
TRANSCULTURAL TANGO: AN
ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A DANCE
COMMUNITY IN THE EAST
MIDLANDS

JANE D. HOLGATE

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY, LEICESTER

NOVEMBER 2015

THIS THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the practice of an Argentine Tango dance community in the East Midlands, England. It is an ethnographic study whose objectives are to investigate this instance of a local transcultural dance practice in order to learn about participants' motivations; their experience of and identification with Argentine Tango; and the meanings produced in the process of their participation. As social dancer, teacher and insider researcher, I employ embodiment as a key methodological strategy in order to engage with and share the experience of dancing with participants; to gain sensory understanding and bodily knowledge of the practice; and in the process to gain access to further avenues of meaning-making amongst participants.

The study considers questions arising directly from my teaching role to do with the transmission and reproduction of the dance, authenticity, the production of meaning, the construction and performance of identity and the imaginative construction of post-modern cultural practices. The nature of space and place is considered, as is Turner's distinction between liminoid and liminal activity with regard to ritual and *communitas* in relation to Argentine Tango. Alongside participant discussions, I explore various perspectives on the cosmopolitan appropriation and exoticisation of Argentine Tango; the diffusion, re-territorialisation and globalisation of Argentine Tango since the late 1980s.

Data was produced using ethnographic tools, including video recording, shared reviewing and feedback from participants. The thesis analyses findings to show how participants project narratives of the imagination into their dancing, thereby providing frameworks of meaning which crucially underpin and sustain this practice. These imagined narratives are compared to journeys, both literal and of the imagination, enabling the creative construction of new identities, the exploration of self in relation to others and an escape from everyday life in postmodernity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I wish to offer my heart-felt thanks for the willing co-operation and enthusiasm of the participants of the Leicester and Market Harborough Tango groups. Apart from those participants who had published work to which I have referred, I do not name them individually but have replaced their real names with pseudonyms for the purpose of confidentiality and in order to preserve identity. Their contribution and participation has been nonetheless important despite its anonymity, as this study would have been impossible without them.

I am sincerely grateful to my supervisors Professor Theresa J. Buckland , Simon Featherstone and Professor Ramsay Burt for their experience, understanding, painstaking assistance and constant encouragement. However, without the endless patience, love and reassurance of my family, this thesis would not have come to fruition: I would not have made it to the end.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE.....	8
THE CONTEXT OF STUDY	8
CHAPTER 1: GENRE AND CONTEXT	16
HISTORY AND ORIGINS.....	16
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY	21
DIFFERING GENRES: SOCIAL DANCE, PERFORMANCE AND BALLROOM TANGO.....	22
EAST MIDLANDS ETHNOGRAPHY	27
AUTHENTICITY AND OTHER QUESTIONS.....	29
CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE ON ARGENTINE TANGO	32
TANGO IN BUENOS AIRES: AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIES	34
TANGO AND RACE.....	37
TANGO AND THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER AND EXPERIMENTAL IDENTITIES.....	40
TANGO AND THE BODY	42
POST MODERN TANGO: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE 21ST CENTURY	43
TRANSCULTURATION AND THE GLOBALISATION OF TANGO	46
OTHER DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY	50
RESEARCH ON SOCIAL DANCING	51
CHAPTER 3: FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK.....	56
ETHNOGRAPHY AT HOME.....	56
A GROUP WITH NO INSIDERS: THE EMIC/ETIC DISTINCTION	58
FINDING THE FIELD OF RESEARCH.....	60
RESEARCHER DISTANCE; REFLEXIVITY; OBJECTIVITY	62
ACCESS TO THE FIELD AND PRACTICAL TIMESCALE	64
METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION, DOCUMENTATION AND STORAGE	67
EMBODIED PRACTICE AS RESEARCH STRATEGY	69
DANCE NOTATION AND VIDEO RECORDING.....	73
RESEARCHER RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSPECTIVES	76

CHAPTER 4: THE VISUAL METHODOLOGY.....	79
RE-ASSESSING THE RESEARCH TOOLS: READDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	79
THE PURPOSE OF MAKING VISUAL RECORDINGS	79
SENSIBLE REFERENTS AND SYMBOLIC IMAGES	82
SEEING THE INVISIBLE.....	85
PRACTICAL, ETHICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF VIDEO-RECORDING	89
ETHICAL ISSUES IN AN IMAGE-MAKING CULTURE: FIRST RECORDINGS	91
FIXED TRIPOD FILMING	93
CAMERA INTERACTION.....	95
WATCHING THE DANCERS BEING WATCHED	96
DANCER’S RECORDINGS	98
THE ATTRIBUTION OF MEANING DEPENDENT ON CONTEXT	99
PLAYBACK SESSIONS	101
ELICITING RESPONSES TO THE VIDEO MATERIAL	103
TRANSCRIPTION.....	105
A SPIRAL OF RESEARCH	106
CHAPTER 5: THE EAST MIDLANDS EMBRACES ARGENTINE TANGO	108
A TRAGIC QUALITY: THE EXOTIC ESSENCE OF ARGENTINE TANGO.....	108
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: PERCEPTIONS OF INTIMACY	113
EAST MIDLANDS TANGO: LOOKING AT THE DANCE WE DO.....	115
INSIDE OUT: ZOOMING IN ON THE DANCE	118
INTIMATE EMBRACES.....	120
TANGO MOMENTS.....	121
EAST MIDLANDS EMBRACES BUENOS AIRES: RELIVING A GOLDEN AGE OF TANGO	123
INVOKING BUENOS AIRES IN SIGNS AND SYMBOLS.....	125
THE PURPOSES OF AUTHENTICITY.....	127
IMAGINARY CONNECTIONS: ROLE PLAY AND FANTASY	129
CHAPTER 6: IN THE SPACE OF A DANCE	133
VIRTUAL SPACE AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE TANGO COMMUNITY.....	134
MATERIAL PLACE AND RITUAL SPACE	136
LIMINOID SPACE: WORK, PLAY AND A BREAK FROM THE EVERYDAY	141
COMMUNITAS AND TANGO ECSTASY	144
REGIMES OF PLEASURE AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF DESIRE	146
SPACES WITHIN THE DANCE: A STEP TOO FAR.....	149

A SPACE OF CONSUMPTION: CHEEK BY JOWEL WITH COMMODIFICATION	152
PERFORMANCE SPACE: CONSTRUCTING SELF AND IDENTITY ON THE DANCE FLOOR	154
PLAYFULNESS AND THE SPACE OF THE 'OTHER'.....	161
CHAPTER 7 BORDER CROSSINGS AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF MEANING	163
LOCAL ENGAGEMENTS AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES.....	163
AUTO-EXOTICISATION AND REPRESENTATION.....	164
THE MEANS OF TRANSLATION: NOMADIC TANGO AND TRANSCULTURATION	167
MASS MEDIA AND GLOBAL FLOWS	169
THE LINEAGE OF DANCE TEACHERS	173
TANGO TOURISM AND DISILLUSION.....	175
VOICES FROM BUENOS AIRES.....	178
RITUAL, PASSION AND PLAY: TRANSFORMATIONS OF UNDERSTANDING IN ATHENS	180
DISCOURSES OF MEANING IN THE EAST MIDLANDS	182
THE RITUAL EMBRACE: SYMBOLIC CONTENT AND BORDER CROSSINGS	184
EXCLUSION AND COMPETENCE	188
IMAGINED CROSSINGS: CONJURING MYTHOLOGICAL SPACE WITH MARKS OF AUTHENTICITY.....	190
TRANSFORMATIONAL ANXIETY.....	193
DANCING THE SAME OLD TUNE: OLD COSMOPOLITANISM OR NEW CONNECTIONS?.....	195
RESPONDING TO SAVIGLIANO'S SENSE OF DISQUIET.....	200
CHAPTER 8: REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	202
THE HAUNTING REFRAIN OF AUTHENTICITY.....	202
IMAGINED COMMUNITIES AND THE WORK OF THE IMAGINATION	204
CONCLUSION: MEETING MY OBJECTIVES	210
POPPY'S STORY.....	212
REFERENCES	217
INTERNET REFERENCES	232
FILMS	233
SHOWS.....	234
GLOSSARY	235
APPENDIX 1.....	239
ARGENTINE TANGO RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE	239
APPENDIX 2.....	242

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	242
APPENDIX 3.....	243
INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION DATES AND PSEUDONYMS OF PARTICIPANTS	243
APPENDIX 4 STATISTICAL INFORMATION.....	245
STATISTICAL INFORMATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRE, QUESTIONS 1-6.....	245
APPENDIX 5.....	246
VIDEO CLIPS USED FOR PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SESSIONS.....	246

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

THE CONTEXT OF STUDY

This ethnographic study is specifically about Argentine Tango as a genre of social, as opposed to performance dance. It is focused on a community of social dancers and their practice at two venues in the East Midlands of England where Argentine Tango is danced socially on a regular basis. It came about as a result of my involvement as a social dancer and teacher in this community. In the East Midlands the community of dancers developed purely as a result of dancing together, rather than for other reasons and consisted of a range of adults living in the East Midlands, with different jobs and widely differing abilities and experiences as dancers.

The study focuses on two contexts in which Argentine Tango is regularly danced, one in Leicester and the other in Market Harborough. Situated almost exactly 100 miles north of London, Leicester is a multi-cultural city, with two universities, in the process of extensive redevelopment and regeneration (*Connecting Leicester*, Economic Action Plan 2012-2020) but with pockets of social and economic deprivation. By contrast, Market Harborough, about 15 miles south of Leicester is a traditionally picturesque and affluent English Market Town, with a floodlit church and quaint school house in the main street, surrounded by gently rolling countryside, and with a direct commuter link to central London at just over one hour away.

The research was prompted by practical questions as a result of my involvement as a dancer. These questions were, furthermore, set against an interest which arose several years previously in 1997 whilst dancing Salsa, also in Leicester, in the phenomenon of that distinctly exotic dance practice becoming increasingly popular in Britain. It occurred during a period in which an increasing number of people were engaging in what has become known as 'World Dance': social dances from exotic places, for example, Salsa, Bacchata, Meringue, Flamenco, Bollywood or Bhangra, and Bellydancing, which have become part of the urban scene in larger cities.

Since the late 1990s Salsa, for example, has ceased to be unusual, just as other kinds of so-called exotic dance are becoming increasingly embedded into British social life. Jonathan Skinner describes it as:

. . . a hot saucy mix of Cuban song and Puerto Rican percussion that spilled out of New York and spread through Latin America before becoming established as a transnational music and dance genre throughout America, Europe, Africa and Japan in the 1980s (2007, p. 486).

However, as Juliet McMains explains:

Both the salsa dance community and the academic discipline of dance studies were in the very early stages of drastic transformation in the late 1990s. Over the next several years, salsa dance, which had previously been shared informally in local communities, would become the center of a multimillion dollar, international industry (McMains, 2015, p.3).

Heike Wieschiolek (2003) also remarks on the striking increase of Latin music and dance all over the world:

in discos, on the radio, in TV commercials, as background music in shops and bars, in concert venues or on the internet . . . from the songs of top earners like Ricky Martin or Jennifer Lopez . . . to a multitude of salsa, meringue and bachata bands from the Caribbean, the US, Latin America, Africa or Europe (p.119).

Thus at that point in the early 1990s, I would find myself standing at the edge of a dance floor, listening to the loud and joyous, syncopated sounds of a Latin American music, wondering why I had not heard of it before. I loved the licence provided by Salsa, to dance in an openly sexy and very un-English¹ way, with partners I did not know. I was intrigued by the atmosphere which seemed to shut out everyday life and effectively transport the entire body of people inside the club to a different world of which few of us had any experience in reality. It was an eye-opening phenomenon which started me thinking about exactly what, and how it was happening, some years before I had even encountered Argentine Tango.

My first physical encounter with Argentine Tango took place in 2002 during a Salsa Congress run by Club Cubana at Pontin's Brean Sands Holiday Camp in Somerset. Here, Argentinian Eduardo Bozzo and his partner, Misha gave a brief but breath-taking demonstration of the dance which inspired my own Tango journey. It was the drama, the deep impression of

¹See Buckland for discussion on how the social climate and the parameters of class and sensuality were instrumental in determining the acceptance of dance at key points.

intimacy and passion which the couple exuded and, above all, the incredible dexterity of their legs which made me decide, at that moment, that I had to learn to tango.

Immediately after that weekend I tracked down the Argentine Tango groups in Leicester and Market Harborough and soon became a regular at both. Very quickly the same questions presented themselves to me: about the exotic nature of the dance and how, in dancing, participants changed their focus, allowing themselves to be transported to a different, imagined place. This raised further questions about the role of imagination in the creation of community and culture, as well as in the performance of identity, as areas of interest in my research.

Likewise the notion of authenticity emerged as a result of the way in which both Salsa and Tango teachers would frequently refer to a geographical place of origin and to specific practices associated with the dance and place in question. Other questions were raised by the disparity of understandings and interests amongst participants supposedly engaged in the same dance; minor conflicts or rivalries arising within the groups suggested the presence of various different interpretations and beliefs about the practice.

It is evident from watching and participating in various social dance groups, that a teacher or dance leader with their own concept of what is authentic or right, will openly compare it with, and even deride the practice of another teacher in the area doing the same kind of dance, on a tacit premise of having a superior claim to authenticity. One Leicester (born and bred) Salsa teacher, Miguel, for example, was able to assert a certain exotic authenticity by virtue of his Spanish mother, Spanish name and the fact that he spoke fluent Spanish. In addition he had worked in Cuba where he had learned how to dance the particular Cuban style of Salsa which he began to teach on his return to Leicester. His credentials of authenticity were therefore high. Different teachers undoubtedly attract and hold on to different followers, partly as a result of personality or manner, their ability as dancers and/or teachers but also, crudely, because of other markers of cultural capital which they hold, as in the case of Miguel above.

After several years of learning Tango, by the end of 2006 I had occasionally become involved in the teaching of Tango at Market Harborough. Consequently, in 2007, coinciding roughly with the retirement of the original founders of that group, my practical interests crystallised themselves into the subject matter of this research. By undertaking this ethnographic study I

hoped at least to be able to develop my own understanding and explore potential answers to my questions.

Whilst a visit to Buenos Aires would have been interesting, the focus of this study remains on a specifically transcultural and local context. Before starting my research I was an ordinary member of these two Argentine Tango groups and not having visited Buenos Aires placed me in the same position as almost all of the other participants. This I view as an advantage: what I set out to explore applied as much to myself as to the other members of the groups. At the same time, my prior dancing experience and my later role as a co-organiser and teacher in Market Harborough provided me with differing perspectives from which to view the practice and thus to enable this field of research to be conceived.

In order to contextualize the practice of this community of dancers, I am therefore concerned to investigate the broader contemporary scene in which the study is situated and the extent to which participants' identities are constructed, in relation to globalization, tourism and the impact of technology and communications. By focusing on these local tango groups in the East Midlands, and their perspectives and perceptions of what is occurring within them, I intend to elucidate an understanding of this tango community and identity with reference to the twenty-first century context .

The use of the word 'transcultural' in the title thus describes a practice which is often understood as if it has been uprooted from a particular place and cultural context and transported to a different and unconnected location where it is subsequently articulated by different and unconnected people. The nature of such transculturation is elaborated in the course of the thesis in the light of participant data and work by other researchers.

Beyond the contextualisation of this study which I have outlined above, the remainder of this introduction sets out the general themes and direction of the succeeding chapters. Chapter 1 thus identifies Argentine Tango as opposed to other forms of Tango and situates the practice of Argentine Tango in the English East Midlands against a broader, more global picture, with some reference to the historical and geographical roots and development of Tango. I outline the development of Argentine Tango in relation to the geographical location of Buenos Aires and Argentina with the purpose of locating the practice in relation to that of the Tango dancing participants of the East Midlands. The aim is not primarily an interest in either the geography or history *per se*: nor do I provide a particularly detailed description of the contemporary

Tango scene in Buenos Aires, except insofar as it is of significance with regard to the participants of the East Midlands. In the process, however, I refer widely to other work with a specific interest in the geographical, historical and socio-political development of Tango.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature relating particularly to the practice of Argentine Tango both inside and outside of Buenos Aires. In particular, the work of Marta Savigliano (1995) features prominently as an example of reflexive ethnography with historical contextualisation. Likewise Julie Taylor's (1998) auto-ethnographic account provides an insider view of tango at a particular point in recent Argentine history. The literature review includes work addressing the historical background and context of Argentine Tango². There are also ethnographic works relating to social dances other than Argentine Tango³ and selections edited by Helen Thomas (1993, 1997) and Skinner (2007) provide examples of studies based on other dancing communities, highlighting similar conceptual and thematic areas of interest to my own: authenticity, transmission, meaning, identity, representation, appropriation and globalisation. In addition the review includes literature relating to the global spread and appropriation of Argentine Tango in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries⁴ against the postmodern landscapes described by Arjun Appadurai (2002), Lash and Urry (1990) and Tomlinson (1999). I refer to works relating to the body and identity; leisure, tourism and postmodernism; globalisation, cosmopolitanism and postmodernity in connection with the continuing worldwide interest in Argentine Tango, the fascination which it arouses and the following it attracts.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodology of the thesis, focusing on twenty-first century ethnography and associated issues. I refer to work on recent dance ethnography which has informed the theoretical issues relevant to my own methodology and fieldwork. I discuss methods of data collection and documentation; dance notation and video recording; the

2 For example by Cooper et al. (1995), Denniston (2007), Thompson, R.F. (2005) and articles by Pellarolo (2008), Feldman (2006), Steingress (1998) and Washabaugh (1998).

3 Including Daniel (1995), Bosse (2007), Browning (1999), Buckland (1999), O' Connor (1997), and Foley (2001).

4 Pelinski (2000), Podalsky (2002), Petridou (2009), Verdicchia (2009), Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher (2009).

emic/etic distinctions within a group with no insiders; finding and gaining access to the field of research; researcher distance: epistemology and objectivity; researcher reflexivity and responsibility; representation and researcher perspectives. The chapter also introduces details of the local context of the study, describing the venues and pattern of events; the timescale for the research phases and details regarding the questionnaires which were distributed and interviews which were conducted.

Chapter 4 examines the phase of visual ethnography which evolved and was responsible for producing the most useful and illuminating new material from participants. The chapter deals with the development of the filming rationale and strategy; the purpose of, and justification for producing visual data; the evidence of visual referents and symbolic images and the objective of accessing invisible knowledge. It covers the practical, ethical and technical aspects of video-recording; the process and evolution of the methodology; the relationship and camera interaction with dancers, including their experience of being watched; making the invisible visible; and the editing and selection of clips to be viewed. I explain the process of setting up playback sessions; the filming and the attribution, or production of meaning. Apart from dealing with the processes above, I further evaluate the range and quality of data produced and re-consider the overall methodology.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the ethnographic data and interpretations from different perspectives. Chapter 5, 'The East Midlands Embrace', uses recorded data elicited from audio-interviews and visual feedback sessions in order to explore the initial interest in and appeal of Argentine Tango to participants; their perceptions of the defining characteristics of the dance; the distinction between being inside and outside the dance; intimacy; addiction; authenticity and participants' experiences of what are described as tango 'moments'. In general the chapter explores the identification of participants with Argentine Tango with regard to their personal experiences of dancing and the way in which they shared and described these in the course of watching the video material with me.

Chapter 6, 'In the Space of a Dance', looks at the various spaces which are opened up in the course of a dance, including the virtual, imagined space created and populated by the Tango Community; the physical place of the dance floor and the codified rules and behaviour associated with its ritualised use as a space of performance and self-enactment. It considers the symbolic, physical spaces of the dance vocabulary of Argentine Tango: the invasions of legs

between legs which occur in the emblematic figures of *ganchos*⁵, *entradas*, *sacadas* (see glossary); the arresting and controlling moves of *mordidas* or *paradas*; and the teasing or provocative resistances of *voleos* and *adornos* in response.

I address the relationship of local practice with reference to the real and imagined geographical spaces of Buenos Aires and Argentina: an emerging awareness of the role of the imagination, enabling participants to invent or create imaginative or mythological spaces in which to step out of everyday experience and engage in creative and artistic activity. This chapter also considers post-modern understandings of tourism, leisure, pleasure and play in the light of work by Victor Turner (1969), John Urry (1990) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990). I draw on Urry regarding consumption and leisure and thus consider the dance as a space of commodification. Finally, and probably most importantly, this chapter outlines the imaginaries of participants from the recorded data and draws out the significance and local meanings of Argentine Tango from these narratives.

In Chapter 7, 'Border crossings and transformations of meaning', I examine the translation and transculturation of Argentine Tango around the world as an effect of globalisation, electronic technology and the media. The propensity for tango to cross borders and reterritorialise outside of Argentina is discussed in the light of various works with similar interests, including Verdicchia (2009), Pelinski (2000), Podalsky (2002), Petridou (2009), Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher (2009) and, once again, Savigliano (1995). Commodification and cosmopolitanism emerge as themes from the general discussion of globalisation and exoticisation, leading to the related themes of auto-exoticisation, representation and appropriation.

In chapter 8 my Tango journey comes full circle to ask whether my objectives were met and how effectively the research questions were answered. Understanding the power and reach of the notion of authenticity was significant from the start, as it seemed crucial in order to fulfil my teaching role. The chapter therefore reconsiders the themes of transmission, reproduction and authenticity, having had the benefit of participants' diverse perspectives and their rich and elucidating insights to inform answers to my original questions. Finally, in considering a piece

⁵ See glossary for definitions of Spanish terms relating to the practice of Argentine Tango.

of creative writing by one participant, I consider the role of the imagination in the creation of cultural or mythological spaces and practices, as well as in the performance of identity.

CHAPTER 1: GENRE AND CONTEXT

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

Tango is not only dance, music and poetry but it is also a knowledge of its history; a narrative of its origins, its heroes, its dramas and its places. The historiography of tango reaffirms tango as a national culture. It tells the story of the immigration, of the brothels, of the misery of the south of Buenos Aires and of their ambivalent heroes (Barrionuevo Anzaldi's page on University of Hamburg website).

Historically the dance known as 'Argentine Tango' originated from Buenos Aires in the Rio del Plata region of Argentina and Montevideo in Uruguay towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. It is a dance famed for its intimacy, erotic intensity and dramatic intertwining legwork between the two partners. Frequently associated with sex and violence, it has become a symbol of Argentine national identity. What are now considered to be two distinctive genres, of social and of performance dance, evolved as a direct result of the social and cultural mixing of many different immigrant and indigeneous people. In Buenos Aires, their diverse musical and dancing traditions at a specific point in the history of Argentina.

In order to develop and Europeanise Argentina, a dedicated governmental campaign instigated a massive wave of immigration from many European countries to provide the necessary work force. The government was keen to change and 'improve' the demographic constitution of Argentina, which involved a deliberate process of Europeanising, refining and whitening the population: 'the challenge was to purify the racially irrational and lazy criolla population of América Latina,' (Savigliano, 1995, p.24). Savigliano also cites Sarmiento writing of the benefits of the outcome of this proposed demographic and racial shift:

[T]here will be no advantage comparable to that gained by the extinction of the savage tribes . . . It may be very unjust to exterminate savages, suffocate rising civilizations, conquer peoples who are in possession of a privileged piece of land. But thanks to this injustice, America, instead of remaining abandoned to the savages, incapable of progress, is today occupied by the Caucasian race – the most perfect, the most intelligent, the most beautiful and most progressive of those that people the earth (Sarmiento, 1882 (cited in Fernández Retamar 1989, pp.23-24) in Savigliano (1995, p.24).

Thus the population of Argentina was increased massively by immigrants, whose labour brought about an enormous improvement in productivity and consequently, of the wealth and prosperity of the country by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Between 1869 . . . and 1914, the population of the country multiplied more than six times (from roughly 1,143,000 to 7,885,000 inhabitants) and more than 3 million immigrants, mostly from Italy and Spain, entered its borders. . . . In terms of income per capita, by the 1920s the country was positioned among the most privileged in the world, the state provided free education, and the population's social mobility was stunning (Savigliano, p.22).

Such massive immigration, particularly to the port of Buenos Aires in Argentina from Europe, including, Italy, Spain, Germany and Eastern Europe provided a rich variety of styles of music and dance which came into contact with black and *criollo* Afro-Argentine music and dance styles already in Argentina in the early nineteenth century. From the Cuban-influenced *Habanero* and the Afro-Argentine *Candombe* dances evolved a dance known as *Milonga*, and from this the Tango later developed.

There is considerable debate as to the origin of the name *Tango* (see discussion of Thompson and Poosson in Chapter 2) although Collier et al. (1995, p.42) offer an account of the use of the name in Buenos Aires and South America and also Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century to denote dances of black origin from Latin America: in particular the Habanera was known as Tango-Andaluz. Thus the dance now known as Tango developed from a fusion of styles, including a parodying of black *Candombe* dances by the *compadritos* who then incorporated their improvisations into what became the *Milonga*. Alongside the influence of a variety of musicians and instruments, including flute, violin, harp, guitars, clarinets and, of course, the iconic *bandóneon* introduced by German immigrants, the rhythms and movements of *Tango* gradually evolved from the *Milonga* to a couple dance which also incorporates elements of older European-style dances such as the waltz and mazurka.

The style of the partner dance now known as Argentine Tango has come to be recognised for its intensely intimate attitude and, particularly, the interactive leg-moments of the partners. Its origins are generally associated with the immigrants and working-class *porteños* who lived near to and frequented the port of Buenos Aires, the *arrabales* or slum areas and brothels of the city. Recounting the history of the social dance in contrast to the story told in numerous stage shows, Beatriz Dujovne (2011) however disputes the commonly held belief or 'myth' as she describes it, that Tango was exclusively danced in brothels by the lower-classes and

furthermore, that it became the subject of early prohibition. Despite its lowly origins, she claims that it nevertheless became popular amongst people throughout the middle and upper classes of Buenos Aires, as evidenced by the number of documented sales of music recording and sheet music, in particular to the middle classes, producing an 'early commercial boom' in Argentina' (p.6). Dujovne also cites documentary evidence from newspapers and city records that Tangos were both played and danced in respectable venues in Buenos Aires in the first decade of the twentieth century, well before Tango mania had taken hold in sophisticated circles in Europe.

After attracting the interest of European colonizers in the early twentieth century, certain more enterprising and wealthy Argentinians introduced Argentine Tango, first to Paris and London and other major European cities¹; then later to North America and, perhaps surprisingly, to Japan after 1913.

In order to become socially acceptable to the European upper-classes a process of refinement took place after 1913 in which traces of Argentine Tango's mixed racial, ethnic and working-class roots were softened and erased in favour of a more acceptable and fashionable style of dancing, with less physical contact and a more upright posture, in which the body moves more as a cohesive unit, with straighter legs and longer lines than was the case with early Argentine Tango.

Although glamorized "instinct" was desirable on the stage in order to suit the colonizer's taste for the exotic, tango's wild passion required taming to fit the shy bodies of the bourgeois commoners. The dance masters simplified the improvised characteristics of the tango into a morally acceptable and physically affordable set sequence of steps (Savigliano, 1995, p. 122).

Argentine Tango is not the only dance which has been stylised, standardised and transformed by dancing institutions and dance establishments in order to accommodate the abilities and sensibilities of upper-class dancing audiences. Like the famous dance-teaching couple, Irene and Vernon Castle in America, 'English dance-masters . . . codified dance styles in manuals,'

¹ See Artemis Cooper on "Tangomania in Europe and North America 1913-1914" pp.67-99 in Collier *et al.* (1995) and Buckland (2011) pp.163-66 on "Tangomania" for further discussion of the impact and reception of Tango in different sections of society and different countries, as well as the ways in which it was consequently transformed and refined.

and 'Tango, after hard debates, was incorporated into the category of "modern" (as opposed to "latin") dancing,' (Savigliano, p.130).

Whilst certain young, upper class Argentine males, the *niños bien*, had previously amused themselves with dalliances into the lower-class world of Tango, it was not until Tango's acceptance in Europe signalled a newly acquired respectability and sophistication, that it became popular back in Argentina.

The acceptance of the tango in Europe affected the class and moral identification of the tango in its local setting . . . Foreign/superior recognition empowered the tango – which had been a locally denigrated cultural expression – and made it a competitive marker of national identity (Savigliano, p. 138).

