza y alegría que quise darle a conjunto de la película. No importa que los personajes sean italianos y chilenos, porque el tango, como la poesía según Skarmeta, pertenece a quien lo necesita.” (Ochoa 266)

ACADEMIC VITA

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Education

2012 (Anticipated) B.S. in Biology
Honors in Dance
Minors in Dance and Spanish
Schreyer Honors College and Eberly College of Science
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Selected Coursework
Honors Thesis on the Global Development of Tango
Fall 2010 Study Abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina
400-level Biology Courses in Anatomy and Physiology

Experience

Summer 2011 **Easter Seals**, Personal Care Aide, State College, PA

- Worked with a team of therapists
- Assisted a disabled child with prescribed therapy throughout her time in daycare

2010 **Various Physical Therapy Offices**, Shadowing, Hershey, PA

- Shadowed physical therapists with varied specializations
- Visited outpatient and inpatient settings

Summer 2010 **Company Dance**, Ballet Teacher, Harrisburg, PA

- Taught ballet to elementary school children

2009-2010 **Kennedy's Dance Centre**, Ballet Teacher, Bellefonte, PA

- Taught ballet and pointe to middle school children

2009 **American College Dance Festival Association**, Assistant, State College, PA

- Provided lighting assistance and ran registration

2008 **Gretna Glen Camp**, Summer Staff, Lebanon, PA

- Counseled children, led program activities, and prepared meals

Honors

2008-present **The Pennsylvania State University**, Schreyer Honors Scholarship
2010 **The Pennsylvania State University**, Whole World Scholarship
Summer 2010 **Schreyer Honors College**, Research Scholarship

- Investigated Argentinean tango historical background

Summer 2009 **Schreyer Honors College**, Research Scholarship

- Researched the neurological connection between the brain and the arm with Dr. Robert Sainburg at Pennsylvania State University
- Worked with a team of researchers

2009 **The Pennsylvania State University**, Dancer's Repertoire Performance Award

Activities

2008-present Dancer in Dancer's Repertoire at Pennsylvania State University
2008-present Member and Leader of Navigators, campus ministry group
Fall 2010 Study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina
2008-2011 Dancer in Brio Dance Company, non-profit modern dance company, State College, PA
2009-2010 Volunteer Small Group Leader with Calvary Baptist Youth Group
2008-present Dancer at PA Governor's School for the Arts, Ballet Theatre of Central Pennsylvania, Ballet Magnificat!, and Company Dance