DISCOURSES OF AUTHENTICITY

IN THE ARGENTINE TANGO COMMUNITY OF PITTSBURGH

by

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This thesis contributes to the body of scholarly literature concerning the globalization of tango, specifically its resurgence in the late twentieth century, by providing a case study of a tango community in the United States. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, dancers of Argentine social tango seek to understand the "essence" of tango, through literature, performance, and communication with other dancers. These efforts reveal much about themselves and the role that tango plays in their lives. This thesis examines the competing discourses of authenticity in Pittsburgh concerning the Argentine tango with regards to a divide in the tango community in 2002. Through ethnographic research, this thesis explores how dancers conceive of authenticity in their actions, according to venue, style, music and gender. Often, these perceptions are associated with Argentina as dancers imagine it, either in the past or in the present.

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PREFACE

I would like to thank the University of Pittsburgh for the financial and academic support to pursue this degree. In particular, I am indebted to the Music Department faculty for assisting my development as a music scholar, especially those members of my thesis committee, Prof. Andrew Weintraub, Prof. Akin Euba, and Prof. Deane Root.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, there has been a renewed interest in the Argentine tango in the United States. While this dance was once quite popular in major American cities between the 1920s and 1940s, American tango in the following decades became consigned to a ballroom dance standard, taught around the country in formal dance studios such as Arthur Murray Dance Studios. In the 1990s, an alternative style of tango developed, based on the dance movements of the Broadway musicals, *Tango Argentino* (1983), and *Forever Tango* (1990). Dancers of this style attempt to disassociate tango from the codified ballroom moves and reclaim the original restrained passion of the dance that they feel is missing from ballroom tango, which is often deemed to be too Americanized. While this new style is known by many names, dancers most commonly refer to it as Argentine social tango, or as several Pittsburgh dancers have noted, "real tango." Today, Argentine social tango has become a widespread phenomenon throughout the United States, with active social tango clubs in every state.

This thesis is an ethnographic study of the Argentine social tango as it is performed and practiced in the city of Pittsburgh. By studying institutional settings, individual actors, musical practices, and dance events, I explore how individual dancers create meaning for the dance and its movements, and how those meanings are transmitted to others in the Pittsburgh community, sometimes gaining significance in dance communities outside of Pittsburgh. Discourse about tango among dancers and musicians in Pittsburgh centers on how their actions are authentic, both in relation to: 1) perceived historic Argentine practice during the Golden Age of tango between

the 1920s and 1940s, and 2) individual expression. This study similarly focuses on how dancers' discourse about authenticity manifests in performance practice, through musical choices and body movement. As Pittsburgh dancers attempt to demonstrate a historically valid Argentine dance form, they actively make decisions to represent Argentine culture. However, their choices reflect their individual interpretations of certain notions about Argentine identity.

Discourses about authenticity have gained importance in Pittsburgh, especially following a divide in the tango community in 2002, as both groups have striven to assert their authority. While ballroom tango existed previously, Argentine tango dancing in Pittsburgh began in 1992, and an organization was formed under the name Pittsburgh Tangueros in 1996. In 2002, a splinter group formed, entitled the Pittsburgh Argentine Tango Society. Both groups have attempted to establish themselves as the preferred tango organization. In order to distinguish themselves, each group claims a particular dance style, type of music, and teaching method, each of which is supposed to have originated in Argentina. This thesis explores how the choices of both groups, through venue, dance style, music, and gender relationships, participate in competing discourses of authenticity, with emphasis on the Pittsburgh Argentine Tango Society.

By its very nature, ethnography posits the researcher in a complex position both as an "insider" and "outsider" to the culture studied (Burnim 1985), a factor that must be continually assessed throughout one's investigation. My initial entry into the tango community was as a dance student, in search of a sense of community after relocating to Pittsburgh in July 2002. After several months of experience as a dancer, my interest in the Pittsburgh tango community expanded to include musicological inquiries. Thus, my findings in this study are based on two and a half years of field research as "outsider" and dance experience beginning in October 2002 as "insider."

As “outsider,” I conducted interviews with Pittsburgh tango dancers of varying degrees of proficiency, who consider themselves to be active members of the Pittsburgh tango community. In general, the participants in the study were middle to upper class urban professionals, whose careers include architect, lawyer, doctor, and college professor. While several were graduate students in their late twenties, most participants were established professionals, and above forty years in age. In addition, I supplemented the information gathered from formal interviews with data collected from tango classes, workshops, dance events, and informal conversation as “insider.”

There are many scholarly studies that inform this thesis, by providing models for studying tango practices outside of Argentina, especially the works of Roberts (1999), Collier (1995), Goertzen and Azzi (1999), and Kukkonen (1996). In particular, Roberts and Collier provide general historical summaries of the tango outside of Argentina. The focus of Roberts’ work is the influence of Latin American music on the musical styles of North America, and to this end, he includes a brief history of both the dance and musical forms of tango. He begins with an examination of ballroom dance superstars Irene and Vernon Castle, then traces the incorporation of traditional tango melodies in jazz genres until the 1970s and finally attempts to explain the current trend of tango interest in the United States. Roberts conjectures that tango gained popularity in the late 1980s due to widespread interest throughout America and Europe in the music of Astor Piazzola, an art music composer and player of the *bandoneón*, (button accordion and characteristic instrument of the tango ensemble). Piazzolla’s renown allowed for the dual successes of show tango on Broadway in *Tango Argentino* and *Forever Tango*, the prominence of which established grassroots interest in the Argentine dance form throughout the United States (Roberts, 246). In contrast, Collier’s work centers completely on tango and traces

the history of the dance both in Argentina and abroad. He weaves an intricate tale of the genre's reception in Europe and America in the early twentieth century, explaining how only through the tango's acceptance in Europe did the tango gain approval in Argentina. Directed towards a general audience, Collier's text has the most direct bearing for this thesis as it is the most widely read amongst Pittsburgh dancers, perhaps all the more so because of its availability at several Pittsburgh public and university libraries.

In addition to historical surveys, works by Goertzen and Azzi (1999) and Kukkonen (1996) address the reasons for, and ramifications of, global popularity of the tango. Goertzen and Azzi historicize the globalization of the tango dance form and music by providing ev1idence of worldwide dissemination through mass media. In their argument, examples of mass media include the number of internet sites devoted to the genre, popular cinema, record and ticket sales of musical performances and dances, as well as new art music compositions and recordings. In particular, Goertzen and Azzi cite Yo-Yo Ma's 1997 compact disc *Yo-Yo Ma: Soul of the Tango: The Music of Astor Piazzolla* as being particularly influential; celebrated performers occupy the peculiar position of being able to popularize previously unfamiliar genres because of their elevated status in the public sphere. Kukkonen, through an investigation of the tango in Finland, further explores the changing meanings of tango as the dance is re-contextualized during the process of globalization. His work provides a specific case study of how one may study tango in new geographical contexts, which he achieves through an examination of Finnish tango lyrics. While his methods are unsuited to studying tango in Pittsburgh, as Pittsburgh dancers generally use Argentine recordings rather than creating new compositions with English lyrics, Kukkonen's work reveals ways that new meanings may be attached to the tango. For example, Finus in

Finland deem tango to be their national dance, and rarely associate it with its historical roots in Argentina.

In their works, Roberts and Goertzen and Azzi specifically encourage scholarship concerning Argentine tango communities in the United States. This study aims: 1) to provide a contemporary ethnographic case study of a tango community in the United States, and 2) to contribute to discourses on the globalization of tango.

1.1. TANGO IN THE UNITED STATES

In 1915, upon first seeing the tango performed in Paris, France, the Comtesse Mélanie de Pourtalès is purported to have leaned over to her companion, murmuring, "Is one supposed to dance it standing up?" (Collier, 76). For decades, observers have encouraged a vision of the tango as erotic, bold, and passionate. However, those who are more familiar with the genre usually reveal a quite different story, attaching to the tango a particular mood or emotion. As the tango composer and musician Enrique Santos Discépolo stated, the tango is "sad thought that can be danced" (Savigliano, 243).[1]

This discrepancy in interpretation between observers and participants indicates that the perceived meaning of tango changes through active engagement in the genre. While this will be discussed at greater length below, in this section I explore why observers receive this impression of amative intention through a brief introduction into the steps and embrace.

As in most couple dances, tango partners convey information to one another through the embrace, or physical frame, between couples. Tango dancers often refer to this as the "connection," an important linguistic distinction as they may interpret this connection between

[1] In Spanish, his often quoted remark reads: "El tango argentino es un pensamiento triste que se puede bailar."

dancers on either a physical or emotional level. While the embrace is visually similar to other dances, it differs in that tango dancers lean forward from their hips so that their weight is on the balls of their feet rather than the heels. This creates a mutually inward, leaning, "pushing" frame, rather than the typically outward "pulling" frame that characterizes most other dances, such as swing, salsa, and waltz. When the inward frame results in both dancers pressing against one another from navel to chest, they tango in a “close-embrace,” or “close-frame.” If there is space between the chests of the dancers, they dance in an “open-embrace” or “open-frame.” This decision is made according to the individual preferences of the dancers, and may depend upon their experience with either style, available space on the dance floor, or degree of comfort with their partner. In either case, the weight of the dancers is slightly forward, ideally with the lower body leaning inwards and the upper body remaining straight. This creates the most space between the dancers legs, and many tango steps manipulate this space in creative ways.