In the light of its European and North American refinement, Tango was consequently rendered more acceptable amongst the Argentine upper classes who had previously regarded it as an embarrassment to the Argentinian establishment, representing its displaced and disreputable underclasses. Cultural theorist and dance scholar, Jane Desmond (1997) explains that:

The history of tango . . . traces the development of movement styles from the dockside neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires to the salons of Paris before returning, newly "respectable," from across the Atlantic to the drawing rooms of the upper-class portions of the Argentine population during the first decades of the twentieth century (p.39).

Transgressions or migrations of social and cultural practices across social and national boundaries and over time thus produce transformations in style and meaning, which are evident as much in the attitudes and attributions of meaning by the participants, as by the embodied practice and stylistic changes in steps, figures and posture.

During the 'Golden Age' from around 1935 until the 1950s, Tango became extremely popular in Buenos Aires, not just amongst the elite and middle classes who were now happy to embrace it, but particularly, during the growth and optimism of the Peronista regime, as an expression of working class culture:

Since Peronism was an explicit critique on bourgeois culture and fine arts, tango fitted very well into this new cultural environment. Since the cultural base of tango was . . . the political base of Peronism, tango turned into a well defined working class culture (Barrionuevo Anzaldi, 2012, p.6).

However Tango went significantly out of practice for several decades between 1955 and the early 1980s partly for political reasons, but also partly as a result of the greater influence of

western music and television on the listening tastes of the middle classes. However a subsequent, global wave of Tango spread out as a result of the developing film and music industries and, following the return of democracy to Argentina in the 1980s, mass media, globalisation and mass tourism.

Much has been written, particularly in Spanish², about the history and development, and other aspects of Tango in Argentina and of its subsequent development and spread across the globe in the early 20th century. This process, along with a later, second development of Tango in the 1980s following the dictatorships have also been extensively documented in English.³ These studies provide extensive background information about the social, political and economic contexts in which Tango appears; dates and places of events; fashions and developments within the style of dancing. Understanding the various patterns and waves of Tango fashion, as much as the background history of the dance, is relevant with regard to this thesis insofar as it allows the contemporary context in the East Midlands to be contextualised both geographically and historically, rather than being understood in isolation as if unconnected with other cultural phenomena around the world.

Thus it is possible to see that the latest wave of interest in Argentine Tango has taken hold, not just in the English Midlands, but across many British and European cities, reaching as far apart as Turkey and Finland. Amongst other places, Argentine Tango has become firmly established in Japan, the United States and Canada. This global interest has produced a massive tourist focal point in the city of Buenos Aires since the 1990s which has resulted in significant economic, cultural and physical changes in the city (see Chapter 7.) Following the massive economic crisis at the beginning of the twenty-first century both the city of Buenos Aires and the national government of Argentina has had an economic interest in protecting and nurturing tango as intangible cultural heritage. As well as seeking UNESCO inscription for

²To mention a few most frequently cited: Borges (1955) on the history of Tango; Pampin (1979) multi-volume series on all aspects of the history of Tango; Gobello and Bossio (1995) *Tango, Letras y Letristas*; Matamoro (1982) *La Ciudad del Tango*; Ferrer (1970).

³In Chapter 2 I refer to Savigliano (1995); Collier *et al* (1995); Denniston (2007), Washabaugh (1998), Pelinski(2000); Barrionuevo Anzaldi (2011 and 2012).

Tango as cultural heritage (alongside Uruguay), a 'law of Tango' identified it as 'cultural patrimony' in legislation.

For instance, federal law 24.684 of 1996 officially recognized tango as "one of the typical cultural expressions of the country" and thereby declared it "an integral part of Argentina's cultural patrimony" (Poder Ejecutivo 1996). For its part, the city government passed its own "law of tango" (law 130) in 1999, recognizing the genre and all its manifestations as an equally integral part of the city's cultural patrimony (Luker, 2009, p.5).

For almost a decade since the 1990s Tango has been identified as a category of World Music by the music industry in line with the current resurgence of interest in Tango worldwide and there have been films featuring scenes in which Argentine Tango plays a more or less significant role, and more recently, advertisements featuring snatches of Tango music and dance. Tango music and songs (*canción*) constitute a specific genre of music, now, inscribed alongside the dance, as Intangible Cultural Heritage of both Argentina and Uruguay by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) since 2009.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

In the text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO sets out the definition of Intangible cultural heritage as follows:

Intangible cultural heritage, also known as 'living heritage', refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills transmitted by communities from generation to generation. It provides these communities with a sense of identity and continuity, while promoting creativity and social well-being, contributing to the management of the natural and social environment and generating income. UNESCO (2003, Article 2, Definitions).

In the context of protecting heritage and fostering creativity UNESCO states that:

Heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. Creativity contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies. (UNESCO website, 'Protecting our Heritage and Fostering Creativity').

The inscription of Tango by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage marked the culmination of longstanding rivalry and debate between Argentina and Uruguay regarding the heavily contested relationship between Tango and the cultural heritage of the two countries and their

respective claims to being the birthplace, or at least significantly instrumental in the development of Tango.

Studies in the English language associating Tango and Argentine national identity include Savigliano's auto-ethnography (1995); Anzaldi (2012a); Archetti (1999) on Tango as a marker of Argentine masculinity (alongside football and polo); Tobin (1998) and Salessi (1997) on Argentine male sexuality and machismo with regard to Tango. Other studies⁴ analyse the music or the nature of the lyrics and their relationship to social and cultural context; or address key historic figures, composers, musicians, dancers or film stars such as Gardel, Piazzolla and Valentino.

DIFFERING GENRES: SOCIAL DANCE, PERFORMANCE AND BALLROOM TANGO

In order to identify clearly the genre of dance with which I am concerned in this thesis, it is important to distinguish social from performance or theatre dance; and also ballroom from Argentine Tango. Whilst my study is of Argentine Tango as a social dance, the other genres cannot be ignored simply because they are different: nor can they be dismissed as irrelevant. Argentine Tango undoubtedly maintains a significant presence as a performance genre with influence on the culture and practice of the social dance. Many dancers, including myself, first arrived at one or other of the East Midlands groups as a result of an experience of a Tango performance of some kind. It is not, however, straightforward to describe or define either genre as categorically distinct from the other, as they overlap in many respects, but are also defined with reference to each other. As Julie Malnig (2009) observes:

Social dances get picked up and transformed as staged dances; those stage dances, in turn, circulate back into social realms in yet other modified forms. It is a kind of endless loop of creativity in which steps and styles are continually recycled, recombined, and reborn (p.11).

⁴ See, for example, Castro (1986) on Gardel; also Castro (1998) in Washabaugh pp.63-78 and (1991) on Tango's history; Leider (2003) on Valentino; Gorin (2001) on Piazzolla; Del Priore and Amuchástegui, describing 100 famous tangos (1998); Steingress, G. (1998) on Tango's urban origins. Some of these texts are further discussed in Chapter 2.

Social or popular dance which takes place in a diversity of contexts and environments has furthermore been variously defined in opposition to high cultural activity or artistic dance. Justifying the reasons which led to her study of popular dance, Sherril Dodds (2011) discusses the notion of the 'popular' in the context of:

a paradigm of value that dismisses it as mere entertainment or recreation, subject to easy commercial exploitation, intended for the lowest common denominator and conceptually light. Yet . . . popular dance also constitutes a site of social and economic power that has the capacity to destabilize and transgress cultural norms. Its ability to unsettle beliefs and values renders it a potent cultural form (p.3).

In my experience it is indeed the case that the doors of social dance venues are usually open to newcomers willing to pay the entrance fee for the opportunity to learn, improve and dance socially to the point of performing on the dance-floor with other dancers. Such venues accommodate varying abilities, backgrounds, competences and motivations. Malnig (2009) identifies key characteristics of social dances in the introduction to her collection on social and popular dance. They are:

performed by the public in a variety of social and recreational gatherings – ballroom, cabarets, nightclubs dance halls, discotheques, the street' (p. 2) in their free time from work and 'are generally learned informally, through cultural and social networks' (p. 4). They are 'accessible to and enjoyed by a large swath of the population' and understood 'as a counterpoint to . . . "high" culture or classical forms of dance aimed at privileged audiences'; having the 'ability to spread beyond local contexts to become, in many cases, national or worldwide dance phenomena'; accommodating 'fluidity in levels of expertise among dancers' from beginners, regular amateurs, rising to 'a level of sophistication, style, and skill often equal to that of professionals. . . . on a continuum from the purely recreational to more theatrical and theatricalised styles'(p.5).

Just as the range of social and popular dances is many and diverse, so are the participants themselves. Nevertheless for the most part they share an astonishing degree of commitment, engagement and energy with regard to their chosen social dance, despite these forms of dance frequently being regarded, as indicated by Dodds and Malnig, as merely popular culture, in contrast to artistic or performance dance. This a perspective which has only changed gradually towards the end of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century and which moves both writers to highlight the significance of popular dance as a serious subject of study (see Chapter 2). Regardless of any assignment of value to social dance however, there is no question that the social dancers participating in the Argentine Tango in the East Midlands were indeed committed, enthusiastic, social dancers of what must be regarded as one

representation of popular culture emerging in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

In contrast to social dance, performance dance tends to be taught formally in dance schools or performance establishments; it is not accessible for the public to participate in, being selective, generally highly skilled and undertaken as a paid occupation or in return for some kind of remuneration for the dancers.

The founder of the Market Harborough Argentine Tango group, David Turner (2006) wrote a book, *A Passion for Tango* in which, in an effort to distinguish social from performance Argentine Tango and to defend the social practice which he was engaged in teaching, he said:

Let us not forget that when we see a tango show it is choreographed to the hilt. It is entirely sequenced to give the maximum pleasure to the audience by fitting in the biggest number of spectacular moves in the shortest time, in the space available. I dare say the dancers enjoy themselves a little too, from time to time, but they also suffer the pain of all professional dance performers. This is a different tango world from the one we inhabit in our social dancing (Turner, p.14).

Argentine Tango furthermore, differs significantly from ballroom Tango. Modern ballroom dancing is a much codified form of partner dancing which developed in England from the early twentieth century as a result of the teaching and manuals of dancing masters. Victor Silvester (2005) traces a history of the development of modern ballroom dancing from French peasant dances to the Courtly dances of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century and then of the separation of the ballet and the social dances of the ballroom.

Currently ballroom dancing comprises the two categories of Latin and Modern dances.⁵ In the former are dances such as the *Cha Cha Cha*, *Rumba*, *Salsa*, and *Paso Doble*: in the latter the dances of more European origin, such as the *Waltz*, *Foxtrot*, *Quickstep*, *Viennese Waltz* and *Tango*. Several participants in my study first encountered Tango through their experience of ballroom dancing, but then progressed or moved on (for a variety of reasons) to Argentine Tango, with varying levels of awareness that this was a different genre. Ballroom and Argentine Tango obviously share the name Tango and certain key features, such as being

⁵ See also Moore (1936. Reprint 2002) and McMains (2010).

danced in couples, anti-clockwise around a dance floor, led by one partner and followed by the other, with some recognisable aesthetic characteristics such as *ochos*, *voleos* and *ganchos*.

However there are also essential differences between the two forms. Referring to ballroom tango (or 'English' tango, as it is described in America) Juliet McMains (2010) explains that:

As the oldest Latin dance to be taken up by Europeans and Americans, the tango has been re-choreographed more often than any other Latin dance, each nation's version departing radically from Argentine styles (p.266).

The respected ballroom dance teacher Alex Moore, on *Ballroom Tango* (2002) claimed that, 'The average Englishman looks upon the Tango as a dance full of eccentricities' (p. 180), but that its 'construction is comparatively simple, owing to the fact that more walking steps are used, thus giving the dancer time to think which figure to use next' (p.182). Bearing in mind that Moore's first edition was in 1936, he points out various important characteristics of Ballroom Tango, explaining that '[a]ll walking steps in the Tango [are] picked up from the floor slightly and placed into position,' (p.185) and the 'feet are closed very frequently in the Tango' (p.188). According to McMains, ballroom tango:

. . . substitutes sharp jerks of the head for the risqué intertwining of the Argentine legs and an outward extension of the torsos for the intimate inward lean of the South American dancers' posture (p.267).

Ballroom Tango is thus a stylised, transformation of Argentine Tango, which has evolved within the ballroom repertoire, with preset figures and steps, a more upright and formalised posture and a more rigid and distant arm-hold, as opposed to the softer, more intimate embrace of Argentine Tango.

Apart from the posture and embrace, Argentine Tango is further characterised by the improvised nature of the dance. The leader instigates particular moves or figures through the physical connection of the embrace. The follower 'reads' or senses the lead and responds in connection with the leader's body and the music. The improvisatory aspect of the dance enables it to be danced socially between people who may never have met or practised together, although it assumes prior knowledge and competence at the techniques of leading, following and of performing the commonly used moves and figures. In Ballroom Tango there is less possibility of improvisation by the leader and of interpretation by the follower. Indeed, to aid beginners Moore provides:

*SUGGESTED TANGO AMALGAMATIONS 1. 2 Walks, LF, RE--Progressive Side Step—
Rock Turn--LF Walk---RF Walk turning lady to PP-- Closed Promenade (2002, p.236).*

The music of ballroom Tango tends to have a more insistent, often brassy, mechanical beat, in contrast to the syncopated pulse of Argentine Tango, punctuated with a dialogue of melodic phrases, the unmistakable sound of the *bandoneón* and, often, the melancholic lyrics of tango *canción*. Moore states that the approved speed for the standard ballroom Tango is 33 beats per minute, that the step rhythm is the famous, ‘slow, slow, quick, quick, slow’ and that ‘the figures consist of various combinations of “Slows” and “Quicks”’ (p.221).

In her discussion of the American equivalent of *Strictly Come Dancing*⁶ in which contestants are obliged to perform an ‘English’ (ballroom) tango, McMains (2010) claims that:

Tango choreography in Dancing with the Stars has also been singled out more often than other dance for criticism by the judges. English judge Len Goodman consistently praises the dancers for performing what he calls ‘proper tango’ and chastises them when they dance steps that others might call ‘authentic,’ that is, tango from Argentina. Although Goodman never defines his use of ‘proper’, it is a thinly veiled euphemism for ‘English tango’, which would hardly be considered proper in Argentina (p.266).

McMains further highlights how the distinction between these two styles is emphasised as a means of identifying and valorizing one style over another:

By failing to recognize the existence of Argentinian tango and repeatedly referring to English [ballroom] tango as ‘proper tango’, Dancing with the Stars implies that the Latin American version is improper and inferior to the European style (p.267).

It is clear that between Argentine and ballroom Tango there have been, and continue to be evident swings and transformations in style and aesthetic vocabulary dependent on local moral and social codes and the identification of the dance within different contexts; furthermore that the genres continue to be identified in relation to, and in distinction from each other.

⁶ *Strictly Come Dancing* is an annual, British, televised, knock-out dance contest in which media celebrities are partnered with professional dancers in order to compete in their performances of key ballroom dances. It is broadcast by the BBC and runs from September to Christmas every year. In America the show *Dancing with the Stars* follows a similar format.

Desmond (1997) considers 'dance as a performance of cultural identity and the shifting meanings involved in the transmission of dance styles from one group to another' (p.39); she highlights the need for further study of such themes as identity, transmission, translation and the production of cultural meaning with regard to dance: many of which I address. Few studies⁷, however, have provided ethnographic material from the point of view of people who are at the grass-roots of deterritorialised Tango, as it were, in places where Argentine Tango has arrived and is subsequently adopted and practised in new locations. Of those ethnographic studies which have been produced, none to date have been conducted on Argentine Tango groups within the United Kingdom⁸.

EAST MIDLANDS ETHNOGRAPHY

This study, therefore, produces new material with reference to transcultural participants in the East Midlands, social dancers, consumers, 'punters', *milongueras/os*, however they may be described: local, non-Argentinian people who see shows, watch television, join classes, practise at *practicas*, frequent *milongas* and consume Tango goods, such as shoes, clothing, music, trips and holidays. They include people, some of whom I describe, or who have described themselves as 'Tango tourists': people who regularly travel to Tango venues or events in other cities, both within and outside of the UK. It also includes others whose experience of Argentine Tango was limited to their attendance at either the Leicester and/or the Market Harborough groups.

Historically Leicester has been a focus for successive waves of immigration and currently comprises nearly 330,000 residents, of whom 151,153 (45.8%) identified themselves as white

⁷ Studies in English conducted on local Tango communities outside the United Kingdom include: Knauth (2002); Tateo (2014); Olszewski (2008); Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher (2009); Petridou (2009) and Davis (2015).

⁸ Although Skinner (2014) produced an ethnographic study on a Tango holiday location in France which included some British Tango dancers from Bristol.

from the United Kingdom and Eire; 122,470 (37.1%) as Asian or British Asian; and of whom only 204 held a passport from South America (2011 census).

The 2011 census showed a population of 85,382 residents in Market Harborough, of whom close to 80,000 (93.6%) identified themselves as white from the United Kingdom and Eire; 2,563 as Asian or British Asian; and of whom only 14 held a passport form south America, (2011 census).

It does not need to be spelled out any further that, although Leicester is a multi-cultural city with a history of immigration, both of these places are very far away from, very different from, and with few connections to Buenos Aires, the capital city of Argentina. Nevertheless, there is a group of people in Leicester and Market Harborough who have adopted and are resolutely committed to dancing Argentine tango. Between fourteen and twenty people would meet weekly, on Saturday lunchtimes in the University of Leicester for a *práctica* session; and on average ten to fifteen couples would meet at the Leisure Centre in Market Harborough for classes and an hour of social dancing on three Sundays each month, with a *milonga* on the fourth Sunday.

Thus the study arose in 2007 as I occasionally began to teach in the Market Harborough Argentine Tango group. By the end of that year David Turner and his wife, decided to give up organising and retire from their roles in the Tango group. Up to that point the group was advertised on its website as *Tango del Mercado del Puerto* (a rough Spanish translation of the name Market Harborough) but became known as *Market Harborough Argentine Tango*.

Tango was not new to me, nor I to the group. What had changed was the role in which I found myself, which demanded some readjustment from that of student and social dancer to teacher and organiser. Apart from the obvious changes required, such as now having to plan and prepare teaching sessions, arrive early, set up the room, greet people and collect money, there were also various problematic and somewhat practical questions which had arisen for me.

In the process of discussing and planning lessons, I began to consider not only the range of experience and abilities of the participants, but also what they hoped to derive from their Argentine Tango sessions. There was always a mixture of experienced and beginner dancers: a core of those who had been attending for several years and a number of relative newcomers, some of whom might become regulars in due course, but many who would attend for a few

weeks or months and then disappear. Thus the question of what techniques or steps to teach was always present, coupled with a curiosity to understand and learn more about the motivation of the dancers, what they knew or understood about the dance, what they hoped to learn and what they derived from the practice.

In particular I was aware that the notion of authenticity was often called upon, not in so many words, but in terms of references made to Argentina and how Argentine Tango should be danced.

AUTHENTICITY AND OTHER QUESTIONS

Prior to his retirement David Turner had often referred, in the course of his teaching, to Buenos Aires and what “they” did there; how “they” taught Tango and what the *milongas* were like. It was clear that he felt it important to endeavour to set the dance within a particular context as a process of *mise-en-scène*. Since the context in which he situated Argentine Tango was quite unlike that of the leisure centre in Market Harborough in which his teaching took place, he felt it incumbent on himself to impart what information he could about the context of dancing Tango in Buenos Aires. He would often convey ideas about what dancing Argentine Tango should be like and how it should be taught. Thus it appeared that he had a strong vision and a corresponding version of authenticity to which he adhered, even though, he had not, until several years later, visited Buenos Aires.

However other aspects of authenticity which were also in evidence. Other people had different ideas about what they thought Argentine Tango dancing should be like. David’s representation of Argentine Tango was a conservative and nostalgic view of the way that social dancers in Buenos Aires dance, with little tolerance for fancy figures, kicks or *ganchos*. On more than one occasion I witnessed him approaching dancers (including myself) to quietly point out that kicking one’s feet up so that the sole of the shoe became visible was considered bad taste and would have been disapproved of in Buenos Aires. He wanted to emphasise the importance of connection and to teach people to walk properly, always downplaying set figures in favour of improvisation and musicality: whereas new dancers often wanted to be taught to *voleo* or *gancho* as soon as possible, because these were the breath-taking, signature figures of Argentine Tango which had caught their eye in a stage show or demonstration. It seemed that

the hope of being able to entwine one's legs erotically in a passionate and intense dance was another kind of goal amongst participants. There were also those who seemed to enjoy the possibility of simply exploring and experimenting with dance moves and the music, whilst others seemed to care more for the socialising opportunities of the Tango sessions and less about the dance per se.

In order to teach well I felt I needed to know what the dancers wanted to learn. Did they want to turn themselves into passionate performers of stage-like tangos? Closely connected but unshowy dancing couples who would be able to interpret the music in a mutual embrace? Was it most important to create a warm and welcoming ambience in which people could enjoy socialising and not worry too much about the content? Or did the dance teaching need to incorporate technically challenging figures for those with more athletic and dancerly skills?

In exploring such perspectives, I aim to throw light on a relatively unresearched facet of the phenomenon of transcultural Tango: a view from the people who take up the deterritorialised practice. I was interested to know how the East Midlands participants would articulate and explain their practice; how they identified with Argentine Tango; whether authenticity mattered to them; in what ways their lives are changed; to what extent they viewed their experience of tango as commodification, and their activities as consumption; their global view and how they identified themselves in relation to the globalisation of Argentine Tango.

Turner, as leader at Market Harborough, posed himself questions in many ways similar to my own regarding the practice of dancing Tango:

How did this come about? How could it be that a dance, the tango, could grow from tiny origins over a hundred years ago in a far distant land, Argentina, to be almost a household name, and – what is more – to be so significant in so many people's lives today? Why is that, after all these years, you can find couples dancing tango in every major city in the world, and why is its popularity rising so rapidly? (2007, p.1).

The purpose of this research is therefore to do with dancing Argentine Tango socially in the East Midlands. It is not primarily concerned with the history of Tango, nor with the development of the dance in Argentina or Uruguay, although both these aspects have an inescapable presence and influence upon the local practice in Leicester and Market Harborough. It is, therefore, perhaps apposite and appropriate at this point to set the scene by means of two, seemingly contradictory points with which Turner prefaces his own short history of Argentine Tango:

. . .although the history of tango is fascinating in its own way it contributes only a little, in a practical sense, to the dance you are about to learn. You could leave this whole chapter out completely and still tango satisfactorily. That would be a great shame, however, because it is fun to incorporate some of the flavour of tango's earlier days in our dancing today. . . . I dare go one step further. I am eager to dispel the myth that there is some sort of 'authentic' tango that can and must be copied and is set in concrete for all time (p.3).

Turner's apparent self-contradiction - between his frequent recourse to the practice of dancing Tango in Buenos Aires and his light-hearted dismissal of history and the myth of 'authentic' tango - offer an intriguing introduction to the process and findings of my research, reflecting, quite possibly, the internal tensions of the Tango itself, which could be a theme in its own right.

The following chapter deals with the key literature relating to Argentine Tango and its transcultural practice: much is indeed concerned with inherent tensions or conflicts, such as of class, race, or gender; authenticity and practice; history and origin; meaning and style; stereotype and identity; tradition and change. Beyond the literature on Tango I also consider certain key studies on social dancing, which have a bearing and relevance to my research on the transcultural practice of Argentine Tango in the East Midlands.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE ON ARGENTINE TANGO

The opening paragraph of Desmond's chapter in *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies in Dance* (1997) famously characterises two dancers poised within a typical tango embrace, looking

past each other, eyes focused on distant points in the space. Like mirror images, their legs strike out, first forward, then back. As one they glide across the floor, bodies melded at the hips, timing perfectly in unison (p.29).

Desmond addresses the idea of cultural embodiment, suggesting that, 'we can further our understandings of how social identities are signalled, formed and negotiated through bodily movement' (p. 29) and states that she specifically wants 'to discuss dance as a performance of cultural identity and the shifting meanings involved in the transmission of dance styles from one group to another' (p.31).¹

Attention to the migration of bodily movement styles was similarly a concern in my research agenda. Argentinian Tango in the English East Midlands, danced by a community of non-professional dancers, of whom scarcely any had Latin blood, is an evident example of a migrating body movement style crossing national, racial, class and to some extent, gender boundaries. The task was to discover the nature and extent of any identification with the dance by my study's participants and to understand if and how social identities were indeed being signalled, formed and negotiated by dancing Argentinian Tango.

Further to this I was interested to understand how such transcultural appropriation is addressed and accommodated by the East Midlands dancers themselves. I return to the subject of translation, transculturation and the appropriation of dance and cultural practices in the context of globalisation. The academic literature on Tango comes from a number of

¹ Similarly Bosse (2007) deals with the codification of colour in ballroom dancing in the mid-west of the US, in which participants allude to an affinity with the Latin dances. In particular one woman describes being able to dance and enjoy salsa or rumba more proficiently than some of the other modern categories of ballroom dance, and suggests that perhaps she had black ancestry in her blood or was a Latin in a former life.

disciplines, including anthropology, dance, drama and performance studies, sociology, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, tourism and global studies.

Literature relating to the history and origins of Tango in Argentina has already been discussed in Chapter 1 along with its development and significance in the context of Buenos Aires; cultural and musical influences, lyrics, personalities and bands from the end of the nineteenth century; the acceptance and subsequent spread of Tango across the world and later in Buenos Aires from the beginning of the twentieth century up until the end of the so-called Golden Age. Here I consider two key ethnographic studies of Tango addressing both the background and historic context of Tango, as well as its broader and more contemporary context, both in and beyond Buenos Aires as this particular dance has deterritorialised and been appropriated and transformed in diverse communities across the globe in processes of translation and transculturation. I consider texts addressing Tango and race; the performance of gender and identity; tango and the body; postmodern tango and some twenty-first century perspectives; transculturation and the globalisation of tango; some further ethnographic studies of dance other than Tango; and finally some consideration of the shifts in dance research towards social dance.

Diverse texts from other, non-academic sources also address the place and significance of Tango in Buenos Aires: including the major literary figure of Borges, fiction, travel writing, magazine and newspaper articles, Tango lyrics, websites and several major films and shows, such as *The Tango Lesson*, *Tango*, *Tango Argentino*, *Tango por Dos*, *Tango Subito* and *Fiesta del Tango*.

David Turner provided a significant piece of documentary evidence in his self publication (2006) comprising his own views and research on Tango and his experience of visiting Buenos Aires. Cecilia Sosa, a former journalist and one of only two Argentinian participants who joined the group during the course of my research, provided an article, which she had written for *Página/12*, a newspaper in Buenos Aires, about the status of Tango *vis à vis* American and European tourists. A further participant introduced me to her tango blog. Another had won a prize for a piece of creative writing based on her personal experience of dancing tango to which I refer in Chapter 8. These texts constitute ethnographic data produced by participants themselves: as such I deal with them in their own right in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Perhaps the key work with regard to this thesis is that of Savigliano whose monograph, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (1995) provides a multi-perspectival, multi-vocal, auto-ethnographic, socio-political exploration of Argentine Tango as exotic product. She begins in the preface by placing herself in context with regard to Tango, and then, in the introduction, admitting:

Tango is the main ingredient in my project of decolonization because I have no choice. It is the stereotype of the culture to which I belong (1995. p.16).

She later presents her hypothesis that 'a political economy of Passion has been occurring' (p.1) and explains how Tango has been the subject of an exoticising gaze leading to an economy of passion and the circulation of emotional capital. The 'Exotic' is then exported, producing auto-exotic practices until '[t]he exotic/exoticized representations end up becoming symbols of national identity' (p.2).

As discussed in Chapter 1, Savigliano relates a history of the colonization of Argentina followed by a historical exploration in a chapter entitled *Tango as Spectacle of Sex, Race and Class* in Argentina in the late nineteenth century when Tango originated. In *Tango and the Colonizing Gaze* she analyses the nature of exoticism in Argentina and subsequently in Europe of the early twentieth century, as well as the auto-exoticisation which it produced and the impact on national identity. Written as an act of 'decolonization', Savigliano's text is not a straightforward historical account, if ever achievable, but nonetheless it is simultaneously informative, inventive and provocative.