Tango is an improvised dance, in which one person leads, and the other follows. Observers are not privy to the range of unseen communication that occurs between dance partners to transmit messages, which are felt through the upper body, rather than being visually perceptible. Spectators instead witness the result of these communications; the delicate intertwining of legs as each dancer occupies the other’s floor space, and upper bodies pressed close together, encourage the perception of the tango’s sexual undertones. Thus, when the dance first entered Europe and North America in the early twentieth century, the erotic connotations of tango became embroiled in social scandal and a pretext for the economic production of passion. As Savigliano argues, the reproduction of the tango as an exotic “other” throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas, required distribution and marketing, becoming “involved in hierarchical exchanges of cultural and emotional capital” (Savigliano, 3). While Western European upper

class society cast certain restrictions on propriety, dancing tango allowed participants to assume an alternative identity because of its status as a Latin American dance. Those who deemed themselves as upholders of moral standards did not let the tango occur unnoticed. In 1913, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany forbade any officer to dance tango while in uniform; likewise in 1915, Pope Pius X, when alerted to the potential scandal, requested a private audience to determine whether or not a Catholic ban should be placed upon the dance. Despite popular belief, there is no documented evidence for such a ban (Collier, 86, 90-91). A similar situation occurred when ballroom dancers, Irene and Vernon Castle, introduced the dance to the United States in 1914. Though it was immediately fashionable, it also attracted much negative attention in the newspaper presses concerning its immorality and suggestiveness. In an effort to soften the more risqué aspects of the dance, the Castles devised several versions strictly for American audiences. In their book *Modern Dance*, the Castles distinguish between "lewd" forms of the tango and their versions, stating that "the Castle tango is courtly and aristocratic." This further separated the newly devised American tango from its rougher predecessor, famously reputed to be born in the brothels of Buenos Aires. One of these more "refined" versions of the tango, dubbed "the Innovation," was transformed and desensitized so thoroughly that couples did not touch at all, and as a result, the dance became quite popular at parlor parties (Roberts 46).

By the 1930s, the popularity of tango in the United States had diminished greatly, relegating the former decades of "tango-mania" to a mere fad. However, though it was not danced socially, it was retained in North America's cultural consciousness in various ways. Already, tango had become a recurring symbol of desire in the newly developing movie industry, the most famous example of which is Hollywood's 1921 silent film, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, starring Beatrice Domínguez and Rudolf Valentino. Staged in the Boca quarter of

Buenos Aires, Domínguez and Valentino dance the tango amid a rapt street crowd, yet when Valentino seeks to win a kiss for his efforts, Domínguez resists, until she is forcibly roped in by his rancher's lasso. As Savigliano notes, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* ultimately "set the tango-style s*tandar*d for Hollywood movies up to the present" by creating an image of an aggressive male and a dominant female lover (Savigliano, 130). These films, including *Flying Down to Rio* (1945), *Last Tango in Paris* (1965), and *Scent of a Woman* (1992), have allowed tango to remain in the national consciousness, despite the relative scarcity of social tango dancing in the United States since the early twentieth century.

To a certain extent, the seeds for social tango dancing were preserved also by the tango's entry into ballroom dance. Though American ballroom tango may be performed socially, it is primarily intended for judgement at dance competitions.[2] Originating in the new variations of tango by dancers like Irene and Vernon Castle, ballroom tango demonstrates a codified version of the dance, developing the formerly improvised steps into fixed patterns and acceptable means for ornamenting movements. The embrace is always in an open position, and instead of leaning inwards, upper bodies extend upwards and back, with heads turned to the side. This stylized position creates greater upper body distance between dance partners, and embodies dancers with a strong, presumably independent presence. While ballroom steps generally bear the same names as their Argentine predecessors, they are generally combined with other movements to create formalized patterns.

[2] An interesting point, made by Joanna Bosse in an unpublished paper "Performing Whiteness in Ballroom Dance" at the 49th Annual Conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology, is that American ballroom tango, despite its Argentine origins, is classified as a Modern dance, rather than its correlating category, Latin. "When performing the Modern genres, dancers cultivate an idealized European elegance, whereas performances of Latin genres evoke a generalized image of the exotic Latin American." While Bosse remarked that this "modern" designation is because of the technical difficulty of the tango, this would be an interesting topic to pursue, especially given Savigliano's argument that the success of the tango abroad is *because* of its exoticization of the Latin American.

After the 1930s, social Argentine tango maintained popularity in Argentina and Finland.[3] However, it re-entered global consciousness in the late 1980s, in large part due to the global success of the 1983 Broadway musical, *Tango Argentino*, created by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli. This musical renewed interest in the tango in a variety of cities around the world, including Tokyo, London, and New York, "stimulating a new wave of desire for the passionate tango" (Savigliano, 190). Despite their own Argentine background, Segovia and Orezzoli marketed *Tango Argentino* for a Western audience; tellingly, the dance-musical did not appear in Buenos Aires until 1992. The Broadway-inspired tango combined the inward "pushing" frame with faster, flashier steps, involving intertwining the legs with various kicks and leg wraps. One of the consequences of marketing for a purely Western audience is that when American observers desired to learn to dance the tango, they either had to devise the steps in isolation or travel to Buenos Aires for a teacher. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, social Argentine tango dancing had yet to develop, and thus the only tango teachers in the United States were ballroom teachers. As a result, many of these early dancers attempted to combine these new steps with those that were readily available to them from American ballroom tango.

[3] Tango also became popular in East Asia, including Japan, Vietnam, and Indonesia (Savigliano, 187; Roberts, 109).

2. TANGO IN PITTSBURGH

2.1. HISTORY OF TANGO IN PITTSBURGH

The tango community in Pittsburgh shares similar origins with many other dance communities in the United States. One of the first dancers interested in the tango in the 1990s, Michael Wizer, was originally a member of the growing swing dance scene in Pittsburgh. Inspired by the hit Broadway musicals, *Tango Argentina* and *Forever Tango*, Wizer gathered a few of his close friends and acquaintances from the swing dance scene to practice Argentine tango at the Wilkins Community School in Edgewood, a neighborhood in eastern Pittsburgh. Initially they had neither instructor, nor any real knowledge of the tango aside from that which they witnessed in American film and theater; everything they practiced was self-taught. In the early 1990s, Wizer took several Argentine tango lessons in New York City, one of the main centers for Argentine social tango in North America. He began to advertise and teach weekly beginning lessons at the Wilkins Community School and the Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh in Oakland. When Wizer relocated to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1996 for professional reasons, he left a nascent tango community in his wake (Linda Jeub, pers. comm., July 2004; Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004.)

A year after Wizer left, his first student and teaching partner, Linda Jeub, formally organized the existing tango community through a local, non-profit corporation, Coal Country Traditions, which professed interest in the preservation of traditional music and dance in southwestern Pennsylvania (http://www.coalcountry.org). Jeub named the association

Pittsburgh Tangueros, and in doing so, forged a connection between the local tango tradition and its Argentine counterpart. In Spanish, *tanguero/a* refers to someone who is deeply involved in the world of tango, whether as a lyricist, musician, dancer, or admirer. By using this word, Jeub referenced a tango culture of Spanish origin, yet still maintained the identity of the local tradition by specifically naming Pittsburgh to describe the type of *tangueros*. Jeub continued to teach classes within the greater Pittsburgh community, maintaining the central meeting place of the Wilkins Community School in Edgewood. Though Jeub and her upper-level students (including Ed and Carolyn Goytia, Francesco and Barbara Pionati, Trinidad Regaspi, and Sean Cosgrove) taught most of the classes, the Pittsburgh Tangueros also occasionally hosted professional Argentine tango teachers to teach in Pittsburgh. Jeub also standardized specific days of the week for regular practice and social dancing, something that Wizer had initially proposed. In 2005, practices occurred regularly on Sundays and dances on Thursdays. Lessons may occur throughout the week, depending on the availability of the instructor.

The Pittsburgh Tangueros maintained the use of Spanish words to refer to these events, *practicas* for practices, and *milongas* for dances. The *practicas* are designed for dancers of all levels to rehearse what they have learned in classes in a communal setting. The *milonga* is a more formal dance setting, where dancers typically dress up and abide by formal rules of dance etiquette. For example, dancers generally stay together for a set of three songs before switching partners. Additionally, dancers follow a "line of dance," by moving in a counterclockwise motion around the dance floor. This gives the dancers a chance to practice established "floorcraft" or acceptable ways of moving, without disturbing other dancers. In this manner, Pittsburgh dancers often speak of two dances occurring simultaneously: the individual dance

between partners, and the dance that each pair experiences with other couples on the dance floor (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004; Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., June 2004).

During *milongas* and *practicas*, usually one dancer also functions as a deejay for the event. This person is responsible for bringing a stereo and his or her personal collection of music, most often in the form of compact discs. The deejay will dance in between changing the music selection. Because the deejay chooses the music from his or her own collection, the musical selections during *milongas* often varies according to the preference of the performing deejay.

2.2. FISSURE IN THE PITTSBURGH TANGO COMMUNITY

In 2002, dancers Cosgrove and Regaspi instigated a divide in the tango community for personal reasons. They worked to create a second tango group in Pittsburgh, which they named the Pittsburgh Argentine Tango Society (PATangoS, hereafter referred to as PATS). When Cosgrove and Regaspi created the new group, they had been scheduled to teach an advanced-level tango course for Pittsburgh Tangueros at the Wilkins Community School. Officially, the Pittsburgh Tangueros canceled the class, since they could not find another teacher to fill the position. However, Cosgrove and Regaspi continued to offer the course, keeping the profits for PATS. While this further accelerated negative feelings by the leaders of the Pittsburgh Tangueros, who now felt that PATS had "stolen a class" (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February 2005), this maneuver established that the PATS would not be without a following and that the splinter group would survive.

PATS originally maintained the same format established by the Pittsburgh Tangueros, with the exception of hosting weekly *milongas*. Replacing the *practica* and lesson location of the Wilkins Community School with the Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Squirrel Hill, they

also renewed lessons at the Carnegie Museum, which had lapsed under the Pittsburgh Tangueros. In order to expand their membership, Regaspi and McPherron also founded a tango club at the University of Pittsburgh, with Regaspi teaching lessons and McPherron, a former professor of archaeology, serving as faculty advisor. While the club is essentially defunct during the academic year, they host weekly outdoor *milongas* during the summer on the William Pitt Student Union patio on Bigelow Boulevard, and have been able to bring several young dancers into the larger Pittsburgh tango community.

Although they do not host weekly formal *milongas*, PATS does offer an informal gathering at the Tango Café in Squirrel Hill, following the JCC *practica*, as well as Saturday *milongas* on special occasions throughout the year. While the location for these Saturday *milongas* is often variable, they currently occur at the Church of the Redeemer in Squirrel Hill, which also functions as a site for group lessons. Whereas the Pittsburgh Tangueros is mainly centered in Edgewood, PATS is centralized in Squirrel Hill and Oakland. For the most part, both groups are careful that their events do not overlap with one another, in order to offer the greatest possibility for the most members to attend.

2.3. THE *MILONGA* VENUE

While the *practica* locations for both the Pittsburgh Tangueros and PATS have been relatively stable, the Thursday *milonga* very often changes location, and, over the years, has taken place in various Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Because of tango's early roots in Argentina, where it developed in brothels and drinking establishments, Pittsburgh dancers have always attempted to find a room in or near a bar to tango. However, this often has negative consequences, for the

milonga is dependent upon the whims of the owner of the establishment, who will extend an invitation to the tango dancers only if he or she feels that a profit can be made in alcohol sales. As such, the *milonga* location in Pittsburgh has changed quite frequently. Since 1998, there have been seven different venues for *milongas*. Listed according to chronology, they are Club Havana in Shadyside, the Beehive in Oakland, the Brick House in Greenfield, Cozumel in Shadyside, Nooner's in Bloomfield, Roland's in the Strip District, and Eon's Grill in Homestead.

The *milonga* venue not only functions as a site for dancing, but is also very influential in aiding a sense of fellowship in the tango community. Whereas the main focus of *practicas* and lessons is to learn and review technical material, *milongas* provide dancers with a means for socializing with one another. Most Pittsburgh dancers abide by the rule that one should not openly teach dance steps or consciously work on new material during *milongas*. Dancers consider this behavior to be disrespectful to others whose motives in attending the *milonga* are presumably social in nature (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004). Often, if someone attempts to teach on the dance floor during a *milonga*, other dancers will purposely avoid dancing with him or her.

The first venue for the *milongas* was Club Havana, a site that dancer Rebecca Taksel found by chance in November 1998 when she visited the bar and conversed with the owner (Regaspi, pers. comm., February 2005). Club Havana is centrally located on Ellsworth Street in Shadyside, a relatively affluent locality. For a cover-charge of five dollars per person (which included one drink), the Pittsburgh Tangueros had control of the sound equipment and a tile dance floor in the front of the building. For the most part, Club Havana was an agreeable location that supported the growth of the tango community. The community at this time was still quite small, and *milongas* rarely entertained more than ten people. Nonetheless, Cosgrove and

Regaspi maintain that Club Havana encouraged a sense of communal spirit, because it was the first time that dancers had an opportunity to gather socially; previously, there had been only *practicas* and group classes. Because of the open layout, Club Havana allowed dancers to talk with one another about their individual lives outside of tango dancing in an atmosphere that encouraged sitting together and drinking (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February 2005). However, after less than a year, the modest attendance attracted the ownership's attention, who, seeking to bring in more profits, asked the Pittsburgh Tangueros to leave.

Immediately following Club Havana, one of the Pittsburgh Tangueros, Donald Hsu, initiated dancing at another venue, the Beehive in Oakland, in 1999. This location proved to be less than adequate. The building had multiple levels, and tango occurred on the third floor. Noise from a live rock band on the second floor completely overwhelmed the dancing. After the Beehive failure, two Pittsburgh Tangueros teachers, Trinidad Regaspi and Sean Cosgrove, stopped by their local bar, the Brickhouse, in Greenfield. Disappointed by the Beehive's accommodations, they wondered if the owner would allow them to tango weekly at the Brickhouse. The new owners of the Brickhouse readily agreed, as they were seeking to change the dynamics of the bar, and eager to bring in an older, more subdued crowd.

Cosgrove and Regaspi look back on the Brickhouse as an idyllic location. The Brickhouse attracted a neighborhood crowd, who quietly watched from their tables. The owners did not charge a cover fee, with the expectation that they would make a profit in alcohol and food sales. Initially, only a small group of up to ten dancers attended the *milonga*. By Fall 2000, attendance had doubled to consistently over twenty dancers. In part, the increase in attendance is due to the development of an e-mail list for group announcements in 1999, created by dancer

Alan McPherron, which encouraged many dancers to become actively involved in the dance community. Cosgrove attests that:

> The Brickhouse really built a sense of community. All the tables were in one area of the dance floor, so people could really socialize together. As far as atmosphere, it was the nicest place we've ever danced (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February, 2005).

Regaspi states:

> It was very relaxed; people could fool around. We had complete control of the music and there was no 'I'm better than you' thing going on. Everyone was an equal—none of us had even seen a decent teacher yet. And sometimes, we'd just play around on the floor (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., February 2005).

Some of this idealistic reflection may be attributed to the impending divide in the tango community, which split shortly after leaving the Brickhouse in December 2001. However, the physical design of the Brickhouse and freedom given to the dancers by the management nourished a sense of fellowship amongst the dancers.

In November 2001, the Brickhouse building was sold to new owners, who sought a younger, heavier-drinking demographic. The Pittsburgh Tangueros were forced to seek a new location. Regaspi and Jeub initiated a return to Shadyside, by entering into an arrangement with the proprietors of the Mexican restaurant Cozumel on Walnut Street. No one in the Pittsburgh Tangueros seemed content with the arrangement. The rental for the dance floor cost two hundred dollars a night, and by various accounts, was not a pleasant atmosphere (Alan McPherron, pers. comm., July 2004). Cosgrove maintained that drunken women, who were not part of the tango community, accosted him on several occasions demanding that he dance with them. Similarly, he believed that his "dancing ability" signaled to the regular male patrons at Cozumel that he was gay, because he received several such comments (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February 2005). Also, though the dance floor in Cozumel is quite spacious, it was often

very dirty, since it functioned as a dining area during the day. The dance floor is located between two seating areas on opposite sides of the restaurant. It was during this time at Cozumel, in January 2002, that the tango community split due to a personal disagreement between several dancers. Instead of the space aiding the dancers in mitigating the disagreement, Cozumel encouraged the divide by providing two distinct areas for dancers to congregate in, adding to the feeling that every member of the Pittsburgh Tangueros needed to take sides. Eventually, the Pittsburgh Tangueros, under the financial leadership of Jeub, left Cozumel in search of a less expensive *milonga* location (Linda Jeub, pers. comm., July 2004).

Though the tango community had divided into two groups, (the Pittsburgh Tangueros, led by Jeub and Pionati, and PATS, led by Cosgrove and Regaspi,) neither wanted to jeopardize the survival of the Thursday *milongas*. When Jeub decided to host the *milongas* at a small bar called Nooner's in Bloomfield, Cosgrove and Regaspi did not offer a competitive venue for Thursday dancing. Operating under the philosophy that there were two groups, but one tango community, Cosgrove and Regaspi occasionally attended the *milongas* at Nooner's Bar.

The building in which Nooner's is located is two stories; the lower level is a drinking establishment, and in 2002, the upper level had been in disuse for several years. In return for revitalizing the upstairs, the bar owners agreed to host the weekly *milongas* for a small percentage of the cover charge. Thus, in order to dance there, the Pittsburgh Tangueros exerted much effort in refurbishing the upper level. Once that was accomplished, the dance space was very favorable. The area nearest the door serviced a seating area and counter space for drinks and food, so visitors did not disturb the dance floor when first arriving. The favorable spatial arrangement allowed plenty of opportunities for dancers to mingle and socialize with one another. Additionally, Nooner's was very private. Since the Pittsburgh Tangueros were the ones

who originally renovated the space, very few non-tango dancers visited the upper level. Also, there was little acoustical overlap between floors, as there had been in other locations such as the Beehive.

The main disadvantage for Nooner's was the neighborhood in which it is situated. Many of the tango dancers believe that the surrounding area is very dangerous. As one dancer attested, "there were weekly shootings on that block, and all sorts of drug deals going on" (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February 2005). While this is clearly an exaggeration, other dancers shared similar fears. Several women did not feel safe attending unaccompanied, especially if they had to walk from their car to the building alone (Marion Webb, pers. comm., July 2004; Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., February 2004). However for others, this sense of danger held a very attractive quality. One dancer, Sarah Cornelius, maintained that the economically impoverished neighborhood gave Nooner's a certain "tango ambiance" (Sarah Cornelius, pers. comm., March 2004). Because tango is often associated with having disreputable origins (Sarah Cornelius, March 2004), these dancers automatically assigned Nooner's a certain credibility. Tango dancer Albert Wiegand commented that he first became interested in the tango after another dancer related to him the details of the Nooner's location. The idea of dancing tango in a dark, smoky atmosphere in a "seedy" section of town, at a bar where the bathroom doors are labeled "Hunters" and the "Hunted," was somehow very appealing. It made the experience more "exciting and real" in the ways that he imagined it had originated in Buenos Aires, and furthermore inspired Wiegand to begin learning to tango (Albert Wiegand, pers. comm., July 2004).