As an auto-ethnography of Tango, Savigliano's work also explores its impact on herself, including the reflexivity of what she describes as auto-exoticisation. Savigliano's position as a 'decolonized' Argentinian woman working as a Western academic gives her a remarkable array of, sometimes conflicting, perspectives on the significance of Tango, thus enabling her to speak from many positions. This includes a roving and highly personalised historical viewpoint stretching from the end of the nineteenth century up to the time of writing, gleaned through her knowledge of her grandfather, Don Alberto and her memories of learning to dance the Tango from him.

Whilst the purported subject of her ethnographic study is Tango, in fact the impact of Savigliano's eclectic insights demonstrates the way in which the ethnographic researcher's reflexivity constitutes an inescapable part of the story. This results in a multi-stranded, tightly woven text which appears, by the end, to have served perfectly her somewhat bewildering purpose of decolonization. It is an experimental rather than a conventional ethnographic work, which makes no claims to science, but, by incorporating historic, personal, fictive and oral data, nonetheless commands an important position, as evidenced by its frequent citation² in the literature of ethnography, dance, and cultural studies.

Julie Taylor's (1988) monograph, *Paper Tangos*, offers a contemporary and more personal perspective on Tango in Buenos Aires since the 1980s. Taylor's ethnographic study by contrast, occupies a specific time in the context of the Dirty War in Argentina, during which she was living in difficult circumstances in Buenos Aires. Distanced from America and to some extent from herself as both outsider and insider, estranged from the Argentinian father of her son, in a city beset with terror, her narrative depicts the layers of alienation enabling her to write from both inside and outside, the emic and etic of the culture in which Tango exists. With its overridingly personal tone, in dialogue with the voices of those she knows, the work does not strike one as a research text as it succeeds in conveying the haunting and isolating experience of dancing tango in that context. Together, Savigliano and Taylor provide examples of ethnography in which each respective writer's position and authorial voice leads to a wholly different perspective, offering divergent insights and understandings of Argentinian Tango.

Among other studies with a focus on the history of Argentine Tango, Collier, Cooper, Azzi and Martin (1995) provide a visual overview of the key phases of Tango's history and development, including chapters on '*The Birth Of Tango- 1980s-1920s*'; '*Tangomania in Europe and North America 1913-1914*'; '*The Golden Age and After 1920s -1990s*'; and '*The Lasting Tango*'. This popular text includes historical information about the massive immigration into Argentina towards the end of the eighteenth century and the impact on her population. It traces the influences of dance styles such as the Habanera, European colonial

² Most academic work on Argentine Tango cites Savigliano from one perspective or another. For example, a search on JSTOR in November 2014 produced 982 references to citations from *Tango: the Political Economy of Passion*.

dances and the fundamental influence of the black African-Argentine population on the development, first, of the *Milonga* and subsequently of Tango. Continuing into the twentieth century and the period known as the *Guardia Vieja* (the old guard) Collier *et al.* (1995) chart the development of *Tangocanción*, tango song, and the lyrics by means of further mini-biographies (El Cachafaz, Arturo de Vava, Carlos Gardel). They draw on publicity materials advertising dance and music productions from Buenos Aires and Europe as Tango was introduced and marketed to suit elitist Parisian circles, before becoming adapted and accepted more widely by the upper classes both in Europe and back in Argentina. The reader is introduced to key performance personalities and their involvement in the blossoming film and music industries of the Golden Age of Tango from the 1920s to the 1950s, all supported by substantial visual documentation.

Ethnomusicologist William Washabaugh (1998) offers a selection of comparative essays regarding the social history of Tango, Flamenco and Rebetika, from the perspectives of body, gender and sexuality. Chapters on Tango include Donald Castro's analysis of the symbolic impact of the Tango singer Carlos Gardel on the masculine Argentine mentality; Jeffrey Tobin's discussion of Argentine masculinity in 'Tango and the Scandal of Homosocial Desire' and Savigliano's treatment of the role of the female Tango dancer in 'From Wallflowers to Femmes Fatales'.

Former dance teacher Christine Denniston (2007) also provides a brief history of Tango with regard to the governmental drive to recruit a workforce for the railway and the growing economy of Argentina in the second half of the eighteenth century. Convinced of the fact that Tango between the 1930s and 1950s, in the so-called Golden Age 'had a richness unparalleled in any other social dance', Denniston explains that:

Each time another dancer died, irreplaceable knowledge died with him or her. It seemed to me important that as much knowledge be saved before it was gone forever. That was the reason I went to live in Buenos Aires in 1996. I wanted to absorb as much knowledge as my body could hold (p.3).

The purpose of her book and her (largely unreferenced) research, therefore, is not so much to address the history as to pass on the embodied knowledge of the Golden Age:

It is up to those of us who did dance with them [surviving dancers from that period] who benefited from their generosity, to do what we can to pass on what the Tango meant to them. This book is my attempt to record their Tango their gift to me, and is my tribute to them (p.6).

Denniston's emphasis is thus on the transmission of her own experience of dancing with Golden Age dancers and of justifying and advocating a return to the practices of the era. Contextualising the lengthy period of apprenticeship (approximately three years) which young male dancers would have undertaken before dancing with women, Denniston maintains that:

Tango would not have become the dance it did had not the majority of the people who were creating it been men who found themselves in a world without enough women (p.186).

Denniston thus justifies her insistence on a return to Golden Age-style *prácticas* and 'authentic' practices such as the *cabezo* as a means for inviting/refusing a dance; the expectation that a man would escort a woman back to her seat; the avoidance of dangerous techniques and the importance of personal hygiene.³ This book was published just as I began my field work with a launch at the Argentinian Embassy in London which several participants attended, followed by a demonstration by dancers from the show 'Tango por Dos': this undoubtedly explains the fact that it was one of very few books about Tango which participants mentioned having read. As will become evident later it nevertheless had a significant impact on those who attended the book signing and subsequently read it.

TANGO AND RACE

In *Tango: the Art History of Love* (2005) anthropologist John Farris Thompson provides a comprehensive and detailed study of black Africanist influences on the Tango from its earliest days. During an interview for *Afropop*⁴ in 2005, Thompson described unconsciously swearing 'fealty forever to the cause of . . . black Latino music' arguing that:

³ I return to this aspect of her text in my discussion of authenticity in chapter 6.

⁴ *Afropop* is a radio programme and online magazine based in New York which started in 1988 and is distributed by Public Radio International. It focuses on the music of Africa and the African diaspora and its 'vision is to increase the profile of African and African diaspora music worldwide, and to see that benefits from this increased profile go back to artists, music industry professionals, and the countries that produce the music.' (*Afropop* website)

one of the first things learned in going ritually to Buenos Aires from 1995 right up to now, was that you have to understand that styles are translucent, that you can see through to the milonga, see through even to the habanera in tango today, and that nothing dies stylistically, it's there somewhere (2005, Afropop interview).

Referencing a collection of Afro-American dances including the Maxixe, the Habanero, the Rumba, Candombe, Milonga and Canyengue, Thompson links common words and linguistic threads running through Afro-Argentinian art and music. Noticing, 'little overlaps, little cultural cognations with hip-hop', he describes the motivation of tracing and joining up Africanist themes throughout his work: 'We're not talking about a single little feeble thread coming from Kongo, we're talking about a coaxial cable, baby.' (2005, radio interview, *Afropop*).

Thompson also focuses on Tango in Hollywood, well-known composers, lyrics and lyricists, singers, dancers and Argentine visual artists, ultimately demonstrating that despite the apparent whiteness of contemporary Argentina, even today the black Africanist influence is lived out in some of the most prominent personalities. 'This book documents Afro-Argentines working at the center of the tango not just in 1880 but in 2005' (2005, p.7).

Reviewers of Thompson's *Tango: The Art History of Love* differ in the degree to which they accept his analysis of the black influences on Tango. Harss (2006) acknowledges the wealth of information regarding black Africanist influences on Tango, but resents the over-selectivity of his focus, his 'obsession with uncovering the [. . .] apparently, quintessentially black qualities' (p.36) of tango. Harss questions if Thompson is more interested in redressing the false idea that 'black influence if present at the beginning, has long since disappeared' (p.36) and 'suspects that his interest in the tango might be secondary to his desire to uncover African influences' (p.36), suggesting that, '[s]omeone with a less polemical approach . . . would not give such short shrift to the European immigrant culture – especially Italian – that provided many of its composers, musicians and instruments' (p.36).

By contrast, Elizabeth Seyler (2008) is highly positive, frequently emphasising Thompson's great passion for tango. Acknowledging the detail and depth of his knowledge of Africanist art and its influences on Argentine Tango, Seyler describes Thompson's analysis as a 'glorious archaeological excavation in search of movements, words and customs that have endured in contemporary tango' (p.107) whilst admitting that his text 'can also be exasperatingly repetitive' (p.111). Seyler however, also highlights Thompson's predominant focus on the

contributions of men, despite acknowledging that 'women have contributed greatly to tango,' (p.111).

Prior to the publication of Thompson's text, Sylvain Poosson (2004) addressed the theme of Argentina's black history and its influence on tango, noting that Africans 'were debarked on the shores of the Rio de la Plata in the sixteenth century as slaves for the benefit of the Spanish Crown,' and 'contributed to all aspects of the society in which they were brought up . . . political and cultural,' (p.87). He argues however, that the positivistic generation of 1880 'designed policies in which Blacks would slowly disappear,' and that '[m]iscegenation was a national policy,' (p.87).

Drawing largely on Spanish language and Argentinian sources Poosson argues somewhat differently from Thompson, that the etymological origin of the word 'tango' arises as a result of a gradual change in the pronunciation by the lower classes, of the 'b' sound in the word *tambor* for drum, which became a 'g' and thus, subsequently 'tango' as the final 'r' was also dropped. He supports this argument by demonstrating a similar change of pronunciation from 'bueno' to 'gueno' in a poem from the second half of the nineteenth century supposedly imitating black spoken language (p.91) .

Beyond semantic and linguistic changes, Poosson describes the Creole elite's disapproval of the 'lascivious' and provocative dances of the black slaves, and catalogues a series of edicts and prohibitions intended to prevent them; also how black cultural productions were used 'consciously or unconsciously – by the new leaders as "guiding fictions" in the construction of Argentina,' (p.88). He discusses the long-standing debate as to 'whether or not Blacks have anything to do with tango and if credit should be given to the African slaves for [. . .] the most important cultural phenomenon in Argentina's history' (p.88), arguing that 'the musical instruments used in the production of the *milonga*, from which the tango evolved, give away . . . the African origin of the tango,'(p.93). He describes the 'political agenda of the ruling party which was wiping out Blacks while recuperating their cultural contributions to the nation,' (p.96), and concludes that:

the transformation from Black culture to White culture was an attempt to annihilate completely the remnants of the old colonial regime characteristics and embrace a new era of progress (Poosson, p.98).

It is evident, therefore, that a significant amount of work has been produced addressing the issue of race and its implications in the development of Tango, although varying degrees of emphasis are placed on its importance: it was not a theme alluded to by participants in the East Midlands for example. Other themes appeared to be more relevant to them, however, such as gender and identity which are addressed in the literature on Argentine Tango in the following section.

TANGO AND THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER AND EXPERIMENTAL IDENTITIES

Moving from race to gender, two writers who have addressed the contents of the lyrics of Tango songs, *tango canción*, from a feminist perspective are Anahi Viladrich (2006) and Hernan Feldman (2006). Feldman focuses on the prevailing narrative conveyed in the Tango lyrics composed and sung by disapproving male voices between 1910 and the early 1920s which tell:

the story of a milonguita, a young lower-class woman from a peripheral neighbourhood whose life ends badly due to her desire to overcome the limits imposed by her social stratum, and how *'the poetic voice speaks directly to a woman in order to tell a tragic story [. . .] intended to instil a certain dose of fear'* (p.2).

Viladrich's (2006) intention differs from that of Feldman in attempting to:

redress the vacuum [of women's history in Tango] by providing a detailed analysis of the contradictory gender representations conveyed by the lyrics of the tango's Golden Era, vis-á-vis the careers of women who not only interpreted mainstream tango songs but also challenged traditional gender roles via authorship and performance (p.274).

It is well-known that the lyrics of Tango songs written by men tended to portray the voice of a 'whiny ruffian,' to use Savigliano's phrase. The theme conveys the associations of nostalgia and regret; of misspent time; alcohol abuse; jilted love and disapproval of female Tango dancers who took advantage of the opportunities for social advancement presented by higher class dance partners. By contrast, Viladrich offers a feminist perspective, explaining that her 'article is also a tribute to the many female composers, writers and singers who have been the silent voices behind their tango characters' (p.274).

In a similar vein Sirena Pellarolo (2008) offers an alternative historical view of Tango in Buenos Aires in her article, 'Queering Tango: Glitches in the Hetero-National Matrix of a Liminal

Cultural Production'. Pellarolo interrogates the performativity and songs of female *tango canción* writers and singers of the early twentieth century in Buenos Aires from an unorthodox and feminist historical perspective. Her analysis (drawing primarily on Argentinian and Spanish language resources) suggests that the internal contradictions incorporated in the performativity of female *cancionistas*, as well as within the narratives contained in the lyrics, gave them a 'status as living documents of a fissure in the apparently seamless heteronormativity of the Argentine nation' (p.411). She claims that '[t]he interaction of these women tango singers and their female audiences served as a rehearsal for working-class women's public (and political) empowerment' (p.411) when performed against the backdrop of the predominantly male preserve of *tango canción*.

Pellarolo is interested in the gendered performance of modernization in Argentina, which 'prompted the improvised creation of new "border" sites' (p.412). She identifies the suburbs as 'a liminal space with subverted values in constant experimentation, recovery, and change' (p.412). This interpretation is interesting, prompting questions as to whether the sites of my field work might similarly be construed as 'border sites' offering liminal spaces for 'experimentation, recovery and change' to participants choosing to dance Argentinian Tango in the heart of England.

Pellarolo traces a fascinating history of the couple El Civico and La Moreira, as 'a paradigmatic example of [. . .] gender inversion', of "masculine' women and 'feminine' men' (p.412). In the process she unveils 'the un-nameable existence of a hidden gender-ambiguity in this society in transition' (p.413). She also refers to a selection of female performers, who, variously, employed a male pseudonym, wore drag or masculine clothes, took the voice of a male protagonist in song or alternatively used a female poetic voice with a female perspective. In the case of 'a defiantly butch Azucenar' dressed as a *compadrito* in the 1933 film '*Tango!*' Pellarolo claims that Azucenar's performance represented:

a disidentification from heteronormative, "national," Europeanized discourses (p.422) and, as such, 'subverted patriarchal notions of gender, national, and class identities and staged a space of decolonizing possibility(p.423).

Apart from the detailed historical information and the useful, because otherwise hard to access references from (Spanish language) Argentinian scholarship on Tango in her article, Pellarolo's analysis is insightful, particularly with regard to the notion of disidentification, with regard to gender ambiguities inherent, though not always exposed, in the context surrounding

Argentinian Tango in the early twentieth century. The idea of disidentifications furthermore suggests an alternative possibility for exploration with regard to the Tango dancing participants of my study, though not necessarily to be fixed on gender.

Pellarolo's twenty-first century analysis of a particular aspect of life in Buenos Aires at the start of the twentieth century encouraged me to apply her description of new "border" sites to my own field work contexts and to consider the associated themes of disidentification and liminality in relation to my participants in an attempt to understand the nature of the cultural changes, exchanges or appropriations taking place in the English East Midlands.

TANGO AND THE BODY

Erin Manning's (1997) philosophical ideas of a body moving 'in excess of its-self'; of touch inventing relations which 'invent me'; and the capacity to 'become beyond identity', whilst not articulated for the same purpose, accord with Pellarolo's description of the process of gender transculturation in performances which took place in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, enabling 'the enactment of new identities' (2008, p. 411). With regard to performance, Judith Butler's work (1990) on the processual and performative nature of [gender] identity is of obvious relevance.

Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration (1990, xv).

Whilst my study is not concerned specifically with gender identity, it obviously addresses performativity and identity, since the performance of tango, is not only enacted and repeated on the dance floor, but also alongside it and spilling over into the lifestyles of participants. In this regard Butler's assertion that 'What we take to be "real", what we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and realizable reality' (xxiv) can be applied to the concept of identity related more generally to the body as a whole, especially as she also considers:

the very notion of "the body", not as a ready surface awaiting signification, but as a set of boundaries, individual and social, politically signified and maintained (p.46).

Sociologist Bryan Turner (1996) also considers the importance of the body as a marker and site of the production of identity in twenty-first century society. He describes 'the rise of the

somatic society, a society in which our major political and moral problems are expressed through the conduit of the human body' (p.6). In the light of the importance of:

selfhood in contemporary consumer society, the body is regarded as a changeable form of existence which can be shaped and which is malleable to individual needs and desires (p.5).

Identity has come to be understood as being contingent on the way one acts and interacts with one's body and those of others; a project of the self which, one might argue, was being undertaken by East Midlands participants as they engaged in a very bodily practice. Their comments later articulate the dilemmas and contradictions entailed by the practice, as well as the pleasures and explorations which it makes possible for twenty-first century transcultural dancers. Turner claims the body has become 'a principal vehicle for what one might call consumerist desire' (p.6). Referencing both Pasi Falk (1987) and Paul Shilder (1964) he suggests we:

should argue that the notion of the self in consumer society ought to be seen in terms of the body-image that plays the distinctive role in the understanding and evaluation of the self within the public arena (1996,p.7).

Turner's argument thus prompts questions regarding the notions of self and of identity construction in the case of the East Midlands participants as a result of the bodily practice which they had adopted and chose to perform.

POST MODERN TANGO: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE 21ST CENTURY

My study was undertaken in the early part of the twenty-first century and as such it considers other work addressing the phenomenon of contemporary Argentinian Tango with particular regard to the transformations of music and style taking place both outside and within Argentina, alongside discussion of other themes such as transculturation, identity or gender. Ethnomusicologist Ramón Pelinski's *Tango Nomáde* (2002) comprises a collection of essays by an international range of writers, exploring the way in which Argentine Tango has spread around the world. Guillermo Verdicchia's article (2009) 'Tango's Cross-cultural Dance' plays with diverse senses of the verb 'to cross', meaning variously, to traverse, to mix, to contradict, as well as to 'imply deception or misrepresentation, as in to double cross' and the implications of all of these for contemporary dancers of Argentine tango.

Further contemporary work on Argentine Tango discusses films and their significance with regard to various postmodern themes. Whilst my study does not focus on film per se, articles which do are relevant insofar as the themes they raise are recurrent ones, and also because participants themselves referenced films and shows in their own discussions. In “Tango like Scotch is best taken straight”, Laura Podalsky (2002) considers the representation of Argentine Tango in three films featuring Tango,⁵ as contemporary cultural productions, and consequently asks ‘. . . is the tango moving us in new ways?’ (p.131). She questions whether the relations and identifications formed with Tango are reminiscent of the concept of cosmopolitanism associated with modernist aesthetics, with followers retracing colonial patterns and repeating modernist interests in a search of the titillation offered by the exotic; or amount to new forms of attachment. In Chapter 7 I consider the East Midlands participants’ fascination with Tango and whether their practice is indeed part of ‘the resurgence of an exoticizing impulse’ (Podalsky, p.131).

Carolyn Pinet (2006) also critiques Sally Potter’s film *The Tango Lesson* (1997) and the associated written text *The Tango Lesson* (1997) which ensued from the production of the film. Framing the film as ‘an exploration of translation in terms of cultural identity and border-crossings’ (p.377) she explores the extent to which Potter achieved her wish ‘to show the ‘real’ tango’ (x); not the ‘kitsch eroticism of the Europeanized public image of the tango’ (p.85). The inherent suggestion is that technology and travel have rapidly transformed contemporary lifestyles, inevitably changing the very nature of our personal and cultural interactions.

The post-modern characters, Sally and Pablo, adrift in alien cultures, thus share the experience of being lost and of no longer knowing where home is. Pinet identifies the paradox of Tango, involving tension, conflict, exclusion as being at the heart of Potter’s *The Tango Lesson*,

⁵ Podalsky analyses three films, each featuring the production of a film about Tango: *The Tango Lesson* (Potter, 1997); *Tangos, the Exile of Gardel* (Solanas, 1985); and *Tango* (Saura, 1998). Each film involves an outsider perspective from within the plot on Tango and Argentina, which device allows each film-maker an opportunity to portray Tango as an authentic cultural product of Argentina.

showing the audience that ‘as members of the global community, we are all exiles searching for mutuality and “home”’(p.385).

Similarly Erin Manning (2007) addresses the theme of exile and the search for home in a study of the film *Happy Together* (1997) featuring Argentine Tango. Echoing themes familiar to Taylor’s writing on exile and isolation, Manning’s analysis traces the attempts of the two male, homosexual characters to retrieve a sense of a place they can call home having displaced themselves so far away from their native Hong Kong in an attempt to ‘start over’.

In many ways these works related to the search for home and displacement, if not of exile, prefigure some of the identifications which emerge later from participant data (see Chapters 6 and 7). In line with the habits of many East Midlands participants, psychologist Dujovne (2011) claims that:

Tango gypsies of the 21st century have become an anthropological phenomenon: it is hard to know how large our group is because we are constantly on the move, and we are always spreading throughout the world (p.130).

In her analysis of how Tango developed she offers a further postmodern explanation of the increasingly widespread popularity of Argentine Tango. Understanding the tango embrace as a response to the need for a sense of home felt by the early immigrants to Argentina, Dujovne identifies the need for physical contact and closeness as an enduring theme:

Perhaps in our Information Age, where gadgets keep us “in touch” without touching, and more connected to a virtual void than a living person, we need it more than ever. And perhaps that is why those of us who are hooked go out of our way to find it, in whatever corners of the globe keep the spirit of San Telmo alive (p.127).

Hand in hand with the sense of displacement and the search for home and connectedness are the postmodern understandings of pleasure and leisure which John Urry (1990) investigates in relation to twentieth century travel and tourism. Like Bryan Turner (1996) who addresses desire and ‘the commodification of fantasies and pleasures’ (p.57) under late capitalism, Urry’s analysis offers an understanding of the demarcation of work from leisure time, and the expectation of workers to use their leisure as they choose.

To some extent Urry’s (1990) analysis of pleasure and leisure follows on from Victor Turner’s work on ritual and Liminality which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. Beyond ritual, leisure

presupposes work and the liminoid is distinguished as a concept of space peculiar to post-industrial societies, occurring in free-time beyond the routine demands of everyday life and work. Turner sets out the possibilities which liminoid space offers in terms of play and as an 'independent domain of creative activity' (p.33). It is also in liminality that the possibility of *communitas* emerges: a concept which offers some explanation of experiences which certain participants had whilst dancing (see Chapter 5).

TRANSCULTURATION AND THE GLOBALISATION OF TANGO

The aim of dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster's *Worlding Dance* (2009, 2011) was to open up 'an epistemological space for the analysis of the world's dances' (2011, p.3). It addresses the transformation in focus from the terms 'folk dance' and 'ethnic dance' to 'world dance' as a category implementing:

a global perspective in order to examine the local – tracing how dances have developed in specific localities, migrated, and transformed alongside and in response to political and cultural pressures (p.3).

As one of several teachers and scholars of so-called 'World Dance' Foster is concerned to analyse the effects of commodification, appropriation and relocation on dances from around the world which have become tagged within the category of 'World dance'. Within the collection Savigliano (2009a) offers a discussion of World Dance, into which category Tango can be placed. Attempting to define what enables dances to be eligible for inclusion in the field of World Dance, Savigliano suggests they are those which represent 'new' discoveries to the 'old', or established dance knowledges of Westernised dance, to be acquired and added to the collection on the basis of their exotic otherness and capacity to be incorporated and systematically reproduced. They should be:

Exotic, and yet disciplined enough to be incorporated through translation into what counts as Dance. Exoticism here is qualified as a virtuosic difference, an otherness capable of being appreciated (p.167).

The creation of such a designation has the effect of severing such dances from their dancers as well as from the context in the world where they take place, as if they could exist without being embodied and performed. Her analysis suggests that:

World dance, as a rubric, works at turning practices, those of dancing, into products (dances) and more precisely into a collection of products' (p.167).

In her historical analysis of Tango, Savigliano (1995) addresses the spread of the contemporary Tango scene and subsequently (2003, 2009b) considers its continued global translation and transformation, largely, and in keeping with the classification of World dance, as a function of its exoticism and commodification. Likewise Pelinski (2002) focuses on the extent and contextualisation of Tango throughout the world in the late twentieth, early twenty-first century. Chris Goertzen and Maria Susana Azzi (1999) consider the gradual globalization of Argentine Tango as a global music with 'several kinds of semantic flexibility'(67) and 'strong but mutable links to place and culture' (p.68), whilst Olewski (2008) identifies its aura of authenticity as the key to the spread and uptake of Argentine Tango across the world.

Since starting this research in 2007, academic conferences⁶ devoted to twenty-first century practices of Argentine Tango with papers covering a range of postmodern themes have begun to take place in key Tango cities. Although published largely in German, Gabriele Klein's (2009) collection of papers from the Translation Dance conference in Hamburg provides pertinent analysis with regard to global participation in Argentine Tango in the twenty-first century. In particular the paper by Jochen Dreher and Silvana Figueroa-Dreher addresses the embrace as an enduring central symbol in the ritual of the dance (see chapter 7). In the same collection, Petridou's analysis (2009) of the global spread and meaning of translated Tango from her ethnographic study in Athens involves three distinct 'discourses' of meaning. These comprise Tango as Passion, as Ritual and as Play and together account for the various understandings and behaviours of the participants in her study.

Via the 'spectre of Argentine Tango' Manning (2007, xvi) introduces 'transculturation-in-movement', a concept that exposes the ways in which interweaving cultures depart from the often stultifying narratives of the nation-state' (xvi): her discussion of transculturation resonates with discussions recorded in the process of my field work. She notes that whilst

6 Conferences specifically dedicated to Argentine Tango include: Tango! Dance the World Around: Global Transformations of Latin American Culture, Harvard University, Boston, October, 2007; Translation Dance: Translokale Tanzkultur Tango Hamburg, November, 2007; Tangoing Gender, Power and Subversion in Argentine Tango, Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICI) Berlin, 2008 ; Tango: Creations, Identifications, Circulations, Paris (2011)

such transcultural phenomena appear to exceed national boundaries, at the same time ‘they often remain embedded within national imaginaries’ (xvii).

A significant amount of work addresses dance and music⁷ which, like Argentine Tango, appears to have had a clear historical and geographical point of origin, but which in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has migrated, translated or been appropriated by different groups of people in the same way that Argentine tango appears to have done. These have provided different ways of conceptualising and discussing the migration of movement styles and the transformation or creation of culture in translation. Such themes underpin discussion of the transculturation of Argentine Tango and the deterritorialised practice which emerges in contexts such as the East Midlands as well as many other locations in the United Kingdom, Europe and other cities around the world.

Paul Scolieri’s introductory article ‘Global/Mobile: Re-orienting Dance and Migration Studies’(2008) devoted to ‘conceptualizing the philosophical and practical intersections’ between dance and migration studies, offered a comprehensive overview of the role of dance in contexts of migration. Although referring largely to involuntary migration, he acknowledges that:

The “dance world” is a nomadic one, constituted by a mobile set of performers, choreographers, teachers, and audiences in search of economic prosperity, political asylum, religious freedom, and/or artistic liberty (2008, vi).

It is informative with regard to a twenty-first century consideration of globalisation and the way in which cultural practices transform as they deterritorialise, migrate and reterritorialise. The collection of case studies compiled by Skinner and Kringelbach (2014) similarly addresses the migrations of dance and the ways in which dance variously performs as a leisure or tourist commodity, social activity, cultural heritage, nationalist identity or aesthetic experience.

⁷ These include diverse works on Salsa by Bosse (2008), Hutchinson (2014), Renta (2004), Skinner (2007) and Wieschialek (2003); O’Connor (1997) on Step Dancing in the wake of the Eurovision Song Contest; Ronström (1999) on diasporic Yugoslavian Polka in Sweden; Da Costa Holton(1998) on Flamenco; Foley (2001, 2013) on Irish dance; Frühauf on belly-dance(2009) .

Appadurai's (1996) theories of '-flows' and '-scapes' underpin his arguments about the migration and flows of culture, as well as incorporating the imagination as being instrumental in modern life and the creation of culture. Thomas Solomon's (2009) transnational communities of affect and Halifa Osumare's (2008) Connective Marginalities similarly address the spread and transformation of Hip-Hop and Rap⁸ as a cultural practice.

In the later stages of writing up this thesis, two texts by researchers using ethnographic methodologies were of particular interest to me: Skinner's (2014) work on the anthropological imagination with regard to Tango dancers on a dance holiday near Toulouse in France addresses the role of the imagination in the creation of meaning for social Tango dancers. The themes articulated in Skinner's study overlap closely with those in my research.

Psychologist, Luca Tateo's (2014) article 'The Dialogical Dance: Self, Identity Construction, Positioning and Embodiment in Tango Dancers' is an ethnographic study of Tango dancers in Italy in which he explores the I-relations of dancers with themselves, the Other and a subject (music, the audience, the tango community). The theoretical aim of Tateo's work is to use tango as a *dialogical* field of application for sketching a *dialogical* epistemology, analysing dialogic exchanges between himself and Italian social dancers along Bakhtinian lines, to reveal the construction of self through the process of dancing Argentine Tango. He takes up a theme also explored by Savigliano (1995) and which I address in Chapter 5, that of 'the gaze' and being watched, such that it takes, not two, but three to tango:

a male to master the dance and confess his sorrows; a female to seduce, resist seduction, and be seduced; and a gaze to watch these occurrences. The male/female couple performs the ritual, and the gaze constitutes the spectacle. Two performers, but three participants, make a tango. However, the gaze is not aloof and static; rather, it is expectant, engaged in that particular detachment that creators have toward the objects of their imagination (Savigliano, p.74).

⁸ Halifu Osumare argues that the diffusion of Hip Hop across the globe, can be accounted for by the power of 'Nommo' as part of the African Aesthetic which, she claims, underpins all contemporary Hip Hop. She offers a conceptual framework of "Connective Marginalities" to explain the power of Hip Hop to exist both as popular global culture emanating from the U.S. cultural hegemony and as subculture in diverse sites around the world. It is a conceptual construct used to describe and explain the process of change and appropriation both locally and against the context of the globalisation of Hip-Hop which I consider alongside others.

OTHER DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY

Whilst not specifically addressing Tango, two works edited by Theresa Buckland, *Dance in the Field: Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography* (1999) and *Dancing from Past to Present: Nation, Culture, Identities* (2006) comprise articles on ethnographic dance research into a range of dances from all over the world. Written, variously, from backgrounds of anthropology, dance ethnology, folk life studies and performance studies they demonstrate the role of dance in the production, performance and reproduction of culture and identity.

Apart from Savigliano (1995) and Taylor's (1998) ethnographic works on Tango, other key works which manifest features of auto-ethnography, participant observation and embodiment include Jane Cowan's (1990) study of the politics of gender in Northern Greek dancing in *Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece*; Barbara Browning's *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (1999); Yvonne Daniel's *Rumba: dance and social change in contemporary Cuba* (1995); and Deirdre Sklar's (2001) *Dancing with the Virgin*, a study of the Fiesta of Tortugas dancing in Mexico. Sally Ann Ness (1992, 2004) studied Cebu dance in the Phillipines and Tomi Hahn (2007) Japanese dance: both with a strong emphasis on the significance of embodiment as a way of gaining knowledge of cultural understanding. Dena Davida (2011) has used ethnographic methodology as an insider professional dancer to address performance or art dance. Dankworth and David (2014) provide a collection of ethnographic studies of dance in diverse contemporary contexts, in which the methodology comprises field research and participation on the part of the researchers, necessitating a reflexive approach. These studies share a common emphasis on embodiment, researcher participation and reflexivity as a means of producing ethnographic knowledge of dance and movement practices.

Whilst I deal further with embodiment as a methodological approach in Chapter Three, I briefly consider here the theme of embodiment in Browning's book, which is a rich and extended ethnography informed by her personal involvement as a white American offering her research,

experiences and understanding of four Brazilian movement themes: Samba; the divine choreography of the Candomble dances; Capoeira; and Carnaval⁹.

Browning realises that:

When an outsider chooses to go through another culture's motions, she may believe hotly in her actions, but the possibility of translating them means they "are and are not" the same. The possibility of translation divides experience (xviii).

Browning's concern with translating meaning as an outsider going 'through another culture's motions' both resonates and contrasts with my purpose of articulating meaning with regard to the dancers of Argentine Tango in the East Midlands, most of whom were insiders geographically, going 'through another culture's motions.' The theme of the embodiment of culture in dance resounds in Browning's work. It provoked consideration of identity and community in my own research context despite the fact that amongst the East Midlands participants the movement system is not acquired or embodied as *habitus*, but is studied, taught and rehearsed, with outcomes which also demand discussion, such as I later endeavoured to facilitate in my methodology.

RESEARCH ON SOCIAL DANCING

There has been a change of emphasis in dance research in the latter part of the twentieth century that has rejected notions of universality, represented notably by Curt Sachs (1937) and later by Alan Lomax in the Choreometrics project (1968). Furthermore there has been a rejection of absolute or positivistic judgements and of the understanding of 'culture' as 'high art' which favoured the study of and research into theatre dance and art dance as the objects

⁹ Like Sklar, Browning is interested in corporeal intelligence. "In Brazil, there are certain dances which, in effect, write their own meanings. And there is an understanding of the possibility of a corporeal intelligence."(xi). Browning describes Samba as "the dance of the body articulate," explaining that "the skilled sambista is able . . . to "dizer no pe" –speak with the feet," (p.1) narrating "a story of racial contact conflict, and resistance," tracing the history of slavery into Brazil.

of intrinsic cultural and artistic value¹⁰. It is only in the two decades spanning the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century that popular dance and culture have become serious and legitimate subjects of academic study with growing emphasis on the notion of dance as being situated and socially contextualised. This shift emphasises the particularities of the cultural circumstances that give rise to popular dance practices and the socially situated nature of the differing values with which they are laden. It has also led towards an understanding of dance as practice which is, in Butler's (1990, 1993) sense, embodied and performative, and therefore absolutely sensitive to, reflective of and contingent upon the contextual circumstances of the culture within which it takes place. It is no accident then, that this change in the direction of understanding the experience of dance, is similarly marked by changes in its epistemological and ontological designation, for example with an emphasis on the phenomenological or experiential and therefore inevitably, corporeal understanding, as opposed to a prior Cartesian ontology within which the body was only a secondary consideration.

Beyond this emphasis on the contextual, situated, and therefore culturally performative nature of dance, there is something else that is highly significant: this change in direction, towards the cultural, has occurred at a time when cultural integrity, with the rise of globalisation and its accompanying post-modern neoliberal sensitivities, is itself in crisis. This is a situation where traditional borders no longer define meaning and practice, and geography is dislocated in the individual imaginaries of participants, often as cultural tourists. These emergent themes are contiguous with my own questions and findings, as I will discuss later. For the moment, however, I intend to outline in a little more detail, the research trajectory within which my study sits.

By the late twentieth century the subject of dance research was gradually opening out beyond performance or theatre dance, to include contemporaneous social dancing, on local as

¹⁰ See Buckland, T. (2006, pp.4-11) with regard to the opening up of subject matter within the evolving field of dance ethnography towards the end of the twentieth century, in relation to classical anthropological and historical studies and in response to the changing political currents of postmodernism; see also Dodds (2011, pp. 11-18) for a detailed discussion of values with regard to the artistic canon and its consequences for popular dance and culture.

opposed to distant communities, and also on non-geographical or even virtual communities. Sociologist Angela McRobbie (1984), noting the substantial lack of dance as a subject of academic study, offers her [at that time] 'unashamedly unconventional . . . series of social snapshot profiles' (p.130) in order to redress the situation and represent dance as significant social experience for girls. Sociologist Helen Thomas presents edited collections (1995, 1997) offering sociological and ethnographic perspectives on examples of dancing contexts within the UK. Amongst these Andrew Ward (1997) remarks upon the dearth of academic study on dance up to that point, despite observing:

a context in which with a 'resurgence of dancing' (Wolffe, 1995) 'about five million people go dancing each week' (Gledhill, 1995), and in which there have been explosions of interest in tea dances (Roffey, 1994,) ceroc (Woolf, 1995), flamenco (McLeod, 1995), folk dancing (Bishop, 1995), tango, (Norman, 1995), ballroom dancing (Gledhill, 1995) and the doop (Halpin, 1994). (Ward in Thomas, p.8-9).

Certain studies¹¹ thus offer models of the kind of approach and methodology used by myself which focused on a contemporary, local, social dancing community who are not connected as a community except by virtue of their dancing. Dancer and anthropologist Drid Williams (1999) writes about locale and the fieldwork context, which, like my research context in Leicester where I also lived and worked, need be only five minutes, not thousands of miles away, but yet can yield ethnographic understanding of the subject matter by virtue of making the familiar seem exotic, or at least strange, by attempting to view it differently, from the perspective of its participants.

Whilst my project is set in a contemporary urban environment similar to those of Thomas' collections, it nevertheless differs in that the particular dance form, Argentinian Tango, cannot be conceived of as British, and nor do the majority of participants have any relationship with Argentina. Andrew Ward (1993) considered such relationships between particular dance activities and social contexts, suggesting two approaches:

¹¹ For example, Thomas (1995) 'An-Other Voice: Young Women Dancing and Talking'; O'Connor, (1997) 'Safe Sets: Women, Dance and Communitas'; Thomas and Miller (1997) 'Stepping Out: Ballroom Blitz' in which the voices of participants articulate meaning and identifications within their dancing just as I intended of the participants of my own study.

- *that a dance practice may be performed by a certain social group at a certain time in a certain context, but could equally be done elsewhere at a different time by different people.*

- *alternatively a given dance practice is intrinsically tied to a social group, time and context and that it cannot transfer, and if it does it is pastiche or mimicry (pp. 19-28)*

It is difficult to ascertain which approach best applies to the Tango groups in the East Midlands. One might consider that dancing Argentine Tango in Buenos Aires is essentially the same practice and the same dance as dancing Argentine Tango in Market Harborough. On the other hand one might argue that the dance, albeit bearing the same name, is clearly a different practice if it is removed from its social group to another place in another time.

In *Everynight Life* Delgado, Muñoz and Fraser (1997) consider social dancing as everyday[night] practice in Latin/o American culture, in a range of dances which have and continue to develop as a result of trans/cultural change and interaction. In *Sport Dance and Embodied Identities* anthropologists, Noel Dyck and Eduardo Archetti (2003) highlight 'the diverse and complex ways in which sport and dance are implicated in the production and expression of embodied identities' (p.1) by means of a series of ethnographic studies in various national settings. The collection addresses a range of sport and dance activities from anthropological perspectives, demonstrating embodied attitudes, moral judgements, allegiances, social arrangements and cultural ideals in these techniques and practices of the body.

Malnig's (2009) edited collection addresses social and popular dancing in America from the late eighteenth century to the early twenty-first century, with attention to the historical and cultural layering and the consequent opportunities for identity production which dance thereby presents to participants. She thus aims to promote further serious study of 'the cultural significance of social and ballroom forms' (p.2) into the twenty-first century. Malnig's contributors explore the social, political, economic and cultural contexts of dance and how it is central to cultural practice.

Dodds (2011) likewise offers a key study of the change of perspective in dance scholarship. In seeking to redress the balance away from theatre or art dance, her collection addresses the shift towards popular dance and culture as a subject of significant academic value. Her case studies on three dancing communities seek to investigate the ways in which participants

articulate meanings and values embodied in their practice. She concludes that in terms of dance scholarship:

The popular idiom has come back with a force, dancing on the canon in its Doc Marten boots, stiletto heels, old skool trainers and all other kinds of vernacular footwear that depart from the traditional ballet slippers or barefoot performances of modern stage dance (p.200).

These studies, some of which I will refer to again in due course, capture some of the layering of values and meaning, both historical and cultural which I was aware were taking place alongside the establishment and practice of Argentine Tango in the East Midlands of England. They frame my study, providing both an historic context and a comparative perspective on the subject matter. Dance ethnography in the last two decades of the twentieth century has developed in response to new political concerns as well as to a range of subject matter now deemed appropriate for study. In the following chapter I address the ethnographic methodology and process of this study, alongside associated theoretical issues relevant to my research project.

CHAPTER 3: FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

In this chapter I discuss various features of my research methodology in relation to associated theoretical perspectives and relevant studies to do with social dance ethnography conducted since the 1980s. The chapter also includes information regarding the practical aspects of the research and the time-scale within which it was conducted. Whilst I do not refer in detail to researchers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), Clifford and Marcus (1986), Geertz (1997), and Wolcott (1999) I wish to acknowledge that these have been important to my understanding of ethnography as a means of research and have informed my own ethnographic methodology. In particular Harry Wolcott's advice stood out for me, that 'the making of an ethnographer is in the doing'(1999, p.150): I sincerely hope that I have succeeded in following it.

ETHNOGRAPHY AT HOME

My focus is upon the contemporary cultural practice, performance and experience of Argentine tango in a specific part of the UK, and necessitates an ethnographic approach in order to reach out for and articulate 'the people's conceptualisations, values and practices' Buckland (2010, p.335). My study shares similarities with a significant amount of ethnography at home research conducted in the 1990s, whilst occupying a position in the early twenty-first century context. As Thomas explains, '[d]ance anthropology . . . has routinely adopted ethnographic methods to examine dance within the context of culture' (2003, p.66). It focuses on specific geographic localities which are close to home; is set in the contemporary urban landscape of 21st century Britain; is conducted in English, my first language; many of the participants are white British, sharing similar backgrounds to my own. Crucially I am a dance insider in this field, having been a member of both tango groups well before this research came into being. In fact, as I have explained, it was my position within these groups which gave rise to this field of research.

Anthropologist Johann Keali'i homoku's (1970) now famous essay portraying ballet as an example of ethnic art, stood out because of the new and controversial perspective from which it viewed a form of dance previously viewed as sophisticated, classical, high art. It was

followed by further late twentieth century ethnography-at-home studies such as by Cynthia Novack (1990) on American contact improvisation and Thomas (1997) who specifically includes a selection of ethnographic studies based in urban landscapes within the United Kingdom.

Such studies were accompanied by a paradigmatic shift since the 1980s, brought about by postmodernism, post-colonial studies, feminism, the debunking of positivism and an epistemological malaise across disciplinary boundaries as a result of deconstructionist writers. This undoubtedly encouraged a more reflexive and perspectivist approach resulting in dance ethnographies which focus less upon the dance forms and figures than upon the participants and context, as well as what they have to say about it. First-person dance ethnographies followed in which researchers explored the multiple layers of self in relation to their experience of dance as 'other' as a way of revealing dance knowledge.¹ Davida (2011) produced a collection of studies of performance dance conducted by researchers who are insiders either of the dance genres or as members of the surrounding community.

In the twenty-first century and within the context of globalization, new kinds of dance ethnography are emerging, whose participants are not necessarily rooted in specific locations nor immersed in longstanding and continuous dance traditions. Although such dance communities arise in geographic locations there may have been no previous tradition of those particular dances in that place. These new dancing communities are sustained more by virtue of their internet connectivity and the participants' mobility than because of a prior tradition or history of dancing together. For example Doane (2006) on swing dancing, McMains (2006) on American ballroom dancing and Bosse (2008) on salsa address more loosely connected, groups of self-determining individuals, joining 'virtual' or transient communities. Such studies are concerned with 'the experiential consideration of the emergent performance of cultural identities that are non-essential, fluid, and relational.' Buckland (2007, p.5).

This description fits the East Midlands Tango community aptly, insofar as it comprised a shifting membership drawn from a wide geographical area: a community 'based around expressive culture' (Hast, 1993, p.21) and sustained by means of the internet and a network of

¹ Including Savigliano (1995); Daniel (1991); Browning (1995); Taylor (1998); Hahn, (2007) as described in Chapter 2.

relationships with individuals and groups from an even wider geographical area, rather than residential proximity. Often the researchers themselves are members of this kind of community, as participants, and their own experience and relationship is understood as a valid aspect of the ethnographic research. 'Ethnography at home by practitioner-researchers' as Davida (2011, p.2) described such ethnographic studies,² is as likely to be addressed to social dancing as to any other genre of dance, but:

Getting to understand what to do – scientifically speaking – with one's own subjective experience seems to me the biggest challenge for the dance insider, and especially for the fieldworker at home (Cazemajou, p.19 in Davida 2011).

In order 'to understand and communicate the emic, that is, the insider, perspective of the participants' (Buckland 1997, p.1) I employ the means of twenty-first century ethnography. This entails crucially, embodied practice as well as participant observation, alongside an ethical commitment to communicate with, and convey the perspectives of those involved as closely as possible: to ask the participants and 'to tell it as it is'.

My interests are in who is participating in these two groups, and specifically with their individual identification and cultural identification with Argentine Tango within these distinct communities. These features are not tied to fixed geographic localities but are almost certainly connected with globalization and twenty-first century lifestyles.

A GROUP WITH NO INSIDERS: THE EMIC/ETIC DISTINCTION

Whilst undeniably convenient, there are nevertheless, as Koutsouba observes:

complexities which emerge when practising ethnography at home' particularly to do with the 'very concept of 'being at home'' with regard to a given cultural practice. (1999, p.189).

A Greek dance teacher, conducting research in Greece, on a Greek island of which she was not native, amongst villagers anxious that their dance practices had lapsed or been forgotten,

² Including Penny (1999) on competitive ballroom dancing; Bosse (2008); Wulff (1998) on ballet; Daniel (2007) on Rumba ; Buckland, F. (2002) on queer dance culture; and Hahn (2007) on Japanese dance.

Koutsouba found herself as both insider and outsider and faced with dilemmas about her role in that context. Facing a similar situation in the East Midlands, it was not just myself, the researcher, who was faced with an ambiguous footing as both insider (to the groups) and outsider (as researcher and, more significantly in terms of expertise, with regard to my knowledge of Argentine Tango). Likewise the participants (with the exception of one Argentinian couple from Buenos Aires) whilst insider members of the groups, were also outsiders to the practice of Argentine Tango. This ironic situation had implications for my research, just as it did for my teaching and their learning: ultimately, such an epistemological position both demands and ensures a reflexivity of perspective and of questioning.

I have already referred to the way in which the different people being studied may hold differing perspectives regarding where counts as home and the nature of their own practice; with whom they consider they share their practice, and where the borders between being at home and not at home are drawn. Such distinctions are important as they colour peoples' perceptions and determine behaviour, beliefs and attitudes regarding the way in which the practice should be conducted.

In this study, however, given its particular and peculiar situation, the role of those considered to be at home (either by themselves or others) could be construed either as entirely empty; or else as a completely new and anomalous role. What confounds and complicates my study is the nature of the two Argentinian tango groups in the East Midlands and the fact that virtually every single member of these two groups, myself included, is engaged in a translated cultural practice with which each has only a nominal or symbolic relationship. This adds a perspective which does not fit the remit of a classical anthropological study; nor does it fit that of a sociological study, in which the participants are at home or, if not at home, then whose presence is continuous with the context being investigated.

By contrast this study straddles disciplines, sitting alongside cultural studies, dance and anthropology in a new space which began to open up towards the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, as a result of globalization, tourism and mass communication. We are engaging in, and performing a cultural practice which is essentially foreign to us and of which we have limited knowledge and a peculiarly ad hoc set of home-grown beliefs. This is the idea of 'cultural predicament' developed by James Clifford (1988) which is caused by the effect of modernity and contemporary multinational relations on

culture, such that cultural traditions and identities are perceived as threatened and changing. Clearly the participants in the East Midlands, dedicated and enthusiastic as they are, do not perceive Argentine Tango to be threatened by their practice. However it is precisely such a local, dislocated transcultural practice which might be understood elsewhere, by some people, as threatening or endangering.

The East Midlands practice, with its internal contradictions and dilemmas, seems to suggest two parallel anthropological perspectives: firstly, as an ethnography by an insider researcher, who, as a member of the community, is engaged in a practice to which we are all (with few exceptions) outsiders. On the other hand, this particular 'cultural predicament' might also be understood as having produced a significant new cultural practice in which all participants are insiders in a loosely connected community of interest, negotiating and constructing identities, which are coherent with the postmodern world of displacement, change and fragmentation.

For many participants, all they knew about Argentinian tango was learned and derived from this very situation: it is as much a microculture, a feature of fragmented postmodern culture, as a translated, cross-cultural practice, nurtured and taken root, for some reason, in the East Midlands. Whilst there are insiders, it is debatable as to who could be regarded as holding key cultural knowledge with regard to Argentine Tango, beyond simply being a member of the groups. This makes the study particular, though perhaps indicative of other similar cultural practices arising around the UK and lends a peculiar and original quality, which in part, is what makes it so interesting. It is also what marks this study out as distinctive and of contemporary significance. In this peculiar context I am an insider, looking on with an outsider's eye, at the anomaly of the situation, as well as the detail of what is actually going in; and yet at the same time being as much an outsider to Argentine Tango beyond the East Midlands, as any other participant within this community of dancers.

FINDING THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

Bourdieu (1990) reminds us of the Weberian idea 'that the value of an object of research is dependent on the interests of the researcher. . . [which] at least allows the illusion of an element of choice in the encounter between researchers and their objects' (p.1). Georgiana Gore (1999) gives another perspective on the creation of a field of research, pointing out that whilst 'the distinguishing feature of dance ethnography is fieldwork', what is '[o]ften eluded is

that the field is a conceptual and not an empirical space, the location and boundaries of which are ethnographically generated' (p.210).

Whilst Bourdieu was drawing an analogy between the selection of a field of research and the taking of photographs, I wish to make use of this same analogy as a means by which to clarify my understanding of my own research activity and the way in which it came to be conceptualized. Whilst in his case, Bourdieu was addressing photography as an object of research in its own right, what he says about the photographer taking a snapshot, namely that 'the taking of a picture is still a choice involving aesthetic and ethical values'(p.6) has resonance for my focus. Everything may be 'objectively 'photographable'', but, '[i]n Nietzsche's words, 'The artist chooses his subjects. It is his way of praising,' and thus:

photography cannot be delivered over to the randomness of the individual imagination . . . the most trivial photograph expresses, apart from the explicit intentions of the photographer, the system of schemes of perception, thought and appreciation common to a whole group.' (p.6).

This describes a position as a researcher which I acknowledge and accept for myself: namely that I chose the field of research for reasons (described in my introduction and Chapter One) and motivations contingent upon who I am, which had already led me to join these tango groups, and to adopt the same schemes of perception, thought and appreciation as other participants did.

With regard to the emergence and subsequent selection of these two Argentinian tango groups as a field of research, it is quite evident that, right from the outset, my choice to do so involved 'aesthetic and ethical values,' amongst others. I was a social dancer. I had been attending both groups for several years. I had danced other kinds of dances in other groups over the years, my interest in the phenomenon of transcultural dance activity arising first whilst dancing salsa.

By 2006 I had been dancing Argentine Tango for approximately two years and had more or less given up other kinds of social dancing. I had made friends with other members of the groups and attending the sessions every weekend had become a regular part of my social life. I was taking pleasure in having 'discovered' Argentinian tango and the challenges of learning how to perform it. That fact itself represented a choice, demonstrating taste, to use Bourdieu's term, although I was scarcely conscious of, or even concerned to articulate the influences which had led me to make it.

The step away from my involvement in these Tango groups towards identifying them as a potential field of research is of course significant both as a process and epistemologically in order to be able to produce new knowledge from insider insights. Gore (1999) for example, points out that:

the distance between researcher and field is intrinsic to the activity whether this distance be construed as geographical, cultural, subjective or epistemological (p.211).

There were in fact three perspectives from which a distancing between myself and the practice occurred, and which subsequently led to the conceptualisation of Argentine Tango in the East Midlands as a field of research. The first, with regard to my interest in transcultural dance was as a salsa dancer listening to teachers' exotic evocations of Cuba or New York or standing at the edge of the dance-floor, watching and waiting for a dance. This distance between dancers and the imagined world on the dance-floor was reinforced on beginning to dance Tango. The second point, when my current research questions began to arise, was as I assumed a role as occasional tango teacher and began to internalise the demands of the position with regard to the participants and the practice. The third perspective emerged as I conceptualised this research, causing me to take a further step away from the practice and enabling me to frame the questions and identify my objectives. Undoubtedly I was often pulled back inside the research field as a participant: equally the exigencies of my various roles drew me outside the research field just as frequently. The fact of being a member of these groups is complicated because, whilst offering a certain privilege of access to insider knowledge, I am also obliged to distance myself in order to question and analyse, not only my position, perceptions and relationships within the group, but also those of other members.

In any case, being an organiser and teacher, placed me in yet another position with a further set of perceptions to be taken account of in relation to the group and the individual members within it. Until April 2009 I continued to experience perspectives from at least four different roles (participant, teacher, organiser, researcher) before reverting from the teacher/organiser roles back to being a straightforward participant again, alongside researcher. In addition I held other roles in between: as a friend of various participants, and of the organisers, ex-salsa partner to several other participants, work colleague of two, wife of another.

The nature of certain aspects of this research was also instrumental in producing distance: the experience of filming and reviewing participants brought about a new view of the practice for myself, and through their eyes as they watched and responded. Furthermore there were certain responses which surprised me into taking a fresh perspective on the practice. Quoting Kilani, Gore (1999) refers again to the necessity of distancing in order to conceptualize a field of research:

. . . without this capacity to render even the familiar strange there may be no discourse on otherness, since complete identification renders analytical practice impossible (Kilani, 1994,11-14). . . .If we accept, therefore, that distancing is an epistemological condition of ethnographic research, the question is how best to acknowledge this without returning to the reificatory stance of positivist anthropology where 'we' and 'they' are constituted as separate categories, implicitly in relations of inequality (p.211).

Apart from acknowledging the contradictory dilemma of needing an epistemological distance in order to constitute a field of study but also not wishing to reproduce imbalanced power relationships between researcher and subject, Gore is also referring to the problems of reflexivity and of representation: the so-called objectivity of research and the subjectivity, not only of the researcher, but also of all other voices who may be heard in the course of the study. 'In a post-positivist climate, the researcher recognizes that there is no one stable and overriding interpretation ...nor one truth to be established,' Buckland (1999, p.197).

Bourdieu addresses reflexivity in terms of positions and points of view and regards social science as 'an analysis of relative positions and of the objective relations between these positions (1989, p.16). Depending on the amount of acquired economic, cultural or symbolic capital:

agents are distributed in the overall social space, [and] [t]he dispositions (tastes activities interests) acquired in the position occupied imply an adjustment to this position, what Goffman calls the "sense of one's place" (p.17).

Bourdieu is concerned with articulating both the reality of an observed social object or phenomenon and the perspective from which it is perceived by different people. He thus observes that:

Points of view . . . are views taken from a certain point, that is, from a determinate position within social space. And we also know that there will be different or even antagonistic points of view, since points of view depend on the point from which they

are taken, since the vision that every agent has of the space depends on his or her position in that space (1989, p.18).

Such an awareness of relative positions and perceptions is very much in the foreground of my methodology, specifically because of the anomalous nature of the context to which I have already alluded: namely that the practice appeared to hinge on a consensus of beliefs and knowledge, which is nevertheless as diaphanous³ and stretchy as a spider's web, but suspended with meaning and significance as implied by Geertz's 'webs of significance' (1973, p.12). In order to understand how the construction holds up, it is necessary to discover what is at stake from multiple angles and in the end to weave together a fabric of meaning which is flexible and accommodating of individual differences as much as commonalities.

Ultimately what is at issue is that a one-sided or single perspective account of a cultural practice cannot be regarded as being the definitive version, or of having hierarchical priority over any other. It is thus important to hear as many individual voices as possible, not in order to assert a majority view of the meaning or significance of a given cultural practice, but to see the range of common beliefs and the extent to which they overlap, as well as where understandings diverge. I have therefore tried to ensure that as many possible strands of meaning are taken into account in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of this translated cultural practice: translated from South America to the East Midlands.

ACCESS TO THE FIELD AND PRACTICAL TIMESCALE

From 2002 until January 2008 the Market Harborough Tango Group was organised and run by David and his wife in a dedicated fashion, largely as an outlet for their own passion for Argentine Tango.