Perhaps Nooner's had too much "tango ambiance," for when the building was sold in November 2003, the appraisers condemned the use of the second floor, classifying it as a fire

hazard for large gatherings (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., March 2005). The Pittsburgh Tangueros relocated to Roland's in the Strip District near downtown Pittsburgh. Roland's is a two-level sports bar with multiple spacious rooms, catering to clientele in their late twenties to early forties. Tango dancing occurred in a back room on the second floor, often unbeknownst to the regular customers, many of whom expressed surprise when they unwittingly walked into the designated tango room on Thursdays.

The dance floor at Roland's was the biggest space that the Pittsburgh Tangueros had yet danced, and while most dancers agreed that it had potential, almost everyone commented on basic logistical problems with the space. First, the dance floor was too large for dancers to practice satisfactory floorcraft. Because dancers had ample floor space in which to dance, some felt at liberty to practice larger figures, many of which involved flashy kicks and other ornaments. This became problematic for many dancers, who complained that this encouraged a dangerous environment on the dance floor for either them or their partners (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004). Secondly, the actual floor was very dirty and sticky, and Roland's would not allow the Pittsburgh Tangueros to clean it because of union laws. This situation was particularly adverse for tango dancers, who need very smooth soles, which may become ruined by a dirty floor. Finally, there was a large noise issue, as the tango room was only separated from the second floor bar by moveable shutters. When the shutters were closed, a reasonable degree of sound-proofing was achieved; oftentimes, however, the Roland's management left the shutters open, which proved to be very distracting for the dancers.

Eventually, the Roland's management discouraged tango on the grounds that it was not bringing in enough drink sales, and the Pittsburgh Tangueros moved the *milongas* to Eon's Grill in Homestead, their current location. Initially, this decision was unpopular because dancers were

unfamiliar with the bar and were worried about Homestead's reputation as being "dangerous" (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., February 2005). However, many of these feelings were assuaged when dancers discovered the location was near the Waterfront, a large strip mall. The dance space is a long, relatively narrow floor, which encourages appropriate floorcraft. Because of this, Cosgrove argues that of all the *milonga* venues, "Eon's has the best tango ambiance" (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February 2005). One negative aspect of Eon's Grill noted by Cosgrove and others is that the seating arrangement discourages socialization. Rather than clustered tables at which dancers may freely communicate, individual booths line the sides of the dance floor. This prevents dancers from seeing other dancers on the dance floor from a seated position. As both groups continued to use the same venue for Thursday dancing, PATS dancers feel that the booths further facilitate the division between the two tango groups (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., February 2005). As a tango site, Eon's Grill is not a stable one; the building will be refurbished into a sports bar under new owners, and at some point, the Pittsburgh Tangueros will have to move once again.

While the Thursday *milonga* site has moved six times in a period of seven years, many dancers do not mind this sense of instability in location. For these people, it reminds them that the tango is still very much a subculture of Pittsburgh life, which they wear as a badge of honor. For these dancers, being relegated to a subculture status links them to a historic Argentine past, when the elite Argentine upper class in the first decades of the twentieth century refused to bestow their approval upon the tango until the dance first became prevalent in Europe, (Collier, 61). As Williams commented, dancing tango allowed him to have a "secret life" outside of work, and he was unwilling to share this part of his life with his coworkers (Christopher Williams, pers. comm., April 2004). While the changing *milonga* locations in Pittsburgh do not

have negative social connotations, several dancers have spoken with longing of hosting "hit and run" *milongas*. At such an event, dancers arrive en masse at a predetermined public site with music and loudspeakers and dance until the police arrive, at which point everyone moves to the next predetermined location. While "hit and run" *milongas* have yet to occur in Pittsburgh, they add an element of danger to an otherwise culturally accepted social activity.

Individual *milonga* venues also have repercussions on how dancers perceive the authenticity of their actions in relation to early Argentine tango culture. Having the site in a bar reminds dancers of the tango's origins in a brothel, and various Pittsburgh Tangueros have expressed their preference for tango over other dances, like swing, because the dancers are old enough to serve alcohol at *milongas* (Sabrina Tsao, pers. comm., March 2004). Additionally, *milongas* are important to the Pittsburgh tango community because they present a needed opportunity for tango dancers to socialize with one another. The venue has an added importance, because the physical space may either aid or detract from establishing this sense of fellowship through seating layout, privacy, noise control, and "tango ambiance."

3. COMPETING DISCOURSES OF AUTHENTICITY

3.1. ESTABLISHING AUTHENTICITY

One of the more interesting results of the fissure in the tango community occurred as both groups, especially PATS, struggled to maintain a following. While the Pittsburgh Tangueros had little need for inner reform since their following basically remained the same, PATS had to create interest in their new group so that new dancers would be attracted to them rather than to the Pittsburgh Tangueros which had a larger membership. In order to distinguish hers as the superior tango group, Regaspi named the organization Pittsburgh Argentine Tango Society. In the term "society," the name conveys a more professional connotation than Pittsburgh Tangueros, which does not immediately suggest a high level of structural organization. Inversely, the Pittsburgh Argentine Tango Society is a more sterile name, and does not suggest a love for the dance that the use of the term "tanguero" communicates, nor does it sound "authentic." More importantly, the title PATS clearly states the type and style of dance performed. By using the term "tango" directly within the name rather than the lesser-known term "tanguero," PATS appears first in an internet search for tango events in Pittsburgh (keywords: tango, Pittsburgh). Several members of the Pittsburgh Tangueros expressed regret about the seemingly secondary importance that this search function implies (Linda Jeub, pers. comm., July 2004).

PATS leaders began more fervently to attend tango workshops outside of the city, something which is still relatively rare among Pittsburgh Tangueros dancers. The most common

locations include Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; Erie, Pennsylvania; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Washington, DC. While Pittsburgh Tangueros may also attend workshops in these areas, they do so less frequently, as their larger membership means they have less need of outside events. PATS is thus more actively in contact with dancers and educators from outside Pittsburgh, which inspires a wider repertoire of teaching styles from which Pittsburgh teachers may borrow. Also, by encouraging their students to participate in non-Pittsburgh tango events, PATS leaders have been instrumental in forming many lasting relationships between Pittsburgh and other tango communities in Midwestern and Eastern states.

As a result of their interaction with tango communities outside Pittsburgh, PATS developed a modus operandi for various aspects of the tango, including dance style, acceptable tango music for dancing and listening, ways that dancers should conceive of their body while dancing, and new ritual practices associated with the tango and Argentina. In the following sections, I will describe PATS's approach to the tango, with attention to how these new practices came to be perceived as more authentic, most often in reference to the Argentine golden age of tango from the 1920s to the 1940s.

3.2. STYLISTIC DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN GROUPS

Stylistically, PATS first disassociated themselves from the Pittsburgh Tangueros by emphasizing a new teaching technique for beginning dancers. PATS teachers believe that beginning dancers should first learn techniques for improvisation, rather than choreographed steps. While this is principally a pedagogical issue, teaching improvisation versus choreography has inspired much controversy throughout many American tango communities, and has surfaced for discussion repeatedly on a national internet-based listserve, the Tango-L, to which many Pittsburgh dancers

subscribe. PATS leaders contest that by first teaching choreographed steps, the follower has a tendency to concentrate on the pattern of the step, rather than paying attention to the actual lead. In this way, choreography lessens the need for a clear connection between leader and follower and therefore limits both dancer's abilities to improvise within fixed patterns.

Those tango teachers who begin with choreographed steps, as in the Pittsburgh Tangueros, contend that planned choreography allows students to survey steps that they will perfect only later. Most often, these teachers begin by teaching a dance pattern called the "eight-count basic," which combines forward and backwards walking with a front *ocho* (half figure-eight) and the cross (a stylistic placing of the left foot over the right).

As the eight-count basic combines multiple steps into a fixed pattern, PATS teachers argue that it is fundamentally choreographic. Through emphasis on learning steps over the ultimately more important connection between dance partners, the eight-count basic hinders the ability of beginning dancers to improvise freely during the dance. Additionally, PATS teachers maintain that the eight-count basic also inspires poor dance etiquette, because it teaches dancers to step backwards, in contrary motion to the line of dance. Moving contrary to the line of dance often results in accidentally stepping on, or kicking, other dancers who might be behind them, out of their line of sight. Furthermore, PATS teachers contend that the eight-count basic teaches poor musicality, as the step requires a mandatory pause on beats five and eight, regardless of whether the dancer feels that the music warrants such a pause. Finally, by refuting that there are fixed steps in the tango, PATS dancers free the "essence" of tango from being defined by physical movement. Instead, PATS appears to have a deeper, esoteric understanding of the dance, which enables them to appreciate the tango metaphors of Argentine *tangueros* that equate

tango with life and emotion and that proliferate on the worldwide web and between Pittsburgh dancers.[4]

Though the distinction between the two groups was initially pedagogical, PATS teachers eventually emphasized a visual stylistic difference as well. Historically, tango dancers in Pittsburgh have performed in an open-embrace, or "salon style," where the upper bodies between partners are distanced from one another. However, after the fissure, PATS further disassociated themselves from the main tango community by teaching a new style of dance called close-embrace (also referred to in Pittsburgh as *apilado* style, *milonguero* style, or rhythmic close-embrace) where the upper bodies physically connect. Most Pittsburgh dancers view this adoption of close-embrace as the main difference between the two tango groups. While dancers cannot see their feet, PATS teachers use close-embrace as a means of preventing anticipation on the part of the follower, and deter choreographic moves on the part of the lead. Because the upper bodies physically connect in close-embrace, both partners are more clearly aware of the movements of the other dancer, thus facilitating greater communication between the two.

Members of Pittsburgh Tangueros see this shift in style from open to close-embrace as an attempt on the part of PATS to reclaim a more historic version of the tango. However, they also rationalize their own claims for the authenticity of open-embrace through reference to Argentine tango dancing, though focusing on contemporary rather than historical dancers. They believe that dancers in Argentina necessarily must dance in a close-embrace because there are so many dancers and the floor is quite crowded. However, many Pittsburgh Tangueros believe that given

[4] For a discussion of how Pittsburgh dancers newly interpret tango as a metaphor for life, see regional tango teacher Katrina J. Zeno's article "The Ultimate Dance Partner," found on www.christianity.com, which compares tango to spiritual communion with Christ. Models for this comparison can be commonly found, most notably Johanna Siegmann's *Tao of Tango*, which, as noted by the product description, "uses the tango as a metaphor to describe the fragile balances of energies found in all interpersonal relationships."

the choice, Argentine dancers would prefer to dance using an open-embrace because there are more choreographic possibilities available to them. Pittsburgh Tanguero Stephen Langton comments:

> I've had a lot of discussions with friends in Buenos Aires over this, and you go to the crowded *milongas*, and yes, they all dance *milonguero* style. That's what you do. And if you decide you're going to salon style with lots of *ganchos* and *boleos* (steps which utilize kicking, which may be potentially dangerous on the dance floor), well, they're not going to like you very well. But on the other hand, a lot of Argentine dancers, who are very good dancers down there, when they have a chance, they'll dance salon style. And a lot of them enjoy it more (Stephen Langton, pers. comm., May 2004).

By referencing Argentine dancers in the above quotation, Langton rationalizes the open-embrace as more "authentic." Furthermore, since there are fewer dancers in Pittsburgh, and the dance floors are rarely crowded, it is unnecessary to dance in a close-embrace in Pittsburgh.

Open-embrace dancers often attest that learning open-embrace is more difficult than close-embrace. As Langton noted:

> One of the reasons that salon style is more difficult is that in order to make it look right, you have to maintain your connection with your partner and do fancier figures. If you're a man, you can do all the right figures and still lose your partner, and the dance looks terrible (Stephen Langton, pers. comm., May 2004).

This assertion that tango must be difficult in order for it to be appreciated is quite common amongst both PATS dancers and Pittsburgh Tangueros, each group maintaining that their style is harder to master. Interestingly, this debate mostly occurs among students; many of the teachers reserve judgement. Dancers ascribe an "elusive" quality to the tango. As one dancer noted, "If I ever figure the tango out, I'll probably get bored with it." For many dancers, it is the endless amount of learning that sustains their interest in tango. This debate is intriguing in that it may be viewed as a means for reinforcing that the tango will always be an "other" for Pittsburgh dancers, since dancing does not come naturally and must be worked on persistently. Yet at the

same time, many of these same dancers are so invested in the dance that tango functions as a strong aspect of their identity. As another Pittsburgh tango teacher commented, "Tango isn't something you learn; tango is something you live," an ironic statement in that this person professionally teaches the dance. Despite the fact that many of these dancers consider the dance to be an important part of their lifestyle, it is still something for which they must strive to achieve excellence.

Choosing between dancing in close or open-embrace also signals the dancer's objective in dancing tango. Pittsburgh dancers generally attach a certain mood to each style; close-embrace is "serious" while open-embrace is "fun." This association is most likely due to the teaching style of PATS, who emphasize a slower learning process in order to first perfect the physical body movements. Pittsburgh Tangueros teachers progress faster in lessons, which maintains the interest of their students to a greater extent. This also accounts for the continued disparity in size between the two groups. While neither method is better or worse, each complements the other and facilitates movement between groups, as students seek the teaching style that best fits their personality.

As dancers switch from one style of embrace to the other, their understanding of the tango evolves. As Cosgrove noted:

> [Tango] is constantly evolving and growing. The *milonguero* style that we're doing now is kind of "a going back to the roots of tango" thing, but I don't think it's truly going back to what it was; whatever it was is lost. The salon style really reflected the "me first" greed of the 80s with people showing off and stuff. The *milonguero* style is just more mature (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., June 2004).

By reflecting on open-embrace as a symbol of the decadence of the 1980s, Cosgrove makes his defense of close-embrace on moral grounds. Cosgrove imagines that American culture is one of "instant gratification" and "selfishness," character traits that he feels epitomize the 1980s.

According to Cosgrove, dancers who are attracted to open-embrace tango because of the "flashy footwork" embody these undesirable traits. *Milonguero* style is "more mature" because people who are attracted to it are presumably more interested in finding a meaningful connection with their partner than in "dancing steps." Though Cosgrove would surely not categorize all open-embrace dancers as "greedy," perhaps this statement may reflect upon a change he may feel in his own personal circumstances, coinciding with his departure from dancing open-embrace to the close-embrace dance style. In any case, Cosgrove asserts that open-embrace is a new style, created during the 1980s. It contrasts with close-embrace, which, although it can never be fully successful ("whatever it was is lost,") it is a more historic version of tango ("going back to the roots"). Because close-embrace attempts to return to its historic "roots," Cosgrove and many close-embrace dancers in Pittsburgh believe that "*milonguero* style gets to the essence of tango," which is within the connection between partners rather than in the footwork (Sean Cosgrove, pers. comm., June 2004). This discourse implies that these dancers believe that the style of the dance, in open or close-embrace, not only affects the authenticity of the physical form, but also the mental and emotional aspects of the tango.

3.3. THE RELATIONSHIP OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Through their interaction with tango communities outside of Pittsburgh, PATS's understanding of tango music changed. Previously PATS leaders were nondiscriminatory in their enjoyment of tango music; after 2002, PATS worked to create a musical canon of acceptable dance music, ranked according to performing orchestra. In order to discuss their musical choices, the following section offers a brief introduction into tango music.

Musically, there are three subgenres of the tango, based upon meter: the tango* (herein differentiated from the main genre with an *) in 4/4, the tango waltz in 3/4, and the tango *milonga*, in 2/4. In sum, all three are styles of the broader genre tango, and the same dance steps may be performed in each subgenre, with some concessions made to account for the changed meters. The tango *milonga* is famous for its appropriation of the habanera rhythm of a dotted quarter note followed by three eighth notes, with an accent on the first and third notes. It is popularly asserted that this rhythm defines all tango music. To some extent, the habanera rhythm is retained in early tangos*, notably, the famed "El Choclo," written in 1910 and popular as far away as Southeast Asia (Roberts, 109). However, most tangos* or tango waltzes do not make use of this rhythm, thus negating the common conjecture that tango music may be defined according to rhythm.

Rather than rhythm, a more cohesive element among the three tango subgenres is orchestration. While variations exist, the typical tango orchestra standardized in the 1920s includes two violins, two *bandoneóns*, piano, and string bass (Garland, 316). This orchestration is notable for two reasons. Foremost, it does not include percussion, thus forcing the interplay between the various instruments to create strong rhythms for the dancers. Secondly, the presence of the *bandoneón* provides a unique timbre. When it was added to the ensemble at the turn of the century, its purpose was to cut across the din of the noisy brothels in which the tango arose. Yet, because of the great difficulty of the instrument, the *bandoneóns* forced the pace of the tango music to slow down considerably, thus giving the tango a more languid feel, which contributed to the dance's sensual reputation (Aslan, 2). The overall form of the tango provides a cohesive musical element as well, as tangos are generally in ternary form, with each section containing two phrases.

Before the tango community split, knowledge about tango music remained relatively unimportant for most members of the tango community. The emphasis was, and to a large extent still is, on the dance steps, rather than on appreciation for a tango musical repertoire. Rather than making informed musical decisions about musical orchestras, dancers chose popularly available tango music, such as the film soundtracks *Tango* directed by Carlos Saura (1999), t*he Tango Lesson* directed by Sally Potter (1997), and *Scent of a Woman* directed by Martin Brest (1992). Other mainstream orchestras include Hugo Diaz and Sexteto Mayor, whose recordings became widely available commercially in the United States following the success of the Broadway tango musicals *Tango Argentino* and *Forever Tango.* Additionally, Pittsburgh dancers sometimes chose non-tango popular music that references the tango in the title or lyrics. An example of this is Canadian Celtic pop singer Loreena McKennitt's "Tango to Evora (1992)," which has been a staple of the Pittsburgh tango communities repertoire since the late 1990s (Linda Jeub, pers. comm., July 2004).

Many visitors to the Thursday *milongas* from tango communities outside Pittsburgh have commented that the music played is not "good dance music," though they suggest that it may be fine for listening. While these dancers may not be able to verbalize why one style of tango music is "for dancing" and another is "for listening," many Pittsburgh dancers commonly restate this assertion in their own discourse about Argentine tango music. Regaspi comments that she first realized that their taste in music needed modification when the Pittsburgh Tanguero *milonga*s were hosted at Cozumel's. At the time, Regaspi attests that the *milongas* always ended with the Tango Project, the tango orchestra popularized in *Scent of a Woman*. She describes the Tango Project as "an American version of Argentine tango" because of the smaller size [of the orchestra] and soft sound" (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., February 2005). As the Cozumel

setting exacerbated the growing problems in the tango community, it is thus fitting that Regaspi notes that it was "at Cozumel, when we first realized that the music was bad" (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., February 2005). Furthermore, because PATS splintered off shortly after members realized that the tango music there was "undanceable," this encouraged notions amongst PATS dancers that most Pittsburgh Tanguero music is undanceable.