³ Apart from Geertz's use of the metaphor of 'webs', I also use it deliberately for two reasons: in order to try to convey the delicately-fabricated nature of the practice itself, which hangs together as a whole despite the elusiveness of the beliefs woven into it, and its vulnerability to damage, should some tacit aspects of knowledge become exposed; secondly because of the words used later by one participant, Daphne, suggesting a sense of delicacy and fragility in her own experience of dancing Argentine Tango (see Chapter 5).

We began in the October of 2002 and ran it entirely autocratically, pleasing ourselves, taking all the financial risks and losses to begin with since we figured that we were paying for our dancing anyway so what was the difference? (David, email correspondence, 26.5.09.)

In Autumn 2006, I asked if David would be willing to be a referee in my application to do a research degree in dance at De Montfort University. He was interested and agreed. I presented my initial research proposal to De Montfort University in July 2007 and in September I sought David's permission to distribute questionnaires and interview participants for an ethnographic study of social dance in the East Midlands. Although unsure what I meant by an ethnographic study, he agreed on condition that any questionnaires be vetted by the university and presented on official headed paper. I reassured him of this and that participants' agreement to be involved, or not, as well as their confidentiality would be safeguarded. There was discussion about the kinds of questions that might be asked, as well as the possibility of him receiving feedback. Beyond that he did not look at the questionnaires, except to fill one in himself. I thus had relative freedom to ask questions and interview people, although it was obviously incumbent upon me to respect privacy and confidentiality, and to endeavour not to encroach unduly upon people's dancing time.

Gradually, having become involved as an occasional teacher, my research questions became more focused. I found myself seeking answers to questions specifically about what to teach, leading to more abstract questions about style, technique, aesthetic values, followed swiftly by issues of authenticity, tradition, and our own intentions, as participants, in wanting to do this particular dance at all.

Ultimately, in 2007 the original founders reached the end of their commitment and the organisation and management of the Market Harborough group were handed over to four people, of whom I was one. From that point on, apart from the time commitment of having to prepare and teach regularly, the possibility of issuing questionnaires at the door and collecting them as people returned them, was not difficult, at least on a practical level. Being one of the organising group and assuming the role of researcher, no doubt removed me on two levels from the participants: putting me in two positions, each of which no doubt influenced participants' responses in inescapable ways, but which equally gave me access and the necessary perspective of distance.

The survey questionnaires were prepared during Winter 2007 and then distributed at the Market Harborough tango venue starting from April 2008. They were left in a pile on the front desk, with a sign inviting people to take one, and a pile of pencils with which to complete the questionnaire. Few people actually completed the questionnaires at the venue: many people said they hadn't brought reading glasses with them; others arrived only just in time to change their shoes and get ready to start the lesson; others, I suspect, simply wished to answer the questions in a more private and less rushed atmosphere. As an organiser I was in a position to encourage people to take the forms and to remind them to return them.

The pile of questionnaires sat on the front desk most weeks over the next 2 months, both to encourage people to return completed ones, and also to make sure that less regular participants would have the chance to complete one, even if they only attended once a month or less.

The task of distributing questionnaires at the *práctica* in Leicester was easier in some ways, as most of the participants had already responded at Market Harborough, which meant that I adopted a more targeted approach, only offering forms to people who did not attend Market Harborough. This took place between May and June 2008. However, when participants from those *práctica* sessions chose to take their questionnaires home to complete, it turned out that they would be less likely to be returned. I suspect this was simply to do with the fact that those I targeted were not such regular attendees (they were not attending Market Harborough on Sundays for example) and furthermore did not always attend the Saturday sessions: if they did not come back the following week, the chances were high that the questionnaire was lost or would be forgotten by the next time they came. In total fifty questionnaires were printed for distribution and thirty-three returned.

The final question on the questionnaire asked participants if they would be willing to be interviewed further about their experience of dancing Argentine Tango. This entailed providing their names and contacts. Only four people did not agree to this out of all the questionnaires which were distributed, which meant that I had more willing interviewees than I was actually able to interview.

During June 2008 I began to conduct one-to-one interviews with people who had declared themselves willing to do so (88% of the response). The first of these was with my co-teacher, Malcolm, one of the core members who had been attending both groups from the very

beginning. This first interview took place on a staircase outside the practice room, with the sound of the music in the background and people sticking their heads around the door to see what we were doing. The lesson was quick to learn, that these interviews needed to take place a bit further from the dancing and out of sight, in order not to invite curiosity or interruption: this proved to be easier at Market Harborough where there was considerably more space. Consequently this is where the majority were conducted.

At the end of July 2008, the summer holiday period began and the Market Harborough group was only running *prácticas* on Sundays instead of lessons and social dancing. With many people away on holiday, the possibility of continuing with face-to-face interviews did not really present itself again until the end of August and into the beginning of September 2008. By the beginning of October 2008 thirteen semi-structured interviews had been completed. Thereafter the process of transcription began, before moving onto the second phase of the methodology, discussed in chapter 4, which involved recording and reviewing video material with participants.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION, DOCUMENTATION AND STORAGE

Dance and movement ethnographers conduct scholarly inquiry which is fundamentally within the realm of social hermeneutics and thus ever-shifting; no one method of documentation can ever be granted pre-eminence (Buckland 1999, p.6).

My main methods of data collection include, primarily, embodied practice, participant observation, field-notes, questionnaires, and one-to-one recorded audio interviews⁴; photographs and video recordings; communication and discussion, both live and taken from e-groups connected to web-sites, including e-mail. Later I used a video camera, in the second phase of the research, which is detailed in Chapter 4. All data was transferred to my laptop apart from some hand-written field notebooks and some early audio-interviews on cassette tape. Overall there were four types of data which were collected: notes written by myself in notebooks and computer documents; paper questionnaires; audio-, and video-recordings of

⁴ I took advantage of the unobtrusiveness and ubiquity offered by a mobile phone for photographs and sound-recording. This also facilitated transferring material to computer for storage and organisation.

participants talking or dancing; other incidental types of information, such as e-mail exchanges and attachments and documents offered to me by participants. Throughout the thesis the names of participants have been substituted with pseudonyms in order to preserve confidentiality, except for those who had published work in the public domain which I have discussed or referenced in the text.

I instigated the research by means of a questionnaire⁵ asking biographical-type information, such as address, occupation, age-bracket, as well as why participants had first attended, any previous dance experience, trips to or interest in visiting Buenos Aires and whether participants had any knowledge of Spanish. In particular they were also intended to provide some impressionistic information about participants' perceptions of Argentine Tango.

The biographical data resulting from the thirty-three completed questionnaires enabled verification of factual information about the participants and provided a demographic profile of the group as at the beginning of the study (Spring 2008), although the composition should not be regarded as fixed as many of those who responded were not regulars; some later drifted away, and new people joined.

Distributing the questionnaires was useful as a starting point to the research as it introduced my role as researcher to the group. Later I was also able to refer back to the questionnaires to establish certain factual details about participants, but otherwise these were less useful with regard to being able to understand participants' deeper identification with Argentine *tango*.

The interviews were semi-structured⁶, asking the same questions to invite open-ended responses from participants. Ultimately I conducted thirteen interviews, providing me with a range of contributions on a set of aspects of Argentine Tango. These early, one-to-one, semi-structured interviews resulted in audio recordings (later transcribed with pseudonyms for ease of reference) in which participants discussed their general experience of attending the groups and their general interest in and knowledge of Argentine Tango.

⁵ See appendix 1.

⁶ See appendix 2.

Finally but perhaps the most important aspect of the study both as a means of collecting and producing data, was the practice of embodiment. That is to say that throughout, as researcher, I was involved in the same bodily practice as the participants. Thus, not only was I engaged in the same contextualised activity with participants, but I was able to share their somatic experience both at the time and later during the playback sessions as a result of which a significant amount of data was produced. In the next section I contextualise the importance of embodiment as a research strategy in much twenty-first century dance ethnography.

EMBODIED PRACTICE AS RESEARCH STRATEGY

Culture is embodied . . . Movement constitutes an ever-present reality in which we constantly participate. We perform movement, invent it, interpret it, and reinterpret it, on conscious and unconscious levels. In these actions we participate in and reinforce culture, and we also create it. (Novack, 1990, p.80)

With a similar commitment to Cynthia Novack's anthropological insight into the significance of human movement and dance, Sally Ann Ness (1992) in her ethnographic account of Sinulog dance in the Philippines, is as insistent on the importance of embodiment as a means of gaining cultural understanding.

To fully comprehend what the act of performing a choreographed movement can mean in an "other" culture – that is to say, in a society whose organizing principles, social institutions, and value systems are profoundly unfamiliar or exotic relative to one's own – a person must have some idea of what performing any choreographed movement can mean at all. There must be some appreciation of how getting oneself physically through a choreographic moment can affect a human being, and how it can affect one's cultural understanding (Ness, p.2).

It was indeed the very act of trying to move our bodies in a particular way and embody Tango for ourselves that led to this research: our long-distance attempts to reproduce the aesthetic style of Argentine Tango from the English East Midlands giving rise to frustration, dispute and, sometimes, satisfaction. These attempts begged questions such as those raised by Koutsouba (1999) about who is considered to be at home within a cultural practice; who is allowed to participate in it or to take ownership of it. But as Ness insists in her description of the process of frequent repetition needed in order to train her arm to take on a particular choreographed movement of a Filipino sinulog dancer, it is imperative to have an open mind and a willingness 'to acquire a new and perhaps startling insight into who it is they actually are' (1992, p.5).

Thomas (2003) highlights 'the contention that ethnography is an embodied activity and that the ethnographic field is an embodied social and physical space' (p.4). She alerts the reader to works which use embodiment in the context, and dancing as a specific strategy of the researcher role, in order to gain relational insights by being involved. These include studies such as by Browning (1995) on Brazilian Samba, Capoeira and Candomble: Cowan (1990) on Greek dancing: Novack (1990,1993), Ness (1992) and Sklar (1991) who represent the embodiment of ethnography in their respective practices by 'incorporating into the research arena their reflexive self-awareness as experiencing, moving and dancing culture bearers'(Thomas, 2003,p.78).

I have studied Japanese dance since the age of four. This book is my attempt to comprehend how my body has come to know this movement. It is . . . a general exploration of how movement is transmitted and embodied, using Japanese dance as a case study. My own experience has both enriched and problematized my ethnographic process . . . ironically the very "data" I sought were deeply entrenched in my very body – ready to be mined. (Hahn, 2007, xiv).

Evolving from the traditional methods of anthropology, including field work, notes and participant observation, dance ethnography and the anthropology of human movement in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century now routinely include embodiment as a significant research strategy. At one end of a spectrum of research embodiment Frosch (1999) described the primary method associated with ethnographic research, namely, participant observation. At the other end of the spectrum, in what she describes as the role of observing participant, Browning's project is to write the body of the dancer of Brazilian Samba, Candomble and Capoeira and, as she explains:

Many things I learned in Brazil I learned with my body, and it was only long after that I began to be able to articulate in writing what I had come to understand dancing (1995, p.167).

Dance ethnologist and performance studies scholar, Deirdre Sklar (2000) who studied the dance practice incorporated in the festival of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Tortugas, New Mexico similarly emphasised the socially constructed nature of human movement and the way in which bodies perform identities. Like Novack and Ness, Sklar maintains that 'cultural knowledge is embodied in movement' (p.71) and that movement is a way of knowing and a medium for carrying meaning. Pointing out that whilst:

it has been traditional practice to erase the researcher's body from the ethnographic text, "subjective" bodily engagement is tacit in the process of trying to make sense of another's somatic knowledge (2000, p.71).

Sklar emphasises 'the phenomenological experience of self' engaged in what she calls 'empathetic kinesthetic perception,' (p.71) in which 'felt data' needs to be acknowledged and recorded as part of the ethnographic research process, therefore, '[t]here is no other way to approach the felt dimensions of movement experience than through the researcher's own body,' (p.71). Likewise Thomas observes that:

The consequences of not reflecting on our taken-for-granted routine bodily practices can limit or inhibit our comprehension of the bodily activities of 'others', and this once again emphasises the need to enter the embodied field with some self-knowledge (2003, p.78).

In the course of her later discussion regarding the potential cultural insights to be derived from embodied practice, Ness (2004) argues that it is partly in the understanding of what it means to be fallible and to know what one is attempting to achieve that the cultural aspect of the dance is revealed, as opposed to simply the accomplishment of moves:

The recognition of fallibility in performance, in particular, is unthinkable without a judgement being made in relation to some preconceived knowledge of a relatively perfect alternative, existent or imagined (p.139).

Emphasising that the knowledge gained by means of embodied practice appears 'to be *more* focused on nonpresent, nonfactual, temporal characters' (p.139) and is more likely to offer explanation and insight into the efforts and attempts to master dance moves, rather than simply describe them in anatomical or mechanical terms, Ness also suggests that:

embodied understanding tends to produce an awareness of movement as a source of integrating relationships in at least two general respects. First – memory or imagination and corporeality most prominently. . . Second, with respect to the mover and the environment in which the movement occurs (2004, p.137).

Thus in order to move beyond description to derive meaning from the outward dance practice in the Tango dancing contexts in the English East Midlands, it is therefore not simply a question of observing what the people do, where they are dancing, what is being taught and what it looks like. More important is doing what participants do, what they say they are doing and why it is important for them to do it; how they explain or demonstrate what they are trying to achieve; by what aesthetic criteria they evaluate their own performance or that of

others; and why they have chosen to dance Argentine Tango in the East Midlands, the rural heart of England, so far away from the dance's urban origins in dockside Buenos Aires.

Embodiment was from the outset already a clear part of my methodology. For several years previously I had been attending classes and workshops alongside the other participants, watching intently like everyone else as new moves were demonstrated, trying to understand how to feel the lead and make them work; practising parts of steps; changing partners after every track, moving around the circle, getting to grips with each new embrace; dealing with partners whose bodies and dancing did not quite co-ordinate with mine; feeling frustrated by less than satisfactory dances and occasionally experiencing the near-ecstasy of sharing a dance with a partner with whom it was possible almost instantly to communicate without speaking and to move smoothly and pleasurably together. Having been taught by various teachers who painted scenes of Buenos Aires, like postcards, in my mind, sowing seeds of nostalgia, romance or sizzle in the imagination, I had then dressed up accordingly like many others for special *milongas*; been impressed by watching certain strangers dance; felt excitement about sharing dances with favourite dancers, though less enthusiastic about others; dared to ask strangers to dance; endured the waiting-to-be-invited scenario and dissected the highs and lows of many a Tango evening whilst driving home.

Before starting to teach and then to conduct my research I had, in short, been a participant like any other, embodying the practice of Argentine Tango in every way. I therefore, feel justified, given these conditions, to be described as a 'member-researcher' (Adler and Adler, 1987) possessing expert competencies which granted me access to the internal culture of the group and qualified me with a level of skill and familiarity necessary to enable me to conduct research into the practice.

However Sklar's assertion that 'bodily engagement is tacit in the process of trying to make sense of another's somatic knowledge (2000, p.71) poses further questions about exactly whose cultural knowledge is being embodied and addressed here. Whilst the attempted embodiments of Argentine Tango participants in the East Midlands are interesting and could themselves even be regarded as a kind of exploratory ethnographic endeavour, they nevertheless seem to provide a different kind of knowledge to that addressed by Sklar: the participants in the Tortuga Fiesta which she studied were indigenous, not distanced from the context of that festival. By contrast the East Midlands participants were not part of a local

community involved in sharing an indigenous social and cultural experience, but a disparate group whose existence hinged solely on the desire and attempt to dance Argentine Tango. Their efforts and successes were inevitably mixed and varied, offering plenty of opportunity for debate and disagreement, some of which is included or alluded to in Chapter 6.

In contrast to Sklar's embodied practice as research methodology, what I had been trying to achieve in my dancing was nevertheless an embodiment essentially similar to that of other participants: like them I started out with the same wish to learn to dance Tango. Where my embodied practice differed was that I later began to experience the practice at a step removed from the participants, not only watching their moves and dancing with them, but also considering the relationship between themselves and their practice, as well as that of myself and mine. Up to that point my efforts to embody Argentine Tango had been relatively unselfconscious, but by having begun as a Tango dancing participant and then turned into a teacher and, later, a researcher, I was both enabled and obliged to reflect on my own embodied experience, in addition to gaining the somewhat more distanced perspective of participant observer with regard to the embodiment of others within the practice. Ann David (2013) suggests that:

working and dancing with people . . . brings a deep involvement and personal engagement, but has the power to transcend issues of representation, class distinction, hetero-normative boundaries and post-colonial differences (p.46).

Dancing with the East Midlands participants certainly resulted in deep involvement and personal engagement, but also more besides. Not only can bodily practice bring about corporeal memory and understanding of the movements and figures, as described by Ness with regard to Sinulog dancing, but it can also facilitate historic insight and connectedness with a practice such as Argentine Tango, if only because having the necessary open-mindedness and perseverance regarding one's own performance encourages questions to be asked. Through the process of being an embodied researcher involved in the practice of participants, further avenues of investigation became accessible and meaningful within the East Midlands context.

DANCE NOTATION AND VIDEO RECORDING

Embodied practice has been a principal strategy of most dance ethnography, particularly from the United States, from the 1990s onwards. Embodiment is as much a method of engagement

and a means by which to enhance understanding, as a form of inscription and documentation in which the researcher's physical practice of dance movement becomes a primary resource in its own right.

Adrienne Kaeppler's recurrent concern was, however, that anthropologists should also be competent in their fieldwork in order to produce meaningful analysis. She maintained that it is '[n]ecessary to examine how individuals studying dance learn to interpret what they see,' (2001, p.117) because without knowledge of movement conventions a viewer is unable to understand what is being conveyed. Consequently fieldwork should include informed movement participation as well as the analytical skills of a competent spectator, in an attempt to gain insightful understanding of the movement system within the society.

Beyond their insistence on embodiment, Kaeppler (2000), Brenda Farnell (1999) and Drid Williams (1995) also called for a structured and detailed analysis of human action, including dance, as a significant aspect of ethnography and of understanding dance/movement 'from an agent-centred perspective' Farnell (p.341). Williams (1995) was, however, wary that movements which look the same may conceal divergent significance, thereby underlining the importance of embodied ethnographic understandings:

How do we know, for example, that actions that look the same are, in reality, different? There are homonyms in movement and gesture, just as there are homonyms in speech, as my work on the Dominican Tridentine Mass, the ballet Checkmate and the exercise technique, Tai Chi Ch'uan, illustrates (Williams, pp.58-69).

With regard to subjecting human movement to functional-anatomical dissection Williams also argued that: 'if human actions are reduced to gross physical movements set in a physiological or biological context, the significance of the action as a part of human life is lost' (1991, p.182).

If my aim had been to compare the Tango being performed in the English East Midlands with Argentine tango as danced by certain dancers from Buenos Aires, in which the accuracy of the moves and closeness to an original model was at issue, notational analysis might have been appropriate or relevant: although such a comparison immediately begs a further question, regarding the notion of an original model. To have subjected the dancers in this study and their dancing to such analysis when what they were attempting to do was culturally unfamiliar anyway, seemed far from appropriate, and would only have yielded information about how well they could reproduce what had been taught (from whomever that may have been –itself

not an insignificant or unimportant point). This is an interesting, though by no means straightforward issue, which I discuss in Chapter 5 in the context of authenticity.

Kaepler (2000) clearly distinguished anthropologists from ethnologists:

during fieldwork anthropologists study dance to understand society, whereas dance ethnologists focus on the dances themselves – and those who do study context do so primarily to illuminate the dances (p.16).

In her study of salsa which she describes as an ‘Ethnographic study of Movement and Meaning in a Cross-Cultural Context’⁷ Bosse (2007) is similarly interested in identity creation, cosmopolitanism, habitus and the way in which the movement quality of a dance is transformed by the fact that a different group of people are engaged in it, some of whom do not have what she describes as the ‘movement dialect’ at their disposal to be able to dance it any other way.

Bosse’s focus however, differs from my own in her greater emphasis on dance moves and how the dance vocabulary is transformed, bearing in mind Sklar’s anthropologist/ ethnologist distinction above. Whilst the transformation of the dance style is of relevance with regard to my exploration of how the identity of Tango is perceived and (re)constructed, I am more concerned with the cultural ‘encrustations’, the intentions and attempts (the imaginary markers and the romantic signifiers, which may not necessarily be embodied in the dance) regardless of whether or of how well they are technically executed.

Consequently I opted for video-recordings in the second phase of this study, rather than a notational system of recording participants. Apart from acquiring a visual record of the dancing, I did so specifically as a means by which to promote reflection upon, and discussion of the clips from those participants who were filmed and from others as participant-observers

⁷ Bosse’s article (2007) also serves as a fertile case-study for examining cross-cultural borrowing and the ways in which new dance styles are generated, addressing issues at the centre of my interest. Similarly, McMains (2006) writes about the connotations of the term “Latin” with regard to salsa and ballroom dancing, and about how different dancers identify with the cultural connotations associated with it. See Chapter 6 for my discussion of these issues in relation to the East Midlands participants.

themselves. I took advantage of the serendipitous experience described by Felicia Hughes-Freedland (1999) in the process of using film, whereby:

the research implications emerge interactively. It is not only the film in the making which is an arena of inquiry. The showing of the film also reveals insight hitherto not observed because too familiar. My own films have elicited audience responses which make my familiar research become strange, and make manifest new understanding (p.119).

Thus I was able to record, replay and review clips of dancing, but also to gain insights from various perspectives, by listening to what people said about them. The whole video process is detailed in chapter 4; their feedback and analysis is addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

RESEARCHER RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSPECTIVES

Williams (2004) is concerned with the reflexivity and the personal anthropology of the researcher: of the necessity for awareness of the many layers of meaning (and responsibility) which one holds in different roles, from different perspectives and at different times (pp.231-254). In the course of her transition from amateur to professional anthropologist, which she describes as ‘analogous to an emergence out of darkness into light’(p.253) Williams moves towards an understanding of objectivity based on that of Pocock and reminiscent of Bourdieu’s ‘analysis of relative positions and of the objective relations between these positions’:

This outside other becomes an object for my knowledge and understanding when I enter into relationship with it, and what I call my understanding is a report on that relationship not on the essential being of that other. I personally enter into this relationship and make my report upon it. It is this making of a report, the offering of my understanding of the relationship as true, having universal intent, and therefore open to the acceptance, modification or rejection of my colleagues that constitutes the difference between my subjective experience and my personal anthropology. (Pocock, 1994 (1973), pp.3-4).

Williams concludes that ‘understanding is undeniably a relationship and it is contingent upon what one does not understand’(2004, p.254); while Perpner (1999) refers to Aschenbrenner’s perspectivism (1981) in which she:

does not attempt to maintain an ideally “objective” point of view. Instead, she takes what she describes as a position of “advocacy,” acknowledging her subjective involvement in her research material. She achieves a certain degree of impartiality, . .

by tempering her approach with a “perspectivism” that recognizes the existence of more than one complementary (and not exclusionary) viewpoint (1999, p.346).

To temper my own approach fully with such a perspectivism in a genuine attempt to achieve some form of objectivity with regard to the object of my research, I have thus taken Williams' lead. I therefore have endeavoured to acknowledge my 'personal anthropology' and take into consideration the differing viewpoints afforded by my own various roles, before attempting to understand the viewpoints of everyone else who is involved. It is not a hierarchical procedure in which I deal with my perspectives first, because they are more important, and then others after that: rather that I have to continually heed my own perspective, in order to ensure that I am addressing those of others as correctly and as astutely as possible. It further necessitates considering and interpreting evidence in different ways according to whose it is and in what context it has been yielded. Fundamentally an awareness of one's underlying assumptions is necessary, that they be questioned and that interpretations or accounts which flow from them are seen as such, and not as universal understandings.

Post-modernism and feminism has 'challenged the visualist, realist and objectivist frameworks inherent in traditional ethnographic approaches' (Thomas, 2003,p.65) and argued for a more reflexive approach which would allow for the voice of the 'other' to be heard. Neither Savigliano nor Taylor give us traditional approaches, but offer on one hand a post-modern, feminist demonstration of hyper-reflexivity (Savigliano) and on the other, an intimate account of the insider in place of the other (Savigliano and Taylor). They differ from studies such as those of Bosse, Thomas and Miller, and O'Connor all of whom conduct dance ethnographies by entering and participating within the context, and attempting to gain and explain insights from dancers, who, nevertheless are other to themselves as outside researchers.

Savigliano (1995, 1998) illuminates the shifting perspectives of the researcher in her ethnographic exploration and analysis of herself with regard to her experience and knowledge of tango. Whilst her tango context differs from mine, her work serves as one kind of ethnographic model, writing as she does with the respective perceptions of an academic expatriate, 'Latina' dancer and 'wallflower', and ex-colonised, Argentinian woman. What characterises her ethnographic writing is that, far from making pretensions to objectivity, it is unashamedly personal, offering multi-dimensional description and analysis from the various roles which she assumes or illuminates from personal experience. Savigliano is unselfconscious about the necessity of having to hear the voice of the 'other' as she is herself

representative of the 'other' as seen through the exoticizing colonial gaze. Locating herself at varying distances from the dancing of Tango per se, Savigliano demonstrates the mesh of loci from which she is able to observe and culturally situate the practice, both within Buenos Aires and from more distant vantage points.

My field-work does not include experience of Buenos Aires, but like Savigliano and Taylor, I too give accounts from my various perspectives. From my first role as a participant I was able to observe and describe the context and the set-up and the way in which the sessions worked. I had participated in lessons, received feedback from teachers, and socialised with participants. As a teacher I was obliged to plan and deliver lessons; to observe the way in which they were received and how successfully participants followed them; to receive feedback and comments when participants came to talk at the end of lessons; to be regarded to some extent, as a source of information and expertise whom people watched and attempted to copy. As an organiser I attended meetings and was involved in discussion regarding the aims, ethos, future and administration of the group, as well as general discussion about individuals and what they had said, done or suggested. Later, in April 2009 I reverted once more to being a regular participant, relinquishing my teaching and organising hats (for reasons totally unconnected with tango). Once again my role changed such that I was again able to take a more relaxed, because less self-conscious view of the action from the sidelines: refreshed, as it were, by having had other perspectives, which no doubt had changed and informed my own experience and understanding.

What was required was that full attention be paid to the issues inextricably bound up with this kind of qualitative research methodology: issues such as the choice of, and access to the site of fieldwork; the inescapable position of the researcher; reflexivity and the overlapping spheres of perspective; the shifting positions in which each individual sits and cannot do otherwise; of their cultural, political, social, gender and personal roles of participants which inevitably determine the way in which their world is construed and identity constructed; the so-called objectivity of the research; the recognition and inclusion of the voices of participants; the etic/emic distinction at play offering different cultural understandings; collecting and interpreting evidence; and ultimately, the writing and use of ethnography.

CHAPTER 4: THE VISUAL METHODOLOGY

RE-ASSESSING THE RESEARCH TOOLS: READDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

An ethnographer is a human instrument and must discriminate among different types of data and analyze the relative worth of one path over another at every turn in fieldwork, well before any formalized analysis takes place (Fetterman, 2009, p.2).

I had always intended to make use of video-recordings of the dancers as an integral aspect of my research, dance being a highly visual as well as mobile activity. Whilst the completion of questionnaires and a series of semi-structured interviews had provided biographical data and some insights into participants' general impressions of Argentine Tango, I was concerned that my questionnaires may have directed and inhibited the quality of participants' feedback. Furthermore the framing of questions had, I felt, foreclosed the possibilities of open-ended responses to some extent. I therefore needed a methodology by which to produce more free and wide-ranging responses. Video-recording had always been part of my research design, however I wanted to avoid what David Fetterman describes as 'the methodological tail wagging the research dog' (2009, p.3) and instead to ensure that my process of recording was productive and revealing. The plan was to produce and replay video-recorded material in order to use it to elicit participant responses as a means of gaining further insight into my research questions relating to the dancers' identification with Argentinian tango.

In his 'companion volume for practising ethnographers'(p.2) Fetterman admits the sometimes disorderly nature of ethnographic work, and that it 'involves serendipity, creativity, being in the right place at the right or wrong time, a lot of hard work, and old-fashioned luck' (p.2). He also emphasises the necessity for an open mind in order to be able to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities or sources of information. Such, as it turned out, was to be the case with this phase of my research: at times disorderly, it nevertheless proved rich in outcomes.

THE PURPOSE OF MAKING VISUAL RECORDINGS

There are three relevant approaches to the use of visual data to which I refer in the course of this chapter as exemplified in the work of Sarah Pink, Elizabeth Chaplin, Michael Emmison and

Phillip Smith and also Douglas Harper. These are further enhanced in the light of work of Ivo Strecker and Iain Edgar with regard to their work with invisible and mental images.

Chaplin (1994) and Pink (2007) advocate a collaborative and experiential relationship with the visual (or sensory) as a means of creating new knowledge and reducing the distance between the researcher and subject. Emmison and Smith (2000) proposed an approach to the visual which, whilst initially criticised as treating the visual merely as data, they later reviewed in their second edition (2012), acknowledging the potential value of using photography as part of the research process. Photo-elicitation and auto-photography are two examples given of the use of photography as a research tool by Harper (2002) and also by Emmison and Smith. The latter subsequently revised their approach to extend beyond two-dimensional visual data (flat images such as photographs) to include what they describe as three-dimensional visual data (including objects, spaces and people-watching) to yield meanings associated with human association and interactions.

I was reluctant to adopt an approach to the video-recording which might suggest objective observation, an outsider's eye and an epistemology asserting knowledge and truth, from which one might extract information about people. Johannes Fabian (1983) questions the ethics of such an 'objectifying' and Pink (2007) questions Uwe Flick's (1998) use of visual research as 'second-hand observation' because of its 'problematic assumption that reality is visible, observable and recordable in video or photography' (p. 31). Pink therefore insists that it is important to consider two issues. The first is whether it is possible to observe and record reality and whether one can assume that just because something is visible, that it is true; the second is the assumption that 'we can observe and extract objective information (data) about our informants' (Pink 2007, p.32).

For the same reasons I did not want to use the video recordings as 'raw data'. Instead I was attempting to feel my way into alternative means, not simply of representing the dancing and acquiring visual 'data', but more significantly of making use of the process of video-recording to produce a visual interface comprising a new perspective and evoking new knowledge of a qualitatively different nature, as a result of a collaborative interaction with participants regarding the visual content.

The methodology of my second phase of research therefore engaged collaboratively with visual text, in this case from video rather than photographic material, as a means of generating

new understandings. It sought to produce feedback beyond the kind of conversation which typically occurs within the context of dancing and which tends not to be extensive, nor even generally accessible. The intention was to produce new knowledge in the sense that dancers have the experience of being able to see themselves, which under normal circumstances they cannot do (except fleetingly in mirrors). Even more significantly, beyond the visual text, there is new knowledge in the dancers' experience of, and their responses to watching themselves dancing in playback. More even than remembering or recalling the experience of what was represented on the screen, there was an opportunity of re-living or re-visiting the event, but from a different perspective, much as exemplified by Pink in her work of sharing visual or sensory experience with informants.

In my experience watching oneself or other people performing actions with which one is intensely familiar and have strongly experienced, can stimulate the same muscle activity and reproduce the same sensations of physical tension which would take place if one was actually to be performing those actions again. Sounds can evoke smells, sights produce memories and tastes invoke places: the senses are enmeshed in memory and experience and can scarcely be separated from each other into single sensory strands. Thus whilst the feedback sessions were centred around a largely visual experience, they produced a new sensory experience in those viewing it, which was articulated linguistically and thence transformed from a collection of audio-recordings into transcripts, before being re-presented once more as a written narrative about the whole process in the later chapters of this thesis.

Many of the dancers acknowledged that they had never seen themselves dancing on video before, but even for those who had, the occasion of watching a playback constituted a specific, new moment for each participant, generating new responses and new knowledge as a consequence. The process of the feedback sessions meant that I shared their watching and was involved in their discussions about the experience, enabling me to grasp their perspectives

and ways of viewing, such as suggested by Cristina Grasseni (2004)¹, whilst endeavouring not to lead or control the content.

It was not simply a question of collecting data which happened to be of a visual nature. Aside from my role in creating and presenting the visual material (a selective and subjective process at both the filming and showing stages, which undoubtedly shaped responses) what each individual saw and said is not so much analysis, as a way of linguistically articulating the visual representation of an embodied experience: analysis suggests an object of analysis, separate from the process, as opposed to construing the playback session as a seamless and inseparable experience tied to the experience of dancing, of which the visual and sensory is one part and the verbal another. For participants the feedback activity involved watching oneself and talking about oneself in a different place and at a different moment of time. Often it also involved talking about the act of watching or seeing oneself as experienced in the present place and the present moment of looking. Thus these two places and two temporal moments are bound together by several layers of intersubjectivity constituting a multi-layered experience, the dimensions of which cannot readily be separated from each other.

Obviously in one respect the video material did provide visual evidence - of the material context, of how the room was arranged, of who was there, the music which was playing, the clothes or shoes that people were wearing and so on. What is unique is that in each viewing of a video clip, but only available in the experience of it being played back and shared, is the invisible knowledge evoked by the dancers; likewise the reactions and responses which they articulated, using language to do so – an integral, symbolic and metaphorical aspect of a multi-sensory experience.

SENSIBLE REFERENTS AND SYMBOLIC IMAGES

At this point I am making an assumption, which I am endeavouring to explore, that a dancer's identity and identification with their dancing exists in and through their dancing in many

¹ Grasseni argued that learning to view visual material correctly was comparable to the apprenticeship of those involved with cattle breeding (in her research): to acquire 'skilled vision' necessitated training and learning to see what was considered significant.

different ways and also continues to exist away from these dance contexts through different senses: when they are dancing privately in their kitchens, for example; watching clips on YouTube; shopping; cooking; or talking about Argentine Tango with family or friends. In different aspects of their lives participants refer, more or less explicitly or directly to their practice of Argentine Tango by means of other practices or objects. For example I have bought Argentinian wine as a direct result of my interest in Tango and, consequently, in Argentina too. Friends and family have also brought me Argentinian wine, with an implicit reference to the practice with which they know I am engaged. My sister gave me a large framed picture of two tango dancers for my birthday one year. My daughter returned from a trip to Buenos Aires with leaflets about *milongas* there and some books about Tango. These objects or habits are not part of the dancing as such, but nevertheless refer to it and come to symbolise the practice by means of certain understandings imbued upon them by those who purchase or exchange them.

Such use of referents is a feature of how we use images to refer to other phenomena which may or may not be visible. Pink quotes photographer Sekula's example of someone pulling a photo from their wallet and saying "this is my dog" (Sekula 1982, p.86) as if the visual image is a vehicle capable of actually bringing its referent into existence.

Likewise Jan Baetens and Hilde Van Gelder explain:

the photo is a material, tangible form of communication between the image and the reality it visually displays. The photo digs its critical potential out of this privileged relationship to reality; it really has something to say about it because it arises out of it (2007, p.9).

Not all referents are photographic however, although they still connect with some kind of reality, which may not necessarily be as material or tangible as that with which a photograph is causally connected. In tango, there are visible (as well as non-visible) referents to a different world, which may to a certain extent be imagined (ie. existing in the form of privately produced images) or else constructed by means of outwardly visible referents, such as posters, books, CD covers, internet web-sites or YouTube or the kinds of clothes which typify tango fashion.

To the ear, the music may provide a clear identification that a dance is an Argentine Tango (although some dancers are also happy to dance to non-Tango music, particularly those who identify themselves as *tango nuevo* dancers). With the sound switched off, to a third party

onlooker, Tango can often be evident and identifiable by means of a particular aesthetic vocabulary of movements and by means of references which include, but also go beyond the dancers' use of certain body movements: referents such as wearing certain clothing perceived as typically tango or reminiscent of a certain view of Buenos Aires (high-heeled shoes and dresses with slits or very low backs); the use of other bodily practices within the context, such as the *cabaceo*² and the embrace (both of which will be further discussed in due course); dressing tables in red gingham; dancing in *tandas*³ These are sensory referents which seemed to be accepted by participants with a degree of security as a means of identification and reassurance that one holds a common understanding of a shared practice.

Following interviews I conducted in the early stages of field work, I documented the use of referents like post cards from Buenos Aires as a *mise-en-scène* for Tango in the East Midlands. These were drawn as much from what people told me, as from straightforward observations made in the dancing context. For example, shoes and shoe bags displayed Buenos Aires addresses; there were discussions about certain individuals having visited Buenos Aires and comments about how it really is 'over there' from teachers and tourists, and even from those who have simply read about it, or watched a film or documentary on television. Whether the shoe bags around the edge of the dance floor had arrived via a global internet trader, or had been brought back as a souvenir, with or without shoes in them was not an issue. (My own shoe-bag was a case in point, as this had been brought back completely empty as a knowing gesture, as opposed to a gift, from my daughter). There were stories surrounding some such artefacts or objects attesting to their Argentine Tango-ness, and what had been bought where and for how much, although there was no arbiter or judge of authenticity in operation. Overall what was significant was the way in which these references or signs provided detail, each adding a layer of depth to the process of depiction, or even of the production of Argentine tango in the English East Midlands.

The signs and details around the room resulted in an accumulation and accretion of Barthesian significations and the creation of a Tango mythology, from which ambience and a sense of

² See glossary for definitions of terms specifically linked to the practice of Argentine Tango.

³ See glossary, as above.

authenticity is derived. Viewed by an outsider the attempt to produce ambience might have appeared somewhat random or piecemeal: to the dancers however, it was enabled by their willingly creative and imaginative leaps from signs to signification and back again, attempting to incorporate and embody what they understood as certain ways of acting, moving and behaving, as well as to create a space in which Buenos Aires could be invoked or imagined. Thus red gingham tablecloths, might seem an incongruous (read 'naïf') way to dress a table in a twenty-first century British leisure centre. For Tango aficionados however, the red and white checked fabric signifies an association of meanings to do with the places where Tango used to be danced: an amorphous blend of nostalgia, wholesome youth, American simplicity, ingenuousness and, conversely, colonialism and understated European sophistication, without it being clear exactly where or exactly when, whether in Paris, Hollywood or Buenos Aires, these meanings might have become attached. Ultimately it does not matter: one glimpse of a gingham tablecloth in the right light is enough to transport a Tanguero to a mythological place and make them want to Tango.

Bearing in mind the symbolism with which objects can be charged for those who understand or chose to read them, it is clearly not enough in the research context simply to look at or observe objects and artefacts, nor the context in which they occur. Moving beyond visual ethnography, Pink (2009) challenges conventional ethnographic methodology, suggesting ways in which sensory ethnography may be used to represent multi-sensory experience using an approach which 'both seeks out knowledge about the senses and uses the senses as a route to knowledge' (p.3). In the context of my research, physical objects, clothing, music, as well as the bodily practice of dancing Argentine Tango and, in particular, what people told me about it, all cohere as part of a whole sensory involvement and experience of the participants and myself.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE

My objective however was to go beyond what is merely visible and sensible, to another level, to discover how else people identify privately and imaginatively with the practice of Argentine tango: to listen to what they said, the metaphors or images which they used to describe or articulate their experiences; their fantasies, wishes or imaginings - especially considering the minimal personal, historical or geographical links which most dancers had with Buenos Aires or

Argentina. In other words, I wished to illuminate the site of my ethnographic fieldwork, the dancers themselves, in whom images of desire, fantasy and memory occur.

Increasingly researchers are addressing the areas of dreams, mental images and imagination as a valid and fruitful ethnographic field site. Social anthropologist Iain Edgar's hypothesis with reference to this further layer of knowledge,

is that experiential research methods, such as imagework, can elicit and evoke implicit knowledge and self-identities of respondents in a way that other research methods cannot (2004, p.2).

Whilst material objects are visible, it does not follow that visual images are necessarily material. As Pink explains, 'the intangibility of an image that exists as a verbal description or is imagined makes it no less real' (2007, p.32). In turn this challenges definitions of 'the real in terms of the material, which can be accessed through the visible,' (Slater, 1995, p.221). One should therefore be wary of believing that one has captured reality on film:

the most that one can expect is to represent those aspects of experience that are visible . . . Moreover these visible elements of experience will be given different meanings as different people use their own subjective experience to interpret them (Pink, p.32).

Given my objective, it was not just the material and the visible which was of significance.

Anthropologist Strecker emphasises:

film can only produce images of things which are actually present "out there". It cannot film the images which people hold in their minds of what could or should or should not be "out there". In short, we are back to the mental images back to the topic of meaning and interpretation (1997, p.223).

Defining four fields of imagework, Edgar identifies that the second, the 'field of imagework, involves guiding respondents into their memory of earlier events . . . I call this . . . *memory imagework*' (p.10). His methodology involves participants in different levels of analysis, starting with description and their own attribution of meaning and analysis of their images, through to sharing and comparing their images with others. His methodology has similarities with processes of photo-elicitation and, in this respect, also to my processes of reviewing and eliciting responses to the video-recordings produced of the Argentine Tango groups in my study.

Edgar's contention is that image-, and dreamwork methods 'refer to the mind's spontaneous production of imagery that people may consider 'good to think with'(p.10) and furthermore that what they and 'related experiential research methods can achieve is the articulation of respondents' as yet dimly perceived but emotionally present aspect of self and world'(p. 21). He contends that imagework – making use of 'the field of inner visualisation' (p.15) - thus presents researchers with a way of gaining access to

a blend of cognitive, affective and intuitive material, known, dimly known, implicit, suppressed and even repressed by the conscious mind (p.142).

Hingeing crucially around the tension or intersection between the practice of dancing Tango and the dancers' engagement with Tango in terms of their identification with the activity, the whole purpose of my video activity was thus focussed on a means of evoking or facilitating the dancers to explore such areas of knowledge. The process of reviewing video and sharing participants' feedback offered unpredictable and wide-ranging content and provided insight into imagery and imaginaries which were consequently produced and articulated. For each dancer it might have been knowledge which had not been expressed, was unclear, suppressed, or quite simply new - that is - only just being created. In this respect my role amounted to rather more than just allowing knowledge to become evident, but was actually instrumental in bringing it into existence.

The rupture between what is visible and what is real, as a result of the implication that reality cannot necessarily be observed visually, became evident later. Clear examples of the disjunction between the visible recorded material and the dancer's perceptions, recollections and descriptions of the actual experience of dancing emerged during playback sessions. For example, some dancers expressed immediate surprise at how different their dancing looked from how they thought, felt or imagined it when they were actually dancing.

I'm surprised when I watch it, to see how slow it all looks, it feels much faster and much more energetic when I'm in it. I think I'm giving it a lot more welly and I'm really frightened to see how little welly I'm giving it because I feel in myself, you know, using the core when I'm doing it I feel that I'm whizzing round at times and have got quite a lot of energy and am giving a lot and I look at and I think oh that looks far too bland. (Daphne, July 2010, 17'07").

Ceci, the Argentinian woman in the group was surprised and delighted by what she saw. Watching the video seemed to give her the opportunity to relive the experience as if for the first time:

It looks nice, that's really nice . . . I can imagine it (Discussion, Leicester, 06/03/2010).

In Ceci's case it seemed that she did not quite believe in the video-recording as a factual record of her dancing, but which enabled her to imagine doing it as an activity in the present, as opposed to remembering it.

Conversely there were to be other instances where material was produced purely as a result of a playback session, which would otherwise have remained invisible, both at the time of dancing and in the recorded video material.

Just as images inspire conversations, conversations may invoke images (Pink 2007, p.21).

For example, without having undergone the process of recording and playing back video clips to one particular dancer, Oliver, he would not have articulated the way that he imagines himself into a specific role, evoked by particular paintings and photographs by specific visual artists which I describe in greater detail in Chapter 5. Moreover, without his description of those visual images during a playback session, I, in turn, would not have been reminded of a recurrent dream of mine of dancing Tango (also described in Chapter 6). Even now, writing the previous sentence about that dream has jolted my memory of yet another dream, in which the sensation of dancing closely in tune with my partner as a follower produced a powerful image of myself as a dancing wooden doll.

It is an extraordinarily vivid image of being a Victorian peg doll with jet black hair, a painted wooden face, bright red mouth, beauty spot and a small wheel where two feet should have been at the end of my legs, painted onto a single piece of wood. In the dream I was being led across the dance floor, my movements minutely transmitted from the lead to the floor through the tiny wheel, and my balance constantly maintained at any one moment on a single, smoothly moving point of axis. Bizarre and faintly ridiculous, the image nevertheless captured something of the feeling of how a lead can be transmitted, invisibly and wordlessly through a follower's body right down to the floor, where figures are graphically and gracefully traced by the feet. It was also accompanied by a strong sensation of flowing motion and the satisfaction of dancing as one with another person.

The memory of this dream image was undoubtedly invoked by my conversation with Oliver and, as Edgar argued, 'paying attention to dream imagery is useful as a way of 'catching'

emergent realities that are in some sense 'waiting in the wings' (2004, p.131). Without Oliver's revelation of the images accompanying his dancing, the startlingly vivid imagery of my dream would not have been recalled.

These are some examples of how using video and, more particularly, sharing and discussing the video playbacks with people, produced referential material not visible to the eye, and which indicated to a greater extent how thoroughly images are embedded into different (observable, sensory, imaginary, remembered or desirable) layers of experience. It was moments and interactions such as these which appeared when the obvious and visible opened up new spaces, perspectives and images; corroborated or else parted company from material or embodied experiences, offering rich, new material which would otherwise have remained inaccessible.

Clearly this was a case in which the fieldwork and research process itself, including the process of ethnographic writing, were instrumental in generating meaning and knowledge from mental images and dreams. Whilst I was responsible for the process, my own involvement likewise produced images for me, which alongside those of participants, contributed to the attribution of meaning to the cultural practice in which we were all engaged.

PRACTICAL, ETHICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF VIDEO-RECORDING

With regard to the practical process of video recording, there were three main areas to address: the practical filming strategy; ethical issues; and editing. Despite my preparation and my awareness that video-recording is not as straightforward as might be believed, suddenly the research issues and perspectives were driven straight home. I had been prepared, in principle, for having to make choices and decisions to do with what to record: which activities, which dancers, the shots and angles, whether to zoom in, when to zoom out, where to stand, or whether to walk around. The literature on reflexive visual ethnography had, however, left me rather self-conscious about the whole affair and it took several weeks of filming to evolve a satisfactory and productive approach.

From a practical perspective it seemed important for a methodology to be developed regarding the process of video recording. In the circumstances the process turned out to be a question of doing what I could and refining my practice as I went along. I knew I wanted video

material, and there was plenty available, although at the outset I had no preconceived idea of exactly what kind of material I wanted or how to achieve it.

Until October 2009 I had been using my mobile phone for sound recording, which, whilst having the advantage of being unobtrusive and highly versatile as far as sound recording was concerned, was not adequate for the purpose of video recording, for which I used a JVC Everio GZ-MS120SEK camcorder.

Arriving, at last, with my camera in the ethnographic field, I was unsettled in a number of ways. There were unanticipated hitches: such as being obliged to use reading glasses in a dance context with dimmed lights in order to operate the camera and see what I was doing on the screen. I had a new role to contend with and a different relationship with the people I was filming. Suddenly they were anticipating technical competence; several people were quick to ask for a copy of the DVD they assumed I must be making.

Previously, my video recording experience had been of using a camera fixed to a tripod and focused on a static spot, with subjects who obligingly sat or stood still and talked to camera. Now, on the dance floor there was music and action from people dedicated to not keeping still: lots of them, criss-crossing in front of and behind each other, determined, in fact to make everything very difficult to film. Evidently I felt more conspicuous wielding my camera, than they did, dancing as normal: by contrast, I felt challenged, technologically, ethnographically, methodologically.

As a case of 'ethnographic reconnaissance' what I actually did at first, was simply to point the camera and record (see Appendix 5, clip: '*Workshop at Market Harborough*'). In a sense I was feeling my way into an appropriate method of working in order to achieve my objectives, recalling that what is more crucial is that '(t)he methods should serve the aims of the research, not the research serve the aims of the method.' (McGuigan, 1997, p.2). Certainly in the case of video-recording these Tango dancers, there was a clear evolution of strategies towards the eventual rationale which emerged through the process of recording.

Luckily I was not a stranger. Hopefully I was not threatening or off-putting: evidently I did not put anyone off sufficiently to cause them to stop dancing or walk off the dance floor and out of my field of vision. Amazingly I appeared to have been 'given the nod' and thus granted

permission to continue, which I duly did. Obviously I knew that to use any material I would need permission from anyone appearing in the video-recordings.

I was also aware that there would be a need for drastic editing at a later point as I quickly began to amass a large quantity of material, with, as yet, no clear vision about what the end-product might be like. I also decided to address the issue of permission later, once I had decided on selection and exclusion: that would be the point at which to seek permission from the participants appearing in the videos I wanted to use. In any case my intention was to talk in depth to the people who appeared in the videos and I foresaw this as an opportunity to alert people to the content of the recordings and gain permission for its further use.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN AN IMAGE-MAKING CULTURE: FIRST RECORDINGS

The first occasion upon which I recorded video material was at a workshop at Market Harborough which took place immediately prior to the monthly milonga (Appendix 5, clip: *'Workshop at Market Harborough'*). I had an injury and was unable to dance, so it was the perfect opportunity to begin recording. There was a visiting teacher, who commands quite a following of dancers, so the event attracted an unusually large number of people for a Sunday (about a third of whom were not regulars). In fact there were close to 60 people in the studio, making it very busy, quite noisy and challenging to film.

In the Tango 'scene' at that time (2008) there was already a culture of taking and sharing photographs on mobile phones, and also, increasingly, of using the video facility in iPhones by those who possessed them. In particular, participants would often request a teacher to repeat a move or a sequence at the end of a workshop as an aide-memoire in order to be able to refer back to it at a later date whilst practising. This was not unusual in the East Midlands Tango venues, as long as the teacher is amenable (as Isolde Kanikani was) and attendees were consequently not unduly bothered about it taking place around them whilst dancing.

Highlighting the impact of the researcher Pink (2013) points out that:

When we do visual ethnography, especially when it involves making images with, in ways parallel to and/or for participants, we can become implicated in some way in their visual and digital practices . . . [by contributing] to these activities through our own images or sharing images we begin to also participate in the making of the places and visual cultures we are researching. The images we produce and the practices we

engage in thus belong simultaneously to the different but connected material and digital cultures of visual scholarship and of the culture being 'studied' (p.46).

That evening I was the only person with a video camera, as participants were engrossed with mastering the moves being taught in the workshop. Although my video was not to be used later to rehearse those moves, but to prompt discussion, it nevertheless took place within both the culture being 'studied' and the culture of research. The act of recording video looks identical in both cultures and whatever the intention, however. I did not therefore anticipate a problem with regard to filming in the dance-studio from an ethical point of view in such circumstances.

From a practical point of view, however, the fact that there were so many visiting dancers at the workshop on that occasion meant that making video recordings was not easy and also that to use any of the video-recorded material later in a further capacity would not be straightforward, in terms of making contact with dancers, showing them the relevant material and acquiring their consent for its further use. I resolved to deal with these issues 'as and when' and in the meantime to proceed with recording. My immediate purpose was to make material available on my computer and then later to make decisions about to proceed with the next, hopefully most productive stage and begin to engage people in playback-discussions. These were exploratory steps in the project.

I began filming from a distance, gradually moving closer to the group of people. I hesitated as to whether to stay fixed on the spot and allow the camera to record whomever passed in front of its lens; walk around; or zoom in on certain couples; who they might be and how I would justify selecting and focusing on them. However moving around with so many people in the dance studio made it difficult to get an uninterrupted view of anyone for any sustained shots, before they were obscured by other people passing in front of the camera. In addition it was difficult to avoid getting in the way of the dancers in an effort to focus on a particular person or couple.

Nevertheless, by the end of that first session I had several clips, mostly of the teacher teaching and re-capping; of couples practising moves and also some of the social dancing during the milonga at the end. Nobody had batted an eyelid at the camera or questioned why I was recording: something of a reflection of the degree of concentration which is invested into such

workshop sessions, as well as of the fact that it was fairly normal in this context for people to make video-recordings.

The second session of recording took place at the Leicester Saturday lunchtime practica (see Appendix 5, clip: *'Participant Involvement'*), starting with deliberate attempts to focus on individual couples and to follow them specifically around the dance floor. Whereas there had been too many people at the Market Harborough workshop to enable me to effectively follow particular couples around the dance floor, or even to be able to control the content without people criss-crossing each other and the camera, the experience at the Leicester venue in February 2009 was quite different. There were fewer people and consequently more space to allow the camera to see between couples on the dance floor. This enabled a more distinct strategy to emerge.

FIXED TRIPOD FILMING

Using a tripod and filming from a fixed point (third person, fly-on-the-wall recording) was a technique I had initially avoided for the purposes of filming the Tango groups because of a concern that the video material might be understood purely as an attempt at realist representation.

However, I encountered various dilemmas and difficulties, both practical and theoretical, with selecting and framing aspects of the dancing and of following dancers whilst in motion. In the process of reviewing the clips along the way as I recorded them, I realised that some were frustrating to watch because of the way that couples would be obscured; that there was too much movement; or that I had changed the camera shot too quickly and thereby broken the continuity. I also realised that in order to conduct feedback sessions successfully I needed sufficient visual material for people to view. This material had to be produced and selected, once again posing me problems with regard to framing the content; it had to be of appropriate length; and there were ethical issues to be taken into consideration regarding which clips I might be able to use, if they featured other people whose permission could not be gained.

A considerable amount of time was spent working through these questions, deliberately trying out various filming strategies, partly with an eye on the technical quality (and therefore the 'watchability') of the material that ensued; partly with the issue of content in mind, as well as other issues to do with selecting clips for playback sessions: what would people be interested

to see? What would serve my purpose best? Should everyone be shown the same clip, thereby offering consistency and continuity in context across all the feedback sessions; should what I showed be edited or left uncut, as it were?

Collier and Collier (1986) distinguished 'research' film consisting of unedited or 'undisturbed' footage, from 'ethnographic' film comprising shots and sequences edited by the ethnographer in order to create a coherent and meaningful representation. They argued that the inevitable selectivity of ethnographic film made it invalid as an observational record. However my video was to have a very different purpose: it was to be neither the outcome, nor an observational record, so much as an interactive part of the process of research. I was nevertheless wary of my own selectivity in terms of how to produce it.

Basically the problem of what material to show people and how to select it was the driving force behind my eventual decision to try filming with a fixed tripod. Additionally, it had been suggested that it would be an appropriate method to use because of its relative unobtrusiveness within the context. Beyond the initial positioning of the camera in the context, it also offered the benefit, from a theoretical point of view of removing the constant decision-making regarding whom and where to shoot. From a practical point of view it only required me to charge the camera, set it up on a tripod in a suitable position and then remove it at the end.

Eventually I came round to using this technique, setting up the camera on a small tripod on top of a piano in the Saturday practica room, angled in such a way as to get a view of the door through which people arrived; the row of chairs where they changed their shoes and would sit whilst waiting to dance; and the area of the dance floor in front of them. Then I simply pressed record and left the camera to its own devices: see Appendix 5, clip: '*Leicester practica*' for a short section of the resultant fixed tripod footage which was finally chosen for all subsequent video feedback sessions.

Not many people noticed me setting it all up: the session was already in full flow and many people were busy dancing; while others were sitting chatting. As I sat down next to another dancer to change my own shoes I had a brief conversation with her about filming the group. Shortly afterwards we both stood up. I was free from the responsibility of filming and, as a bonus, free to dance. Within another 30 seconds I started talking to someone, began to dance and completely forgot about the camera: my own camera. If I had forgotten about it, it seems

safe to assume that other people probably did the same for much of the time. The camera recorded evidence of a few people momentarily noticing the camera during the course of the session, peering at it, making a comment and then walking away from it, unperturbed; one man blew kisses and pulled faces over his shoulder whilst he was dancing; many people did not appear to notice it at all.

Having a single sustained piece of video, in which I was also included, with a manageable number of participants, all of whom could feasibly, and indeed were, contacted and involved in feedback sessions, provided a controlled consistency to those discussions, whilst at the same time offering the possibility of multiple interpretations and commentaries on the same visual content.

A further benefit of having adopted this technique of filming was that it was as much of a surprise for me when I first played it back, as it would be for anyone else watching it. I was thus able to experience firsthand how it felt to watch oneself. In the spirit of democratic participant observation it seemed appropriate that I should know how it felt to be obliged to review oneself, as an insight into what I was asking of others. Not surprisingly, when faced with the experience, I behaved much like most others, being both curious and at the same time somewhat dreading the prospect: like most participants I also produced strong and instantaneous observations about my dancing, before commenting more closely on other aspects of the video clips.