Many Pittsburgh dancers contest this idea that certain music is more appropriate for dancing than others, for as one Pittsburgh Tanguero dancer remarked, "You can dance tango to anything." Those who are more invested in maintaining a status quo in the Pittsburgh Tangueros, such as Jeub, assert that they dance to the music to which they like to listen. Jeub remarked that her favorite music for dancing remains that of Hugo Diaz, an artist that PATS has particularly singled out for criticism as non-danceable in this debate (Linda Jeub, pers. comm., July 2004). Because of Jeub's position as an original organizer of the Pittsburgh Tangueros, her stance assures that there will always be two sides to this discussion.

Though Pittsburgh dancers imagine that the debate about danceable music versus non-danceable music is one of the main divisions between the two tango groups, it also is prevalent within the Pittsburgh Tangueros. Since the Pittsburgh Tangueros employ three deejays, Tanguero members have the opportunity to compare different styles of music during *milongas*. Francesco Pionati plays traditional tango music from the 1920s to the 1940s; João Pedro Sousa plays mostly contemporary pieces, not necessarily always tango music; while Roger LePage plays both traditional and contemporary tango music. Pionati, who is a main instructor for the Pittsburgh Tangueros, is careful to specify that he likes "danceable" tango music. As he notes:

> Not all tango music is danceable. There's music that is good to listen to, for example, Piazolla. You listen to the music; you understand what's going on and it's much more cerebral…. The music that is danceable is music that is beat-driven or melody-driven (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004).

Pionati demonstrates extensive knowledge about tango music, explaining that "beat driven" music is that in which the basic pulse is made clearly apparent on various instruments. Generally, this characterizes music composed before 1935. "Melody-driven" music developed slightly after these early tangos in the late 1930s through the 1940s. He singles out the tango orchestra leader Juan D'Arienzo (1900-1976) as exemplifying this musical style. Pionati feels that "melody-driven music" is still very danceable, although the beat is more "subtle," being slightly obscured by the melodic emphasis of the music. However, because "the beat is always there," meaning that the tempo of a piece remains constant, Pionati considers "melody-driven music" to be danceable (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004).

After the divide in the Pittsburgh tango community, PATS leaders expanded the debate about musical appropriateness to include the ways that different tango music enhances particular dance styles, such as close-embrace, open-embrace, and ballroom. After dance style, music is the primary means by which PATS differentiates itself from the Pittsburgh Tangueros and attempts to claim authenticity for its dancing. PATS gained much of their information about tango music coinciding with their change in dance style, following the 2002 summer workshops with Susana Miller and Robert Hauk. Miller especially has strong opinions concerning what constitutes "authentic" Argentine music and dance, much of which has been transmitted to her student Robert Hauk, who is an amateur musician as well as a professional deejay. With Hauk's help, she was better able to verbalize what she felt constituted appropriate music for dancing.

According to Hauk and Miller, dance music should include a steady rhythmical pulse throughout the piece, strong enough to be immediately discernible for beginning dancers. If there is a singer, he or she should not obscure the basic pulse by singing too far ahead or behind the beat, in a manner similar to Billie Holliday of early jazz, as this might throw off the dancers.

Also, tango music should enhance close-embrace dancing in a manner different from salon style dance music. Hauk and Miller maintain that another name for close-embrace dancing is "rhythmic close-embrace," because the physical connection facilitates stronger communication between dancers. Therefore close-embrace allows for quicker steps, as the weight changes of the leader to signal faster steps are directly perceptible to the follower. In an open-embrace tango, dancers generally step on beats one and three, whereas in close-embrace, dancers tend to step on beats one, two, and three in quick succession, which gives their dancing a faster, syncopated sense. Stepping on beat two, in addition to beats one and three, is a subtlety that separates open-embrace dancers from close-embrace dancers in Pittsburgh.

Close-embrace dancers deem that music which emphasizes a syncopated second beat is better suited for their style of dancing. Through their interactions with Hauk and Miller, PATS teachers have created a canon of acceptable tango music for close-embrace dancing based upon tango orchestras popular between the 1920s and 1940s. The three orchestra leaders that PATS deem most suitable for close-embrace dancing include Carlos Di Sarli (1903-1960), Osvaldo Pugliese (1905-1995), and Juan D'Arienzo (1900-1976). PATS teachers actively promote learning about these key figures, often by informally questioning their students on the names of the orchestra playing during *practicas* or in lessons. By associating historic orchestras with their chosen style of dancing, PATS dancers endeavor to link their own actions with a historic Argentina, thereby making their dancing more authentic.

One of the potentially detrimental results of this canonization of acceptable tango music is that certain dancers have become reticent in claiming knowledge about tango music. As dancer Marion Webb noted:

> It's been very hard for me to understand the music, or to hear the music, to hear the beats. But it's coming. And I feel that I have musicality. I'm trainable. I'm

> not even musical. I mean, I can't play any instrument; I can't read music. It's a whole education for me to listen to this music (Marion Webb, pers. comm., June 2004.)

Though PATS's intention is admirable, by establishing workshops that focus solely on musicality, and creating discussion groups just to talk about the music, PATS imply that dancers should have a specialized knowledge about music, before they can fully understand its relationship with dance. Therefore, many dancers believe that they should begin to learn about music, and often speak with musically trained dancers about their supposed deficiencies in this area during *milongas* and *practicas*.

In any case, Miller and Hauk's visit to Pittsburgh was so successful that PATS invited both back for successive workshops. PATS members hoped to gain a deeper understanding of tango music from Hauk, and prior to his visit in February 2003, PATS initiated informal gatherings at the Tango Café to discuss tango music. PATS members were especially interested in talking about the ways that dancers could interpret the music through dance, and communicate that interpretation to their partner. In their discussions, PATS attempted to isolate the melodies and countermelodies of particular instruments in order to suggest different roles for the leader and follower. For example, if the *bandoneóns* are playing quarter notes and the violins are playing half notes, the leader may take steps at twice the rate of the follower. In this way, he is dancing the part of the *bandoneón*, while she dances the part of violin.

In his 2003 workshop, Hauk devoted several classes to dancing musically, interpreting the music, and the role of the deejay in a *milonga*. The last aspect became very influential for PATS's musical construction of *milonga*s. Usually during a *milonga*, dancers remain with one partner for three songs, before switching dance partners. This set is called a *tanda*. Hauk explained that deejays construct *tandas* by pairing similar pieces, both by subgenre and

orchestra. For example, a *tanda* may consist of three tango waltzes, all performed by Di Sarli. Additionally, *tandas* are separated by small instrumental breaks called *cortinas*. Hauk taught that *cortinas* do not necessarily have to be tango music, but rather should reflect the personality of the deejay. As Hauk illustrated, *cortinas* might be a clip of a Led Zeppelin guitar solo or even the opening of Richard Wagner's "Walkürenritt."

Though PATS's knowledge of tango music continues to expand as they work with other tango instructors, notably Joe Petrisko of Washington, D.C., and Daniel Lapadula of Buenos Aires, the basis of PATS's musical learning is established in Hauk's and Miller's approach. While PATS teachers currently work towards creating their own musical *tandas* for *milonga*s, many of their current recordings are borrowed directly from these teachers. Additionally, when Regaspi and Cosgrove host Argentine instructors in their homes, many of these teachers intimate to Regaspi and Cosgrove that certain music or dance knowledge is only to be entrusted to PATS teachers, with the hopes that they will study it and then pass it on to their students. This special treatment implies that PATS teachers are receiving an unadulterated, more authentic rendering of the tango than other Pittsburgh dancers, which they alone can convey to their students. While PATS teachers suppose that they have a deeper understanding of the music than the Pittsburgh Tangueros, as shown by Pionati's statements, they are not the only group to engage in debates about musicality and aesthetics. As Pionati remarked:

> I have very little tolerance for undanceable music. And Pittsburgh is a great place for undanceable music…. Simply because it's tango doesn't mean it's good. There's a lot of bad tango…maybe five percent is worth listening to (Francesco Pionati, pers.comm., July 2004).

As Pionati only dances at Pittsburgh Tanguero events, this comment is clearly not levied at the rival group, PATS; but rather, he is challenging the musical tastes of the other Pittsburgh Tanguero deejays.

Additionally, Pionati shows similar awareness for the skills involved in deejaying, elucidated by Hauk. Pionati comments that choosing the music for a *milonga* is an active process, which requires changing music continually during the night according to people's immediate responses. Like Hauk, Pionati determines that *tandas* should be organized according to orchestra or musical style. However, Pionati demonstrates alternate ways of thinking about *cortinas*. He comments that "the *cortina* should nicely fit with the *tanda*. It should be a nice, crisp break, but it fits." He contends that *cortinas* can destroy the mood of the *milonga*, if they appear to be haphazardly chosen. For Pionati, it is important that *cortinas* provide a smooth transition between sets, rather than allowing the personality of the deejay to infiltrate the *milonga* (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004). This discrepancy is important to note, because it demonstrates that members of both groups have intently scrutinized how music enhances the overall experience for the dancers. Though their decisions for actualizing music during a *milonga* may differ, neither is more appropriate than the other.

3.4. TEACHING GENDER ROLES

Through their additional workshops with non-Pittsburgh based teachers, PATS acquired new ways of using their bodies during the dance, and through this, new understandings of gender relationships in the tango. Understanding bodywork is important for both styles of tango, but especially important for close-embrace dancing because there is a higher risk of discomfort for dancers whose bodies physically touch. When bodywork concepts are communicated to students, PATS teachers invoke essentialized ideas about gender. Often, PATS associate body

positions with ideas about gender that are embedded in "hispaniolisms," or in the terms of Edward Said, American conceptions of Argentine gender roles for the purpose of domination.

While PATS determined specific ways of conveying Argentine gender roles from their interactions with non-Pittsburgh tango dancers, this association of tango with providing specific ways of self-representation has germinated in America through film and television from the 1920s to the present. Media representations of the tango combine the strong male and female actors of *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* with the overt sensuality of Barry Sonnenfeld's *The Addams Family* (1991), complete with outstretched arms and a rose in hand. Many Pittsburgh dancers comment that it was these Hollywood versions of the tango that first encouraged their interest in the dance. Most often, Pittsburgh dancers cite Brest's *Scent of a Woman* (1992) as their main inspiration for learning tango, which thus merits a brief exploration of how this film portrays identity creation in the dance.

Scent of a Woman stars Al Pacino as the blind, retired Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade, who no longer desires to live—a role for which Pacino received the 1993 Academy Award for "Best Actor." The drama centers on Slade's conflicting desires of self-destruction and vivacious abandon, the latter of which is epitomized in a brief tango dance between Slade and a young woman, Donna, played by Gabrielle Anwar. At this point in the drama, the audience is aware that Slade perceives his masculinity to be shattered with his ruined eyesight. In this scene, the tango not only helps Slade temporarily regain his masculinity, but also helps Donna overcome her fear of "making a mistake" in trying something new. Slade equates the tango as a metaphor for life, yet easier and less complicated. He says:

> [There are] no mistakes in the tango, Donna. Not like life. It's simple. That's what makes the tango so great. If you make a mistake, get all tangled up, you just tango on**.**

Tango gives both Donna and Slade a space for temporarily expressing a part of their identity that they might normally be unable to reveal, exemplifying Lipsitz's theory of strategic anti-essentialism (Lipsitz, 57). Only by dancing the tango does Slade regain empowerment and the ability to recall the type of man he used to be. Donna is able to try that which she has always desired, yet which has been ridiculed by her boyfriend as being "silly."

Many Pittsburgh dancers were initially inspired by this vision of tango, as a means for assuming an identity that they have not expressed for some time in their own lives. Though the circumstances may change, numerous Pittsburgh dancers confess that they first danced tango to aid them in finding a suitable means for expression after feeling under-appreciated by their family and peers. As Webb confessed:

> [Tango] has given me a life. It's given me a life in Pittsburgh. I had no life. I complained about having no life. I was dying in Pittsburgh, socially dying…. It's given me a life. It's gotten me out. Tango attracts people…and then you get pulled into it, into the vortex of tango (Webb, pers. comm., June 2004).

By repeatedly commenting that tango has "given her a life," and that she was "socially dying," Webb feels that the physical movements of tango allowed her to express herself in a way that she felt socially and creatively satisfied. Furthermore, earlier in the interview, she asserts that only Argentine tango, rather than American ballroom tango, could help her achieve this self-fulfillment: "Ballroom tango has nothing to do with the Argentine tango" (Webb, pers. comm., June 2004). In a way, by learning about and conquering that which was more clearly an "other" for her, she was able to conquer and reveal the part of herself that had been deferring her own happiness. Furthermore, she deems the tango "a vortex," and ascertains that this penetration into her psyche becomes addictive, necessitating regular repetition.

When teaching the tango, both PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros translate this idea of tango as a form of strategic anti-essentialism into physical ways that dancers can embody "the

Argentine," most commonly through discourse about gender. PATS has developed various teaching strategies to this end, due to their greater communication contact with non-Pittsburgh tango teachers. One such example, which has since pervaded PATS teaching style, occurred during the February 2002 PATS workshop series, featuring Robert Hauk as well as Tom Stermitz of Denver, Colorado. In a beginner's workshop on dance posture, Stermitz taught that women find the chest to be the most attractive quality about the male body, despite many alternative answers postulated by the attending women. He then commented that Argentine men know this about women, and therefore when they walk, thrust their chest forward to display their masculinity. Translating this into the dance, Stermitz commented that the man's role is to present his partner with a masculine chest, while women must invoke a masculine chest. To illustrate, he asked each woman to place her hands against her partner's chest and simply "feel the masculinity" emanating from the correct tango stance, as they walked in time to the music.

Though Pittsburgh dancers at first felt uncomfortable with this activity, the exercise became standard practice for PATS beginning lessons. Often Regaspi eliminates the initial problematic question about the chest being the most attractive part of the male body, instead beginning with demonstrations about how Argentine men walk, with forward thrusting chests. Regaspi often contrasts a perceived Argentine manner of walking with that of an American, in which the American is portrayed as slouching and insecure, while the Argentine is strong and confident. Before releasing her students to perform the walking exercise, she announces to her students, "Remember, you are all now Argentine!" (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., April 2004). Through the dialogue surrounding this exercise, Stermitz and Regaspi have first created and then reinforced stereotypes about the Argentine body as different than, and preferred over, the American body through posture.

Teaching strategies do not always address how Argentine gender constructions may be embodied as blatantly as in Stermitz's exercise to "feel the masculinity" from the chest. One of the more subtle ways that dancers conceive of gender is in the interplay between leader and follower during the dance. Dance teachers encourage students to perform dance moves according to commonly held notions about femininity and masculinity. When describing the embrace to beginning female students, Regaspi frequently uses an image of the woman reaching for a box of chocolates that is behind the man. While this procedure is supposed to teach the follow to stand up straight, leaning forward with the whole body, Regaspi reinforces a commonly held stereotype about a feminine passion for chocolate. Likewise, when teaching beginning male dancers to stride forward with a confidence that will convince his partner to move with him, Regaspi will comment that the man is "in charge," thus invoking patriarchal dominance of the male over the female. Additionally, the terms "leader" and "follower" are highly suggestive of male dominance and female passivity, as these parts are normally performed according to sex. This connotation has been inadvertently reinforced in lessons, which tend to focus on the lead, as he is the one primarily responsible for initiating the dance steps.

To encourage the follower to be receptive to her partner and resist anticipating his lead, both PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros teachers encourage the follower to close her eyes and relax under the guidance of the leader. In addition, both PATS and Pittsburgh Tanguero teachers feel that closing their eyes and relaxing the body helps followers achieve what is referred to as the "tango trance." The tango trance occurs when the follower has an enjoyable experience and does not concentrate on what steps she is performing, but rather focuses on the intimate connection achieved between both partners. While certain dancers, such as Pittsburgh Tanguero Chris Williams, maintain that the leader can likewise achieve a state of trance, this can only occur in

close-embrace and even then, only rarely (Christopher Williams, pers. comm., April 2004). While the tango trance is supposed to be a pleasurable experience for the follower, it also means that she is a less active participant in the dance, receiving, yet not returning, energy from the leader.

Many dancers, both in PATS and the Pittsburgh Tangueros, find the terms "lead" and "follow" to be problematic. When first learning to dance, PATS dancer Albert Wiegand reacted strongly against the notion that he must be the dominant partner, always setting the direction and pattern of the dance. Often during *practicas,* he asked his partner what she would like to work on, so that he might cater his dance steps to her desires. At first, Wiegand resisted labeling each dancer "leader" or "follower" because of the implication of control that coincided with this terminology.

Pittsburgh dancers believe that the terms "leader" and "follower" were first created by American tango instructor Daniel Trenner, and have since entered widespread usage in the United States. In Spanish, the roles are referred to simply as "Man" and "Woman;" thus Pittsburgh dancers believe that the terms "leader" and "follower" are strictly an American invention, developed from American ballroom. Additionally, they have not been privileged with a broader usage in tango communities outside of the United States. Debates about whether or not these terms are appropriate or desirable have recently been an issue of contention on the Tango-L, and were instigated by Pittsburgh dancer, Regaspi.

In her posting, Regaspi argued that the terms "leader" and "follower" are "psychologically inhibiting" for beginning female dancers, who place blame on themselves as the "follower," when the dance does not transgress smoothly. She suggested replacing these words with "Man" and "Woman," regardless if the leader and follower are in fact male or

female. Additionally, Regaspi postulated that the term "tango trance" is too passive a term, and opened up the discussion for more appropriate terms that might inspire the female to become an active participant in the dance. Regaspi commented that a change in terminology would help assert balance between the sexes during the dance, so that a dialogue between equal partners might be achieved in every dance, rather than very rarely. Furthermore, women might not only realize that they "could add something to the dance…but actually practice it" (Regaspi. "[Tango-L] Rephrasing of Words"). In general, the Tango-L responses to Regaspi's posting were favorable. Furthermore, her postings allowed her to think clearly through her points of contention with the terms in question, so that she could share them more plainly with her students.

This notion that men and women are equal participants in the dance has been widely debated in tango literature on the subject, much of which is available at local libraries and read by tango dancers in Pittsburgh. In several of her works, anthropologist Julie Taylor theorizes that the very act of tangoing destroys the female presence. She argues that men demanded absolute ascendancy on the dance floor. Taylor views the continual forward motion of the dance not as indicative of good floorcraft, but instead as symbolic of copulation. Furthermore, she comments on the total dominance of the male over his female partner. She writes of the dance style:

> The relationship of man and woman [is] seen as an encounter between the active, powerful, and completely dominant male and the passive, docile, and completely submissive female…. The male dancer in tango seldom recedes…. The female shows no will of her own. Though they may be technically difficult for her, her steps must be performed to give the appearance that they are entirely due to her partner's masterful guidance. She is never allowed as in other dances to escape the man's embrace, and must execute the most complex figures of the legs with her upper body immobile in a stylized, tense embrace, totally overpowered by the male (Taylor, 282).

From Taylor's description, the tango is an extreme case of male dominance over a disempowered female. The male chooses his partner, he physically supports her throughout the dance, he leads all the steps, and he determines both the rhythm of their movements and the style of their embrace. The female does not even have the power of rejection, and unable to escape his embrace, must follow her "leader" in every way.

There is certainly precedence in the dance for such descriptions of male-centrism. The egotism extends to the actual moves of the dance such as *molinetes*, in which the man rotates in place, while leading the woman to walk in circles around him. The opposing version of this move is when the male physically holds the woman in place while he in turn circles around her. Although the female is now the center of attention, her inability to move might make this appear as a possessive display of ownership.