CAMERA INTERACTION

As part of the process of filming I soon realised the extent to which, simply by having the camera in my hand, in whichever venue, my role had changed. The changes were subtle, but people's behaviour was different. My video-camera is small but still substantially larger than the mobile phone I had been using previously; and quite obviously, a camera. The advantage of discreetness which I had suspected in using the phone was instantly confirmed: with the video camera people immediately became aware that they were the focus of my attention. In neither place did I try to conceal what I was doing, but in Leicester, a smaller venue, with fewer people, I felt more conspicuous with my camera in hand. I was clearly not reading text messages, but recording activity in the room. Nobody appeared to be offended or to object to

being recorded, but their relationship with the camera, and with me, the person behind it, was noticeably different.

Furthermore I soon realised that the process of filming was different from simply seeing, even though what was there to be seen was the same as had I been simply looking with both eyes naked. With the camera I was having to select and frame certain parts of the view; to follow certain couples; to decide whether to zoom in or to switch from them to another view if they became obscured or too distant or if something else caught my eye and seemed more interesting to follow. Seeing through the camera entailed a more active and selective way of viewing the event, in order to record anything at all.

WATCHING THE DANCERS BEING WATCHED

As I began filming and people danced past, they sometimes caught my eye and winked or smiled, pulled faces or made remarks about being recorded, such as *“Don’t point that at me,”* or *“Will we be on YouTube tomorrow?”* I was no longer just an observer sitting at the side, but was evidently engaged with the dancers on the floor. Unlike the people waiting to dance who were sitting and talking at the same time, the focus of my gaze through the camera was unmistakably and purposively on them. I was not also chatting or changing my shoes; the camera was not watching with half an eye; its gaze was not divided; nor was it accidental. The presence of the camera told participants that they were interesting, performative subjects, who were being actively, visibly watched, because of what they were doing: because they were dancing Tango. Their performance was precisely the point of filming, even though my reasons for doing so may have been unclear to them and open to conjecture. If they were aware of the camera at all, they almost certainly must have realised that they were being watched. Whatever their thoughts, indubitably, our relationship had changed: I had joined the dance floor in a new way in which they were directly involved (see Clip: ‘Participant Involvement’).

Dancers know that when they dance, they may be watched⁴, although sometimes less obviously than by someone holding a camera. I had previously asked questions during interviews about how participants felt with regard to being watched and watching others dance. Most had taken this for granted and were not unduly bothered by the idea; several said later that they enjoyed watching others when they were not themselves dancing. It is thus a significant part of the activity of dance that it is watched at least in some way, especially when it takes place in public.

At both the Leicester *práctica* and at Market Harborough, watching generally takes place incidentally alongside the activity of socializing, whilst waiting your turn to dance. Occasionally participants would sit on the floor around the studio to watch visiting teachers perform a few Tangos; or, in the context of a class, they would stand and watch a teacher demonstrate a move or figure. Lacking the confidence or experience to dance casually, beginners would frequently sit and watch during the social phase of an evening at Market Harborough. Otherwise watching is less concentrated, and takes place between dances.

The camera changed the activity of watching from an incidental to a proactive one. Filming was a positive action connecting me directly with the dancers. Rather like a musician engaging with dancers by means of the music and instruments, I entered the dance through the lens. As Owe Ronström (1999) observed in his research on music and dance in the context of dance 'events' in the Yugo-Swedish community in Stockholm:

If the relationship between dance and music in any genre seems obvious enough at a general and abstract level, a closer look will reveal a much greater complexity . . . in Western Europe the rule is for the dancers to follow the music, but when performing informally, the musicians and dancers may interact so closely that it is hard to tell who is following whom. . . .both parties can start to interact with a real or imagined audience (Ronström, p.143).

The Tango dancers had previously been engaged in a partner dance, with perhaps a sporadic awareness of how they might look to a semi-attentive audience: the introduction of the camera suddenly brought a third gaze into the dance, making participants understand themselves as being directly visible. Their comments acknowledged my presence alongside

⁴ See also Tateo (2014) for discussion on 'gaze' in Chapters 2 and Chapter 8 .

them in their dance, inviting me to join them. Sometimes their invitation was confirmed at the end of a dance when they would come straight over to see what I had recorded (see clip 'Participant Involvement').

Jane Cowan (1990) relates similar, though rather more boisterous accounts of the same phenomenon in her study of Greek dancing in Northern Greece, when she finds her participants playing to her camera:

Slightly tipsy men came up to me or gestured insistently from across the room, each demanding that I photograph him with his pareia [group of friends] (p.153) At the 1985 Orpheus horoespheridha [a dance soirée], two middle-aged business men . . . responded to my video camera by climbing onto a table top. There they performed an acrobatic face-to-face dance, with the tobacco chemical salesman leaping up and wrapping his legs around the barber's waist and leaning backward, as the latter waved his hands in the air, eyes closed, smiling. When the dance ended, the barber turned to his partner, kissed him on the cheek, and with one arm round the other's shoulder, turned dramatically to make a broad, smiling gesture of greeting to the camera (p. 167).

Similarly in Leicester my camera and I had participated in the dance and thereafter the participants staked an immediate claim to their share in it. They were intrigued to know what they looked like. Some wanted me to do it again, to improve on their performance. Happily, nobody came to stop me recording.

DANCER'S RECORDINGS

It was at a certain point in the interaction between the camera and the dancers that a new filming strategy seemed to be evolving. Some dancers were offered the opportunity of being able to record the dancing themselves, or else to decide how or what I should record. What started at random then moved towards the development of a strategy promising the possibility of further perspectives, although in the long run it proved less viable and productive than hoped for.

In the wake of participants' eagerness to view themselves and to be filmed even further, I encouraged them to use the camera themselves to shoot aspects of the dance of their own choosing or for me to take clips requested by specific people dancing, in order to play them back and discuss the experience with them.

The intention was to allow the dancers the choice and the freedom to provide me with material which I hoped would be enlightening, in itself because it was what they requested or decided to record, as much as for the aesthetic insights and evaluations which would emerge when playing back the video.

It began in an impromptu way when one dancer picked up the camera which I had left on a chair in order to go and dance, and began recording (see Appendix 5, video clip: '*Participant filming*'). It suggested the kind of collaborative strategy advocated by Chaplin (1994) with the goal of reducing the distance between the researcher, research process and the area of research. Subsequently I began to offer people the chance to film for me, assuring them that I did not mind what they filmed, but asking them to talk over the camera whilst doing so, or else to tell me afterwards what they had done.

Despite my encouragement and genuine wish for this strategy to become a significant one in the project, it was to prove less viable than I had hoped for two reasons. The first was that, whilst some people were willing to film when they were not dancing, they would almost invariably turn to me and ask what I wanted them to film. I endeavoured not to lead them or tell them, but even when reassured that I did not mind and that they should film whatever they liked or found interesting about dancing Argentine Tango, they generally decided to film me (perhaps believing that was what I really wanted) or else the best dancers. Alternatively there was a tendency to sweep across a wide view of the studio, accompanying the film with a commentary about who was in view and what they were doing, rather than with any subjective evaluation.

The second reason why this strategy was not particularly successful and was later abandoned, was because spontaneous attempts to use an unfamiliar camera were often technically disastrous, showing wide expanses of ceiling or struggling to control the zoom feature, thereby producing unwatchable sequences of blurred people engaged in unidentifiable motion.

THE ATTRIBUTION OF MEANING DEPENDENT ON CONTEXT

Interestingly the necessity of producing a 20 minute visual presentation at De Montfort University in May 2010 (some of which appears in Appendix 5, video clips) required me to

return to the video material and edit it into suitable excerpts for the purpose of demonstrating and summarising something of the process which this chapter has endeavoured to describe in greater detail. The clips produced in that context were intended to demonstrate the various stages and strategies I had worked through during the visual fieldwork: certain clips shown in the presentation were examples of those not shown to the dancers (largely because of poor quality); a longer section of the clip *'Workshop at Market Harborough'* was included because, although very short extracts of participants from this clip were later shown to them, it would have been difficult to show in its entirety for ethical reasons to do with not being able to gain permission from so many unknown participants. Others offered examples of experimental attempts at filming or editing: for example, *'Filming Feet'* was an attempt at artistic editing, partly as a means of avoiding the ethical issue of having to gain participants' permission to use video of identifiable peoples' faces for research purposes and partly as a way of representing the material, which I subsequently decided was too close to producing a 'performance' which I was concerned would interfere with participants' spontaneous discussion. A further example *'Participant Involvement'* was of a strategy for producing footage which had proved unreliable because the visual focus was frequently interrupted or lost. Similarly *'Participant Filming'* shows an example of a strategy that was abandoned mostly for technical reasons. The presentation included short snatches of longer footage which was subsequently used as the main content of feedback sessions: see, for example, *'Leicester practica'*.

The necessity of having to edit and produce clips suitable for such a presentation illustrated points made by Pink regarding the interpretation and the multiplicity of meanings available from images according to who is viewing them and the context in which they do so.

For visual research this means scrutinizing the relationship between meanings given to photographs and video during fieldwork, and academic meanings later invested in the same images. (Pink 2004, p.118).

For the purpose of the De Montfort University presentation, the meanings and interpretations attributed or evoked by the dancers were not my focus at all: my objective in that exercise was to demonstrate and explain the visual methodology. Preparing the presentation emphasised the divergent processes of analysing and archiving material depending on purpose and context, and should not be regarded as reflecting finite categories or representing objective truths, but rather, reflexively, in terms of the persons and process of making connections

between materials and the consequent ethnographic meanings which emerge from them or are variously attributed to them.

Clearly, diverse meanings and interpretations might come about as a result of various different perspectives of the researcher at different times, alongside those of as many participants and as many viewpoints as have been involved during the project. There was obviously a clear difference in purpose and in interpretation between the way in which I viewed the Argentine Tango clips in anticipation of my presentation and for other research purposes as compared with how participants viewed them in playback sessions.

PLAYBACK SESSIONS

Initially I attempted to run playback sessions within the dancing context, immediately after making a recording of a couple or individual. This quickly proved unviable for various practical reasons. The Market Harborough venue was busy, noisy and the lights were dimmed. When I replayed video material it added at least one more layer of noise in terms of the music and sounds captured by the camera microphone. It was difficult to see the film on the mini screen of the camcorder, especially given the lighting. People wanted to watch but at the same time they were there to dance. Furthermore, I wanted to hear and record what they would say and how they would respond. I also wanted to continue to make video-recordings.

Realising that the conditions for feedback sessions would have to be substantially different, I abandoned this initial method. Some months later, having collected a large number of recordings and spent time reviewing them, I had a selection of clips ready to use for the sessions and a strategy by which to meet the ethical need for gaining permission. Feedback sessions proper started in Spring 2010. The process of arranging times to meet with people, to playback video clips to them, to encourage their responses and record them was to prove more time-consuming than anticipated. The playback sessions were nearly all over an hour long and required even more time to listen to, transcribe, categorize and begin to develop an understanding of the material. Those outcomes and insights form the content of Chapters 5 and 6.

After my initial, unsuccessful attempts to conduct playback sessions within the dancing context, I subsequently arranged for them to take place elsewhere. Generally people were unprepared for the request to review the video-recordings, but nevertheless agreed willingly. I

would suggest that the session could be conducted wherever they chose, suggesting either my home, or theirs or else a cafe or somewhere else they might prefer. In fact participants frequently invited me to their homes, sometimes offering a meal as well. Otherwise they were willing to come to mine at a time which suited them. The sessions which took place in participants' own surroundings were probably the most relaxed, although sometimes interrupted by the need to check food that was cooking or carry things from the kitchen. Sometimes a participant would go to find something which they wanted to show me; I was given a guided tour of one person's house and of someone else's wonderful garden. These were obviously distractions from the research purpose, but nevertheless indicative of participants' good will and motivation to share their interest and experiences with me.

At my house I offered drinks and biscuits, but did not attempt to cook at the same time, which meant that the sessions were more concentrated on the Tango recordings, with participants sometimes standing up to demonstrate something in the middle of the kitchen floor. Distractions only occurred if another member of the family arrived home or appeared in the kitchen, although generally I tried to ensure that these sessions were uninterrupted.

Prior to each session I identified clips featuring the person or couple with whom I would be speaking, so that I could quickly find and show them (these clips were nearly all less than 3 minutes long – the average length of a piece of Tango music) with a view to seeking their permission to use them. I hoped by showing clips of themselves to quickly catch participants' interest and to enable me to explain the purpose of my research on an individual basis. At the beginning of each playback session I sought permission to record the content of our discussion using the voice recorder on my mobile phone. Only one person objected to the use of video clips of herself, therefore they had been excluded early on from any further viewing, by anyone. She did not want to be involved in playback sessions, but otherwise, no one else objected to the use of video clips nor to being audio-recorded during playback sessions.

The first clips I set about showing in each session, were snatches from video material in which individual couples were practising workshop moves ('Workshop Market Harborough'): but even though I had selected sections of film relevant to the participants to whom I was talking, it became clear that most people did not find this aspect of their dancing very interesting to watch and generally demonstrated much more interest in clips showing sustained sequences of spontaneous dancing. Nevertheless I always tried to ensure that everyone saw all the clips

which I had recorded of them, before proceeding to play a piece of video lasting nearly 55 minutes, taken at the Leicester *práctica* on Saturday, February 20th 2010 (Appendix 5, clip '*Leicester Práctica*').

This clip ('*Leicester Práctica*') became the common experience running through all the playback sessions. It is long and records almost a substantial part of a *práctica* session at Leicester. I always introduced it by saying that it would not be necessary to watch the whole recording; that people could stop and go back to look at any section, or skip sections if they wanted to. Occasionally people did ask me to pause and then watch bits again, but on the whole most participants watched the whole piece from beginning to end, and sometimes to watch other clips after that. I was amazed at the interest and issues which arose during the sessions. Using this long clip served my purpose well, in that it offered sections where people could watch themselves dancing with various different partners, have views of other people and of the context. In some parts nothing much appears to be happening on the dance floor and at these times attention and discussion ranged towards the people and activities around the edge. These spaces on the dance floor also encouraged discussion about other Tango events or topics, thus providing material related more loosely to the context. If discussion dwindled, there was always the video material, almost as a backdrop to return to and watch together, allowing it to stimulate further discussion.

ELICITING RESPONSES TO THE VIDEO MATERIAL

I was prepared that it might be difficult for people, who may or may not have previously been aware that I was conducting research in their midst, to enter into a situation in which my aim was to encourage them to talk to me about things which they may not have thought about before. It was not that I was expecting great depth or profound meaning, but it felt awkward at times to broach the very issues which I most wanted to know about.

After one dancer divulged that he would regularly fantasize whilst dancing I wanted to know if this was the case for others, stimulating my subsequent pursuit of imagery (mental images, dreams, memories). However I was reluctant to ask directly if they fantasized on the dance floor or imagined themselves in other roles, lest I be instrumental in suggesting content which might have been wholly irrelevant or disconcerting to them. Occasionally I would refer

(anonymously) to other peoples' imagery, as a gentle prompt, but on the whole I would wait for these to emerge unsolicited as much as possible.

I was hoping for a degree of 'self-theorizing': I wanted to know what they saw, not just when they looked at themselves, but in other dancers too. This faced me with a dilemma, both of confidentiality and integrity, in that I did not want to be seen to encourage people to talk about each other, which could have been damaging, lest they think I was encouraging gossipy criticism. On the other hand there is no doubt that I was interested in whatever people had to say, whoever it was about. As a rule I endeavoured to avoid negative discussion about people, unless initiated by that person about themselves.

Nevertheless I wanted dancers to look at themselves and others and tell me what they thought was good, interesting or important; or what they liked or were impressed by. Similarly I wanted to know what they did not like. I reasoned that if other dancers are like me, then when I watch other dancers, I am captivated by things I wish I could do; conversely I am also drawn to people's individual styles, particularly if they grate on me. I find myself hoping I don't look like that and watching all the more carefully to try and identify what looks odd or wrong. No doubt it is fuelled by a general desire to improve one's own dancing or to look more graceful or skilled: in that respect I am similar to other people who were regularly attending lessons and spending substantial amounts of money on workshops by visiting teachers. It was these areas I wanted to access which would involve asking questions like, Why do you like that way of moving? or that adornment? What makes you think there is something wrong with that movement? How do you know? How do you make that decision? Do you realise you are making it? What model do you have from which this movement deviates? With what are you comparing it? In other words how have you arrived at your aesthetic judgements, your beliefs, your ideas?

My concerns about asking the right questions and having an awareness of how it might feel to be asked them, prompted me to think that I should watch some video-recording of myself. This realisation was different from the circumstance in which I asked other people to make video recordings - that had been a consequence of the interaction I had with dancers once I started to record them: this was to do with understanding how it would feel to be in the situation of watching playback of myself and having to talk about it and answer awkward questions about

myself: What don't you like? What looks bad? What are you doing wrong? What would you like to change? How would you like to look?

As it happened various dancers did film clips in which I appeared (see for example, Appendix 5, clip: 'Participant Filming'). There were also various other clips by participants which were not used because in general the quality was poor). Although I watched these privately, my responses, unprompted by someone asking questions, were more to do with self-consciousness and embarrassment; the difference between my body-image and the visual evidence of myself on video; the surprise and unfamiliarity of seeing myself and being able to watch myself dancing; the recollection of the occasion on which the clip was recorded; unexpected observations to do with other people; the memory of what certain people said that day; a revisiting of emotions or other details evident from the clip: than with answers to the kinds of questions I wanted to raise with others.

In general, and I suppose not surprisingly, these were to be the same kinds of response which participants gave: initially overcoming a sense of self-consciousness and embarrassment; voicing interest in the purpose of the video recording; recalling and commenting on the visual record; and incidentally introducing associated material prompted either by what they saw or our discussion. The kind of light-hearted comments made at the time of filming suggesting a wariness of public exposure on YouTube or as the content of a DVD did not reappear in feedback discussions as participants quickly realised that my intention had been otherwise.

In the event I was also asked questions similar to those above during playback sessions with participants. However in such circumstances (rather than in sessions set up by others in order to elicit my responses) I was obviously in control of my computer, of the clips I was showing and of the general situation. Thus the experience could only be viewed as an approximation of that of my participants.

TRANSCRIPTION

The video-recordings proved extremely useful as an interface for stimulating and eliciting the feedback discussions. There were, however, many more video-clips taken than were used, or even viewed by anyone other than by myself and which were therefore redundant. This was partly the result of my initial uncertainty regarding the kind of clip to present to participants for the purpose of discussion. The video-recording process consequently transpired to be a

very time expensive aspect of the project. The end result in terms of the discussion outcomes, however, was worthwhile.

Overall an immense amount of data was produced, as the feedback discussions were nearly all over an hour long, such that each transcription easily ran to more than ten pages. It was consequently, a laborious and painstaking exercise to complete the transcriptions, large tracts of which contained conversation which, although amiable, was not particularly enlightening with regard to the research questions.

Furthermore the whole process of playing back material, of prompting responses and engaging with participants, caused me to refine my questions at each stage, conducting each subsequent playback session in the light of earlier responses, or of new perspectives as they emerged. The process of listening closely to the recordings whilst transcribing ensured that I became intimate with the data and was more able to draw upon the themes when writing. Furthermore it was from these sources that I gleaned the most significant information and insights.

A SPIRAL OF RESEARCH

There was thus a continual reframing of questions, and of searching from new angles which resulted in the production of further knowledge and new perspectives at each stage, always returning to the aims of the whole research: to find out what Argentine Tango means to these dancers; how they imagine their dancing should look; what they hope to achieve; how they experience it. It would involve finding out about their idea of Argentine Tango, of how and from where it had emerged, how these dancers knew what they are doing, or were wanting to do. And then, from questioning what the dancers think and believe about Argentine Tango, to further questions about the relationship of Tango here in the United Kingdom with Tango in Argentina.

The impetus and the very strong visual image of a spiral which I have of my research process and the development of knowledge resonates with David Fetterman's view (2009, xi) in which he describes the practice of ethnography as a way of life, insofar as it takes over every aspect of one's practice in relation to the people around one, and in one's perspectives with regard to them. One aspect of the ethnographic practice, is that of analysis and interpretation which Fetterman characterises as:

an ongoing responsibility and joy from the first moment an ethnographer envisions a new project to the final stages of writing and reporting the findings (p.3) . . . It begins from the moment a fieldworker selects a problem to study and ends with the last word in the report or the ethnography (p.93).

My experience of the research process was indeed that each stage is linked intrinsically to the others: preparing the presentation for De Montfort University about doing the video fieldwork; writing this chapter about the process and methodology of the fieldwork; the chapter which follows this one, regarding the feedback sessions and the production of knowledge evoked by the visual ethnographic research method; and the one which preceded it about the earlier methodology. No stage can be separated from any other: revisiting and revising, reframing and re-interpreting the process and developing insights in a continuum of activity. It was by means of this continual, cyclical process that my research questions were refined and refocused; each refinement of the research methodology aiming to produce a more specific area of knowledge and at the same time building another layer outwards, like a spiral, where there always remains the possibility of yet more layers being added. Eventually I have realised that unless one takes strict control, anticipating and emphasising the finality of the last word one writes, there remains the possibility of the ethnographic research seeping into and taking root in one's life with the possibility of continuing indefinitely and never leaving it. There is no natural or obvious ending to a piece of ethnographic research: only the ethnographer's judgement that it has completed its objectives, reached a suitable conclusion and is, at last, a finished product.

CHAPTER 5: THE EAST MIDLANDS EMBRACES ARGENTINE TANGO

In this chapter my aim is to explore the interest in and attraction to the Argentine Tango of East Midlands Tango dancers. By addressing the ways in which the dancers themselves described, demonstrated, embodied and evaluated their identification and relationship with Tango I endeavour to explore how they perceived or imagined Argentine Tango; what they regarded as authentic or genuine practice and their evaluations of their own dancing.

A TRAGIC QUALITY: THE EXOTIC ESSENCE OF ARGENTINE TANGO

Reviewing the questionnaires and one-to-one interviews in the first phase it became clear that participants could be divided into two groups depending on how they became involved with dancing Argentine Tango. The first group was comprised of people who claimed to have no prior knowledge or interest in Argentine Tango, but who joined for a number of reasons, amongst the most frequent being that they had been introduced to it by a friend, or were looking for a social activity to share with friends or partners, or through which they might have the possibility of meeting prospective partners.

The second group of participants were those with some prior knowledge of Argentine Tango, who had been specifically seeking out an opportunity in the East Midlands to learn the dance. They came because they liked the music or had seen films or shows featuring Argentine Tango; or else, as in my case, had witnessed some kind of live Argentine Tango demonstration and decided they wanted to take it up as an activity. Frequently the people in this group had also done various other kinds of social dance.

Certain participants also claimed other relationships or geographic connections to Argentina or Latin America which involved family relationships with Argentinian people or arose as a result of having studied or worked in Argentina or with Argentinians, or in other places where Tango featured. Kirsten, for example explained her initial interest in Tango as a result of a South American (Colombian) boyfriend who first introduced her to the music which he loved. François had discovered Argentine tango while working in Quebec; Malcolm first saw Tango watching his father dancing in Paris in the 1950s.

Approaching from the opposite direction, was a young Argentine couple who joined the East Midlands Tango groups during the course of this study: the woman was studying at London University and the man working at Leicester University, which was how he first heard about the group. They had gravitated towards the Tango group because they had met whilst taking Tango lessons in Buenos Aires, and were thus keen to continue this shared activity, although joining the Leicester group had come about partly out of a sense of incredulousness that it existed at all. A further reason for their joining was as a way of retaining a link to Argentina in much the same way as Maria, in Skinner's article *The Salsa Class*, imagines 'herself returning home through the salsa' (2007, p.494). Wieschiolek's research (2003) on the salsa scene in Hamburg, Germany, notes that many Latin Americans attend salsa nights in order to confirm a sense of identity away from home:

It was only when they came to Hamburg that salsa became an important element of their generalized cultural identity as Latin American. Living outside Latin America, they feel as if they were living in a diaspora (pp.125-6).

In fact, Ceci, of the Argentinian couple, actually did observe how:

When we were in [Berlin] we went into a very nice place . . . there [was] an old building and there was like a little bit of a party and it was [. . .] a lot of people dancing tango and whenever you entered there, you feel a lot like as if you were home (Ceci, discussion, Leicester, 6.3.2010, 41'20").

Prior to my study, Raul, another Argentinian man (though not from Buenos Aires) had similarly joined the group, having never danced Tango previously. He subsequently left to return to Argentina without involvement in this study, but one might surmise that his participation was at least partly connected to his being Argentinian and wishing to perform an aspect of what is commonly perceived to be part of the Argentinian national or cultural identity. Skinner (2007) describes the daughter of Puerto Rican immigrants similarly 'reconnecting with her ethnicity through salsa,' who said, 'My Puerto Rican identity has become diluted and so I use the salsa to reconnect with it' (p. 494). Renta (2004) writes that 'many Latinos/as in the US combine salsa dance performance with language and music to construct and affirm an individual and collective sense of cultural identity . . . a kind of counter hegemonic potential that involves the body' (p.142). Pelinski, furthermore, points out:

Las grandes ciudades son la meta de refugiados políticos, emigrantes, obrero huéspedes que agrupados en 'comunidades imaginadas' (Anderson 1983) pueden crear fuertes lazos de apego (o de rechazo) a sus patrias respectivas (Pelinski 2000, p.41): The big cities are the destination of political refugees, immigrants, guest workers

who group themselves in communities of imagined communities (Anderson) where they can create strong ties of attachment with their respective home countries. [My translation].

It is interesting to note that the presence of Argentinians within the group, afforded other participants and the group in general, a degree of confidence and reassurance derived from the fact that none of these Argentinians were expert Tango dancers: participants would chat to them and seek information about Argentina from them; refer to them as the most likely to know first-hand and best about certain aspects of Tango; about what certain Spanish words meant; about Tango music. During interviews and discussions other participants would refer me to them, *“You should ask Ceci and Mati about Buenos Aires”*, or *“Have you talked to Ceci and Mati?”* Despite not being expert dancers, they embodied cultural capital by virtue of being Argentinian which ensured them a credibility to which people deferred.

Returning to the participants in the East Midlands who identified themselves as having encountered Argentine Tango in some way before deliberately seeking it out and joining, two participants identified having first seen Argentine Tango in Barcelona and another the film *‘The Tango Lesson’*; two referred to becoming interested as a result of seeing a BBC documentary about Tango in Buenos Aires; at least ten participants referred to an interest in, or enjoyment of the music and one woman described visiting Venice, *“we arrived on the plaza in front of the church and they were dancing impromptu tango”* (Jenny, interview, Market Harborough, 22/06/08). Four people referred separately to the skill or technique of the legs. Others variously mentioned its elegant style; spiritual energy; creativity; eccentricity; maturity; culture; mystery; danger; magic; how it looks amazing; is sensual, sophisticated, eye-catching, different, visually stunning, expressive, unique, cerebral, wonderful.

Though sketchy, some of the adjectives and comments used above by participants to describe their initial knowledge of Argentine Tango are reminiscent of Savigliano’s account (1995) of the exotic appeal of Tango. Participants were referring to their experience of watching Argentine Tango and of interpreting or ascribing meaning from that perspective. Remarkably, their choice of words appears to exemplify and corroborate Savigliano’s account of the production of exoticism:

The imperialist circulation of feelings gave rise to an emotional capital – Passion – accumulated, recoded, and consumed in the form of Exotic Culture: “mysterious”, “untamed”, “wild,” “primitive”, “passionate (p.2).

Savigliano further argues that:

Passion plays a major role in the production of exoticism but the passion of the exotics is molded by the exoticizer's Desire. . . . [Thus] [e]xoticism is a practice of representation . . . It is also a will to power over the unknown (1995, p.169).

Whilst these participants did not use the word 'exotic' per se, and were not literally casting a 'colonizing gaze' with a conscious 'will to power over the unknown', nevertheless their language evokes visual aspects of the dance to which they were drawn. Their gaze was drawn to a dance holding connotations of 'danger' and 'mystery', luring or compelling them to come along and dance, only to find herself, in the case of one participant, becoming "*hooked deeper than [to] other dance*".