This notion of domination has surfaced amongst PATS dancers, who wish to dissolve any notion that a lead-follow relationship is similar to a "master-slave" relationship (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., March 2005). However, Taylor's argument centers more on possession and control, commenting that "She is never allowed…to escape the man's embrace," and is "totally overpowered by the male." This language is reminiscent of one of the responses to Regaspi's Tango-L posting, by Argentine Sergio Suppa, who is now a regional dancer in Erie, Pennsylvania, which reads:

> To remove the attached feminine-masculine implication would remove a very important part of what tango is about and finally would destroy it.

In describing these implications, he comments:

> The man looks like…the stallion exhibiting all its muscles. The woman, receptive, attentive, interested, cuddly, loving, understanding, pretending resistance for a while and finally surrendering.

Placed within the Pittsburgh context, this emphasis on the female's feigned "resistance" and "surrendering" are reminiscent of the Pittsburgh *milonga* location, Nooners, in which the bathroom doors are labeled "Hunters" and "Hunted." Rather than simply disclosing conceptions about gender roles, there is an underlying theme of female submission before the male. Just as in *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, the tango symbolizes a chase or hunt on the part of the male to "tame" his partner. In Nooner's, Pittsburgh dancers found a location which supported these ideas of a predator-prey relationship, which strengthened Nooner's position as an "authentic" dance space.

While scholars often challenge the idea of the female as subordinate to male power, many retain this idea of a struggle. Savigliano likens the tango to a chess match between equal contenders. Instead of being a display of dominance of one partner over the other, the tango is a game between a "fatal man" and a *femme fatale*, the object of which is seduction. The challenge for each participant lies in keeping their impulses under control, while dancing so provocatively with one another. Yet the tango is foremost a measure of power between the passionate nature of the male and the "untamed" spirit of the female (Savigliano, 110).

Pittsburgh dancers tend to accept this idea of a struggle between equal partners. As Pittsburgh dancers commented in the February 2002 workshops with Stermitz and Hauk, much in the tango—the music, the embrace and the manner of walking—can be characterized in terms of tension. Musically, tension occurs between the various instruments, which may play several themes at the same time. Tension also occurs between each beat in the piece. Each musical moment can be interpreted as driving to the next beat; often the last note of each phrase will end on the first beat of each measure. The tango embrace further typifies these notions of tension, as each dancer exerts matching forward pressure upon his or her partner, by leaning forward

slightly so that he or she is standing upon the balls of the feet. In lessons, Regaspi often comments that the forward intention is what defines the dance. It is this equality of forward exertion that helps make each partner an equal contestant in the dance. While onlookers and beginning dancers may imagine the male to advance as the women helplessly retreats, the more experienced follows are easily noticeable by the greater amount of energy that they exert within the dance.

Collier notes that the female tango dancer is actually more independent than dancers of other European forms, as she is not called on to perform any extraneous gestures such as turns. He argues that these gestures in other dances, such as the waltz, are in fact just another way for the male to mandate the way the female is to perform (Collier, 176). In tango, if the female does not wish to perform a certain move that the male has led, she can simply choose not to respond. The dance will continue unabated. Collier further comments that the size of the steps also indicate female liberation. When either partner takes a step, that spot is immediately filled by the other partner's foot, which results in a delicate intertwining of legs. Richard Martin writes:

> The intervention of the woman's leg into the man's stride (especially in any culture prizing phallic masculinity) is a bold departure from the pattern of male determinations of all mobility (Collier, 178).

Pittsburgh dancers emphasize that many of the movements in the dance are distinctly feminine. In a workshop on how Alexander Technique can apply to the tango in May 2004, instructor Carolyn Johnston asserted that the basic tango walk is inherently feminine both for the male and female. The knee bends, the hip spirals inward, and the leg bends, almost brushing against the opposite thigh. As observed by the various Pittsburgh dancers, this manner of walking is in fact, quite feminine. However, coupled with Stermitz's masculine chest, it becomes evident that both male and female take on distinguishing traits of the other gender. Collectively, these actions of

walking, the forward embrace, the chest, and the placement of the foot all illustrate an equal relationship between the sexes.

While certain dance maneuvers signify equality, others differentiate ideas of femininity and masculinity. For example, in the tango, the female must keep her legs close together at all times. The male, who walks with feet shoulder-width apart, may brush the inside of the female's thighs as he strides forward, but this can only be done if her legs remain touching and if he performs the feminine spiral. These positions for male and female suggest appropriate ways of carrying one's body. Another gesture, quite characteristic for the follow, is the cross, or the passing of the left leg in front of the right. As suggested by several Pittsburgh teachers, the higher up the thighs cross, the more feminine the movement. The cross is a common move for follows and may occur at various times throughout a dance. Through enacting these movements, Regaspi comments that learning tango:

> Was the first time I felt like I could be feminine…it just was a way of moving that I had never really moved before…. Before, during the feminist movement of the 1970s, which is what I grew up with, hiding one's femininity was normal (Trinidad Regaspi, pers. comm., June 2004).

Through movement, tango provides dancers with an alternate means of self-expression, as well as new and socially acceptable ways of envisioning gender.

While debate continues about how best to approach male-female relationships in the dance, either as a dialogue between dancers or as a dominant-passive connection, both PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros teachers refer to the former as an American construction of gender, and the latter as an Argentine construction of gender. Pittsburgh dancers envision American gender roles in the tango to be between equals, communicating with one another proportionately in a non-verbal conversation. Conversely, dancers determine that Argentine gender roles express that same conversation between two dominants, in which the male dancer ultimately prevails in the

direction and manner of the dialogue. The dilemma that Pittsburgh teachers face is maintaining authenticity in physical dance expression, yet challenging these supposed Argentine ideas about gender dominance.

4. CONCLUSION

Performing Argentine tango in Pittsburgh has inspired discourses about authenticity in relation to venue, style, music, and the body. Pittsburgh dancers often compare their conclusions about authentic performance in contrast with the rival group, whether the Pittsburgh Tangeuros or PATS. However, their discourse concerning these issues is often duplicated in both groups. This is especially true regarding musical appropriateness of dance music between PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros teachers, Pionati and Regaspi. Both contrast their understandings with how they perceive the other to comprehend authentic Argentine musical choices, yet both understandings in reality are quite similar.

Pittsburgh dancers attempt to find authenticity in their action in relation to a perceived historic Argentine past. Often Pittsburgh Tangueros are concerned with recreating the intent of Argentine dancers, for example, dancing "for fun," or dancing in open-embrace because that is how the Argentine would prefer to dance if the available space permitted. PATS members desire to recreate the physical moves, rather than presuming to know the intent of historic Argentine dancers. PATS emphasis is on improving technique, which they have greater opportunity to learn from their copious contact with non-Pittsburgh dancers.

However, as both PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros teachers are not Argentine, their reflections on authenticity are always based upon the recreation of a culture that will essentially always be an "other." While most members of PATS and the Pittsburgh Tangueros are from the United States or Europe, only five Argentines are members of the Pittsburgh Argentine tango

community. Most of these Argentine dancers have had some tango training in Argentina, but the majority of their tango involvement has occurred in the United States as they seek to forge a connection with their home country. Whereas most Pittsburgh dancers feel pressured to choose between PATS and the Pittsburgh Tangueros, most members of the community allow Argentine dancers the freedom to move within both groups equally as tango "experts."

Perhaps because of the scarcity of Argentine dancers, many Pittsburgh dancers convey this "expert" status on all Latin Americans in Pittsburgh, whether they originally come from the European mainland or the Americas. For example, most Pittsburgh dancers imagine Pittsbugh Tanguero teacher João Pedro Sousa to be Argentine, though he is actually from Portugal. On occasion, even those who are aware that Sousa is Portuguese propagate the myth that he is Argentine when travelling outside Pittsburgh. By claiming that Pittsburgh has an "authentic" Argentine teacher, they attempt to give the Pittsburgh dancing scene more credibility. Because Sousa has a Latin accent, appearance, and a "passionate" style of dancing, many Pittsburgh dancers are willing to believe that Sousa's dancing has captured the "Argentine essence" of tango.

Similarly, Pittsburgh dancers invest the Tango Café as "neutral ground" for both communities, because it is a venue owned by an Argentine family. While regular dancing does not occur there anymore due to insufficient funding, the Tango Café serves as a site in which dancers may convene and learn more about Argentina in various ways. Visitors may purchase Argentine crafts, drinks, and desserts. Additionally, on various weekdays, the Tango Café offers activities such as beginning Spanish classes and live traditional Argentine music.

Through their interactions at the Tango Café and with Argentine people in Pittsburgh, PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros members learn about Argentine culture, and make contrasts

with their own cultures. Pionati remarks that through his interactions with Argentines in Pittsburgh, he has learned that:

> It's a different culture. [Tango] is from a different culture. Why do Americans dance tango? Because we can. Even though I've been dancing for ten and a half years, I feel that I've only been doing tango for possibly five at the most, because it took about five years [for me] just to understand body movement and dance (Francesco Pionati, pers. comm., July 2004).

Through the tango, PATS and Pittsburgh Tangueros dancers learn to negotiate their own identity in a strategically anti-essentialist way, within the context of Argentine identity. In their search for an authentic Argentine tango, Pittsburgh dancers seek a single essence of tango that can only exist within individual interpretations. Dancers choose these interpretations over years of learning tango, through their interactions with media, literature, and other dancers. Thus, discourses about authenticity in Pittsburgh are an evolving process, as dancers create their own understandings of the Argentine tango.

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