As an observing participant, I often encountered the idea, as well as having voiced it myself, of being 'hooked' in the colloquial sense of having an addiction. This idea emerges frequently in discussions about tango behaviours, such as the remarkable willingness and motivation of participants, again myself included, to go out of their way by driving great distances and spending large amounts of money in order to attend events and classes in other parts of the country and even abroad.

Apart from the perceived look of the dance, many participants went on to reveal a personal identification with Argentine Tango, suggestive of a longing, or a missing part of themselves which they felt Tango could satisfy. In my study, Jenny's explanation for liking "*the Latin*" was that, "*I've always been into the Spanish side*" (22/6/08). Annie similarly claimed:

Argentine Tango was something I'd always, always, always wanted to do. I've always wanted to go to Argentina. It's a long dream of mine. (Discussion, Leicester, February 2009).

And although Samuel said that it was the music which first attracted him to the dance, he also elaborated that, "*There's something about the Latin Americans that has always inspired me . . . it's a tragic quality I think.*" (Interview, Market Harborough, 24.08.08).

Such comments articulate Tango as being 'Latin' or from '*the Spanish side*' and suggest a magical or compelling fascination with a foreign culture, which interests me in relation to the white British identity of most of these participants. Samuel's reference to "*a tragic quality*", which for some reason he found "*inspiring*" similarly hints at a longing for a hopeless or

irreconcilable state of being to which he feels drawn, but evidently feels outside of, or which is beyond him, though worth striving to attain.

These comments are reminiscent of those by participants in Bosse's (2008) study of the Salsa Formation Team (SFT) in Central Illinois, North America. As one member stated, he joined the SFT to 'get ethnic. I'm tired of being white!' Other members believed that deep down they possessed a metaphorical 'Latin soul' or 'Latin blood' and that their performance of salsa was an attempt to find this imagined, primordial ethnic self (2008, p.58). In 'Whiteness and the Performance of Race in American Ballroom Dance' (2007) Bosse argues that the Latin genres offered her informants, who had expressed anxiety about their sexuality and ethnicity, the chance to transform themselves in a context of performance. She argues that:

two conceptual categories, unmarked self and racialized other, have informed the development of ballroom dance, and they structure performance for the midwestern American dancers . . . Through the genre subclassifications of "modern" and "Latin," whiteness is made universal and normative, rational and beautiful, while the racial other is made particular and exotic, physical and sexual. Ultimately, both are manifestations of white-ness, mirrored reflections of one another that help to define whiteness, both by making invisible what it is and explicitly pronouncing what it is not (p.22).

Thus both categories reflect whiteness, with the exotic, racialized other of the Latin dances contrasting and thereby defining and maintaining the whiteness of the classification of modern dances. Her theory is that [within ballroom]:

the Latin genres really have very little to do with Latin Americans, and that they are a fabricated component of white identity modelled on the Latin American "exotic other" stereotype (itself a fabrication) (p.40).

The comments of at least some of the East Midlands participants certainly suggest an interest in 'otherness' and of being involved in an activity which is both 'unusual' in the sense of not being undertaken by a large number of British people, and 'exotic' in the sense of being from a foreign country and possessing a certain mystique by virtue of its origins and connotations. It is possible that dancing Argentine Tango offers participants the possibility of safely becoming someone more interesting, more unusual, more marked out, but in the process tacitly reinforcing their status of whiteness at the same time.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: PERCEPTIONS OF INTIMACY

From my personal experience of becoming drawn to Argentine Tango, it was the technicalities of the steps and, in particular, of the interweaving leg movements in the *voleos* and *ganchos* which first amazed and motivated me to learn the dance. Consequently I had anticipated a category of response to my question about the characteristics of Argentine Tango, emphasising its particular movement vocabulary, although as it turned out, this was less prominent than I had expected.

Surprisingly it was the theme of connection and unity between dancing couples which was strikingly and often reiterated. Apart from, or indeed, despite Jenny's comment that, "*what most people see [as the characteristics of tango]. . . the leg-wraps and things*", very few people actually referred to *voleos*, *ganchos*, *ochos* or other figures typical of the dance at this stage of discussion. Music was mentioned quite often as a defining characteristic of the dance, in some cases as having been the motivation for coming to learn Tango in the first place, but it was connection between partners which was resoundingly discussed, over and above any other aspects of the dance, and about which there was a remarkable degree of agreement amongst participants. Moreover it was expressed, not in terms of the movements, the skill of physical communication or connection, or of the mechanics of the lead and follow, but more often in terms of the effect of seeing these things taking place.

Participants' language conveyed meaning being read or attributed by someone watching a dance, seeing a couple on a dance floor from the position of an onlooker, who imagines the feelings that the dancers are experiencing or describes the feelings to which their dancing gives rise.

Thus such terms as "the tragic quality", "sensuous", "sensual", "not just sex, but sensuous sex", "intimacy", "the looks on people's faces", "lost in a world of their own", "the sort of togetherness", "always as one" were used to describe the magic and pleasure of watching a couple dance, who have achieved the elusive 'connection'. However they make no attempt to explain how the connection and the lead and follow is brought about: they say nothing, for example, of the embrace and how the couple's arms are linked; of how the lead is transmitted through the torso. They do not explain how a follower's whole body must be tuned in and

listening with every nerve and muscle in order to read the sometimes scarcely perceptible weight changes and shifts of balance which a leader makes in order to transmit the lead. From the perspective of trying to summarise or define, in the context of a discussion, what distinguishes Argentine Tango, participants did not produce technical descriptions of features of the movement vocabulary of the dance, but impressionistic evocations of how they visualise or remember the dance.

There is a possible confusion here between what the observer imagines the dancers are feeling and whatever the dancing connotes for the observer, which may be symbolic or metonymic in that it brings other associations, knowledge, or experience into play whilst they watch, which are not explained, but culturally built up and accrued. From their perspective of observation and imagination, participants imbue meaning and allude to what is not necessarily there. For example the “*tragic quality*” of two dancers, or the “*intimacy*” between them, is attributed as a result of the onlooker’s imagination. What is expressed hints at what Argentinian Tango means for these participants, which is not normally discussed openly or explicitly. Words such as “*tragic*”, “*intimate*” and “*passionate*” almost suggest a code referring to something which it is assumed that other people share and understand.

Such terms also hint at an interest in intimacy as a desirable goal for the participants and, perhaps, as Bosse suggests:

Given that there exists little appropriate and positive language with which to discuss white sexuality, perhaps it should not be surprising that these dancers turned to the racial stereotype of the Latin American lover (2007, p.40).

The comments of the white middle-class participants in the East Midlands suggest similar interests to those manifested by Bosse’s ballroom dancers : in both cases their references to the intimacy and sexual intrigue of Argentine Tango reveal a fascination with the eroticism and sexuality of a certain idea of Latin-ness.

Their comments revealed an imaginary aspect of the dance, in which ideas of the exotic and fantasies of another time, another place and other peoples create narratives of intimacy embodied in the dance as viewed by fascinated, cosmopolitan spectators. Returning to Savigliano (1995):

The colonizer constitutes his own “progressive” identity – Civilized, Enlightened, Democratic, Postmodern – on the basis of this confrontation with exotic, colonized

(neo- and post- as well) Other (p. 2). . . [and thus] tango was incorporated into the world economy of passion as one among many exotic dances (p.82).

Whilst such descriptions were of their initial impressions, similar ideas about Argentine Tango became evident and appeared to persist alongside the reality of dancing. In later discussions whilst viewing video of themselves dancing, participants referred to YouTube clips, films or specific teachers as a way of showing me the visual aspects they liked best about the dance. They had clear favourites and used similar words to explain the appeal of a clip or a dance and what they liked about a particular dancer's style or look. For example, Sally showed me her favourite pair of dancers, Homer and Cristina Ladas, describing:

the very weighted, low, sleek walking, scouring the floor stuff that when I see it, just scooping the floor up and kind of they are completely sunk into each other, I think that looks fantastic (Discussion, Leicester, May, 2010, 50'24").

I was also shown clips or sent YouTube links of videos which were significant for participants, though not always because they depicted the stereotype of erotic, sultry tango. On one occasion the leader at Market Harborough circulated a clip of an honestly unglamorous elderly Argentinian couple dancing socially with the implicit message that this couple represented his ideal of connection and, by implication, that exotic dancers performing showy figures were absolutely not what he was attempting to achieve. On another, a participant sent a comical YouTube clip with the apparent intention of showing her knowledge of the Tango *código* and making a comment about those who do not follow it.¹

EAST MIDLANDS TANGO: LOOKING AT THE DANCE WE DO

At the point when participants began to watch themselves on video in the second phase of the research, their responses became focussed on the video material, the movement and how it felt to be dancing. At the beginning of each playback discussion I endeavoured to direct participants' attention first of all to clips of themselves and then to a much longer clip of a practical session in Leicester. Consequently it was as if they were re-living the dances I had recorded. With video clips in front of them, participants spoke as if from within the dance, or

¹ See Chapter 7 for further discussion of both these clips.

at least of what they remembered of being in the dance. They could remember things that they said; the feelings they had been having whilst dancing; what they had been trying to do; what was going wrong or what was working. In addition they also discussed what they liked the look of and what they were embarrassed by, or critical of in their own dancing. A different kind of knowledge was produced in the process: not simply about the characteristics and visual appearance of the dancing, but also about being inside the dance as dancers; of being there once more and reliving the dancing.

Once participants began to talk about themselves dancing, their use of language changed from impressionistic to specific, detailed observations about their own technique related to different parts of the body. They began to discuss how they were actually dancing: their posture, their embrace, head position, chest position, whether their feet were close together; that certain dancers were able to keep their upper body still, whilst others bobbed up and down, or moved their hips as if dancing Salsa. They discussed difficulties they experienced with actually dancing: that leaders stoop, or followers anticipate the lead, rather than allowing themselves to be led; where they preferred to put their hands in the embrace and the difficulties of dancing with taller or smaller partners. Discussions moved away from the imaginary to address participants' real experiences of dancing.

The contrast between how participants had described and defined their impressions of Argentinian Tango and how they described their own dancing is interesting. What it appears to show is that, on one hand, the dancers have a clear image or impression of what they are trying to do, which in many respects is separate from what they saw themselves doing. On the whole most participants expressed a certain amount of embarrassment at their immediate reaction to seeing themselves, which may have affected their appraisal of their own dancing and been responsible for producing comments which had more to do with their failings than with the overall impression of the dance.

However it was notable that no one made comments about how sensual, passionate or tragic they looked. Some comments were made about how a couple might have a good connection, or how they were looking much better dancing together, but they were not described as looking intimate or sexy. Participants did not use the words they had used at the outset to define the dance, about themselves. Was this embarrassment? Respect? English modesty? Or

the fact that Argentinian Tango dancing in the East Midlands has not reached a sufficient skill level to produce such an effect on viewers?

My contention is that there are two different processes going on: the imagined dance and the dance we actually do. Indeed, there may also be embarrassment and reticence about describing fellow dancers, or themselves, using adjectives which suggest a sexual or erotic narrative or which might evoke an exotic place or context, far-removed from the one in which they really dance (an untidy music rehearsal room on the tenth floor of the Students Union or the baldly functional, neon-lit and multi-purpose nature of a modern leisure centre). A compelling explanation is that, given that there are two different practices, the language used to describe the imaginary dance does not, and cannot be applied to the reality of participants dancing in the East Midlands, because to do so would necessitate attaching imaginary narratives of intimacy and intrigue to people with whom participants were fairly familiar and whose lives are known and culturally transparent to them. Sometimes there were visitors outside of the normal group who would arrive and dance during the East Midlands sessions, but for the most part, participants knew who they were watching, knew their Tango histories and, more significantly, knew about an individual's social and personal life. There was, therefore, little scope for reading intimacy or sexual intrigue into a dance between individuals whom one knows not to be involved with each other, but who are simply learning a new figure or practising Tango for the duration of a dance or two.

Nevertheless the two processes are entwined, and the practice of dancing would be difficult if one did not have some kind of idea of what one is trying to achieve. There is the particular kind of impression which participants have of Argentinian Tango, and there is a whole other aspect of participants' behaviour/ engagement with the dance which speaks of their attempts to balance, even marry, the Tango of their imagination with their actual practice of it. Rarely is it made explicit; often it differs from person to person; and sometimes certain views are contradictory or inconsistent with others held by the same person; sometimes they represent contradictions and inconsistencies between different people in the group, as I will endeavour to illustrate in the sections below on 'Invoking Buenos Aires' and 'The Purposes of Authenticity', about practices, ideas and imaginary links with Buenos Aires. I maintain that there are contradictions, which, in the normal dancing routines and contexts, are not made explicit, because there is a tacit assumption that all the dancers share the same imaginary of Tango and that there is in fact a community of imagination holding together an invented

practice, which, in many ways has become a ritual of performance, being constantly re-enacted and reinforced. It is the nature of this community of imagination and its enactment which I hope to reveal by means of participants' evidence.

INSIDE OUT: ZOOMING IN ON THE DANCE

As participants watched themselves dancing, a pattern emerged. First they would identify themselves; often they would groan or make comments suggesting embarrassment at seeing themselves; then they criticised their technique or appearance and, after a little while, began to talk in more detail about their relationship with Tango. A topic that frequently occurred unprompted at this latter stage, but otherwise which I raised, was the extent to which participants felt that the appearance of themselves dancing differed from, or accorded with their experience of dancing Tango.

Carl, for example, was very interested to watch his video clip:

I haven't seen myself dancing on video before. I would be quite interested to see it. . . there should be some quite good moves that I'll be interested to see. (Discussion, Market Harborough, 7.11.09).

However he quickly expressed surprise, coupled with a degree of disappointment that, when he watched himself, he was not doing very much.

I had the feeling of being much more dynamic and moving more and doing more moves (7.11.09).

He was not alone in this respect, and although most people were not terribly disappointed, many had imagined their performance as being larger, more dramatic and more technically impressive.

Here was evidence of the rupture between visibility and reality, and also between lived and recorded experience as discussed in Chapter 4: a disjuncture in which what participants saw on screen did not match their memory of the embodied, sensory reality which they had experienced, nor of the visual images they subsequently produced of themselves as they were at the time of dancing. It was not simply a question of time and distance deceiving them, but a discrepancy between how they had experienced or imagined themselves whilst dancing and the way they perceived themselves in the recording.

Others were realistic, or at least resigned with regard to the outward appearance of their dancing. For example, Oliver admitted that he and his wife, two of the more experienced and competent dancers, had:

suddenly realised that the dance feels very good when you are in it, but when you watch yourself it looks unremarkable. . . . Visually - when you're in your dance and you're moving along to the music, every turn feels it's going splendidly, it feels great . . . For most people Argentine Tango is a social dance so it's what it feels like from inside the dance. The inside of the dance is one thing and the outside is a separate . . . I suppose the kind of thing is to make the outside of the thing look like it feels.
(Discussion, Uppingham, 12/07/2010).

His wife, Daphne, had also come to terms with the discrepancy between how it feels to dance and the perceptions of onlookers:

If you say to someone you are a tango dancer they go 'Wow! Fantastic!' But if you show them, they go 'Oh. Ok. Is that what tango is? Fine, it's not exciting' (discussion 12/07/2010).

Oliver later added that, *"it seems smaller and very kind of human and slightly mundane and I'm not impressed by it at all"* (12/07/2010). For him, as a dancer who enjoyed the technical challenge of mastering increasingly difficult moves, this realisation of how the dance appears to the outward eye held a hint of disillusionment, despite his dedication.

Christina, Malcolm, Sam and Sally, like many others, made instant, critical comments about their posture or their dancing when they first watched the video-recordings. Despite also having very strong views about what was right and wrong technically with participants' performances, Malcolm was emphatic that the social variety, as opposed to the show variety of Argentine Tango, was *"not a spectator sport"* and that it doesn't matter what it looks like.

Other comments regarding the discrepancy of being in the dance and watching oneself dancing included, Glenn's, *"It feels far better than it looks"* (July 2010) and the infinitely harsher, almost angry observation by the original founder of the Market Harborough group, *"There is no passion, dry as ditch water"* (July 2010) revealing the degree to which he has been frustrated by his teaching attempts and disappointed in what participants have failed to produce.

INTIMATE EMBRACES

When asked what an outsider might think of what people are doing were they to walk into a *práctica* session at random, Glenn refers to:

interesting ways in which different couples are dancing to the same music . . . actually dancing quite close to each other in this somewhat sensuous way and then going off and leaving the person they've danced with . . . and that's an end to it (Discussion, Hinckley, July 2010, 28'50").

Glenn also explained how he and his wife became engaged with Tango:

We both liked it and Mary accepted . . . that you can dance with other people and you can dance close and quite intimately with other people and then after three minutes it's over . . . and if a sociable group builds up then that's ok (July 2010, 58'10").

Mary had indeed accepted that you could dance for three minutes and that was the end of it, but it does not follow from this that she necessarily enjoyed it or that it had been straightforward. In an earlier one-to-one interview she confessed that she only really likes dancing with a few familiar people. She described being “haunted” by a particular male dancer and dreading being invited to dance by strangers. Her reluctance to dance with strangers may have been partly due to shyness and her normal English reticence, but her husband’s comments suggest that she also felt uncomfortable with the assumed or perceived intimacy of adopting a Tango embrace and yielding oneself to a leader for the space of several dances; that she had had to learn to distance herself from her usual cultural position in order to enter the alien and somewhat uncomfortable cultural space and practice of an Argentine Tango. She also admitted that her increasing deafness made her feel awkward when conversing with strangers and listening to the music, which undermined her confidence with regard to assuming an unfamiliar and somewhat exposing role. Certain of her own comments suggested that she was often quite pleased to sit down at the end of a dance. Whilst Mike Featherstone (1991) outlines:

[t]he increasing capacity of the new middle class to display a calculating hedonism, to engage in more varied (and often dangerous) aesthetic and emotional explorations which themselves do not amount to a rejection of controls, but a more carefully circumscribed and interpersonally responsible ‘controlled de-control’ of the emotions (1991, p.59) . . .

it appeared that Mary was actually very uncomfortable with any such 'calculating hedonism' and found it extremely difficult to switch between her normal social persona and the one involved in the performance of Argentine Tango.

Whilst most participants hinted at a similar reluctance to dance with dancers they did not consider to be very competent or with whom the dancing experience was difficult, boring or embarrassing, the general assumption from most people was that connection and intimacy were desirable goals to be achieved in dancing Argentine Tango, rather than the reverse. To be fair Glenn had explained at the beginning that initially he and his wife had sought out a Tango class as something specifically to do together in their retirement, and not as a way of meeting a partner, or member of the opposite sex. Nevertheless, even with dancers not deliberately seeking romantic or sexual liaisons, there was an understanding that the feeling of connection and oneness to be achieved in dancing a 'perfect Tango' is what drives dancers onwards in a quest for the next opportunity to repeat the experience on the dance floor, whether with a previous successful partner or a total stranger.

TANGO MOMENTS

A question which I pursued with participants if it did not emerge spontaneously during discussion was about specific, memorable and intensely pleasurable experiences of dancing Tango: what I describe as Tango moments. Not every dancer could identify such an experience, but for those who could, their descriptions were often vivid and highly individual.

Helen described her best moments as a kind of meditative trance:

I love it when you can . . . almost like meditation and you can really get into the zone and you totally forget about everything else around for those two minutes or whatever. . . You have to have a really nice leader for that . . . I think the leader has got to be musical, or to understand the music or else it never works. (Discussion, Kibworth, July 2010)

By contrast with Helen's rather general explanation of what made a good dance for her, Sally's description was of one specific dance at a *milonga* with a man she did not know which stood out for her above any others.

What he did to start with, we kept it very, very simple. . . just like all those feints and differences in steps . . . he worked really hard, so that not only could he feel it but I could feel as well, so I trusted him, because I could feel that the connection was there. .

.. .and then he tried some things out and he kept them as the theme . . . and then he kind of created more from them . . . you know how people do endless variations that have got nothing to do with anything, they don't kind of flow from each other, they've got nothing to do with the music . . . it's just like - I can do this and I can do this and this and this - and you just think well what was all that about? But he very much kind of kept it themed and he worked something out and how that went, a little bit far, kind of simple but . . . an opening pattern and it was just fantastic . . . and I think that is what I look for. (Discussion, Leicester, February 2010, 42').

Like Helen, Daphne gave a detailed and very visual account of how her perfect Tango moments felt, describing the delicate connection between herself and her partner which they are trying to keep intact; also about not being able to tell who is leading and who is following because the connection is so finely balanced:

It's almost as if when I'm dancing with somebody there's a piece of tissue paper between us . . . it's a very thin fragile membrane between us and now what's happening is that we're dancing and keeping that totally intact . . . it's the flimsiness and the delicate nature of that thing which is being kept intact because we're just so reading the leader and he's so reading me that I don't know who's leading and who's following . . . so for moments it almost feels I don't know how we've done it or how this dance is working because I'm not sure if I'm not leading it or if he's leading it . . . and it's totally with the music . . . and at odd little bits there's a tiny little rip in the tissue because there's something which goes slightly wrong and it goes [makes ripping sound] and it kind of tweaks the tissue, it just rips it slightly but it's not fatal, it doesn't matter, it doesn't have to be kept intact but that's what it feels like, "Oh! There's a little nick, a little tear," and then we get back and it's all there again. So that's what I feel that for me is perfect tango. (Discussion, Uppingham, 12/07/2010).

Daphne's perfect tango is a process in which she has to pay close attention to her partner and not do anything to jeopardize the connection and continuity of the dance. Her description demonstrates the need for constant adjustment within the intimate encounter with her partner, in order to produce an experience or performance in that moment, which, by nature of its transience and the impossibility of its recapture, always necessitates repetition.

Once you've tasted it, that wonderful feeling which is so rare . . . that clouds the rest a bit. You forget how it must have been at the beginning . . . I was trying to describe it earlier, what it feels like to have a really good dance . . . It's got nothing to do with showiness. It's got much more to do with connection (12/07/2010).

Oliver was in agreement. *"That's the peak, the pinnacle of perfection to do that, to be able to do that and create that kind of emotion, that kind of bond between two people."* (Discussion, Uppingham, 12/07/2010). However, reiterating his wife's comment about the necessity to return and repeat the experience, Oliver explained that, *"There is a connection between people*

which makes it obsessive . . . there are a lot of people who are very obsessed by tango” (July 2010, Uppingham).

Not all the dancers could fix on, or describe a clear moment of tango ‘ecstasy’ however, but what emerged from discussion with those who could, was almost unanimously, the strong sense of close, physical connection which had been identified much earlier as one of the defining characteristics of Argentine Tango. More experienced dancers were more likely to be able to relate and identify to my question and to be able to describe the sensation. For beginners or less experienced dancers, the necessity for close physical contact in the embrace, self-consciousness, lack of familiarity with Tango steps or the nature of improvisation would undoubtedly jeopardise the likelihood of experiencing anything approximating to Tango ecstasy. Similarly if two partners find it difficult to find a connection within a dance, for whatever reason, their experience of the dance is unlikely to attain the sublime level of a Tango ‘moment’.

EAST MIDLANDS EMBRACES BUENOS AIRES: RELIVING A GOLDEN AGE OF TANGO

Apart from the immense physical satisfaction attainable by dancing Argentine Tango, it became evident that nostalgia and a need for authenticity were important to some participants. A middle-aged, married couple and long-standing members of both groups, Gary and Helen had helped with setting up the Market Harborough group and on occasions Helen had helped with the teaching of beginners. Whilst Gary contributes less to the discussion than his wife, their joint comments emphasise a strong belief in and allegiance to what they understand as a system of teaching and learning Argentine Tango as described by former Tango teacher Christine Denniston in *The Meaning of Tango: The Story of the Argentinian Dance* (2007) which they had both read. Gary and Helen make implicit and explicit references to the practice Denniston describes, in which male dancers in Buenos Aires did not dance socially with women until they had served a kind of apprenticeship by learning from, and practising with more experienced male dancers:

The whole process, from first going to a práctica to first dancing with a woman, generally took a man three years, with the first nine months spent only following (Denniston, 2007, p. 17).

Their view of Tango emerges strongly as a dance which requires a male leader and in which women should follow without allowing themselves to anticipate the lead. Helen comments on a section on the video of Gary helping another male dancer:

I think it's quite good the guys doing that though, 'cause Clive and Geoff together have learned quite a lot from dancing with each other, 'cause they see how it feels to lead and what they need to do to lead properly . . . rather than to invite and then the woman does a performance, they're actually leading the moves . . . and being in control of her legs . . . if she allows it. (Discussion, Kibworth, July 2010, 18'24").

Denniston is proscriptive and direct about how followers should behave:

The follower should never lift the leg her or himself . . . It would be both rude and dangerous (p.156). . . Apart from the fact that it looks far less aesthetically pleasing (again, dogs and lampposts are called to mind) it is also dangerous (2007, p. 161).

Whilst Gary jokes, "I always say to followers - If you can play your role as it should be played . . . you can have a nice dance" (July 2010), his wife, in a similar vein to Denniston and in contrast with her husband's tongue in cheek approach, is critical of some followers' habits and forthright about how they should behave:

Then he'll lead one [a gancho] rather than them helping themselves. . . . I think that's one of the problems though, isn't it: the women want to do nice things and so they do tend to do all their own moves and that's why the leaders take so long to learn to lead properly, because a lot of the time they just go like this [Helen gestured how leaders sometimes use their hands to push followers into a voleo] and the woman performs (July 2010, 27'23").

Helen suggests that when they start to learn Tango women should be taught more rigorously about the importance of strictly following the lead and not performing their own moves, and that men practising with each other is "a good system" because:

they get the idea of the mechanical . . . and are much more likely to discover then and not worry about being too rough or standing on their toes (July 2010).

Still referring to "the good old days" of Denniston's book, Gary later discusses aspects of the etiquette surrounding the embrace:

There are lots of different schools. It is said that the official Argentine way, the guy always decides, but the follower has to feel comfortable . . . (July 2010, 38'30").

Later to corroborate what he regards as the official Argentine way, he says, "I think Christine Denniston in her book on Tango said that the accepted view from tangueros in Buenos Aires is that women don't get up" [until they have agreed to dance with someone] (July 2010, 39'16").

In Buenos Aires in 1914 the gap [between men and women] was more than 100,000 (Collier et al. 1995, p.38)

The apprentice system (which may have arisen less out of pedagogy and more of necessity and the lack of opportunity to dance given the much smaller population of women) is one example of a model of practice from Buenos Aires, alongside other codes of behaviour and Tango 'etiquette' held up by Turner at Market Harborough. He had a conviction about the 'proper' way of doing things and frequently conjured up scenes of Buenos Aires and references to the way 'they' danced in Buenos Aires, without ever being explicit about who 'they' were. He would, from time to time, invoke a somewhat paternalistic and foreboding aspect of early *milongas* in Buenos Aires, in which older brothers or uncles would watch protectively over their sisters or nieces whilst they danced with other men. His explanation was that the provocative and intrusive lower leg work of Argentine Tango thus evolved in order to avoid their gaze and enable men to dance suggestively with the women they desired.

One day, for example, following a workshop with Chan Parks, a visiting teacher from the United States, David was at pains to explain why "*no self-respecting tanguero* [male tango dancer] *in Buenos Aires*" would stand up and invite a woman to dance unless the music was being played in *tandas*. It is a particular way of organising the music and dancing, although frequently not adhered to in the United Kingdom and Europe where *cortinas* (breaks) are not always used to divide music into thematic groups. David wanted to impress upon us in a very serious manner the extent to which the visiting teacher had been unable to dance and fully enjoy the previous evening because the individuals responsible for the evening playlist had not organised the music into traditional *tandas*. As Chan's host, David had been embarrassed by the fact that Chan had not been able to enjoy and participate fully in the evening and explained that the reason why the music is organised into *tandas* in Buenos Aires is to ensure that the *milongueros*, whose job it is to lead the dance, in understanding the progress of a given *tanda*, can decide at what point to invite a woman to dance, and thereby control the number and kind of dances he might wish to share with her. Without *tandas* to divide up the previous night's music into dances of similar types and tempos, Chan, an expert dancer, had been unwilling to enter the dance or invite a partner to dance with him.

I have attended milongas run by Argentinians in which not a single *cortina* has been played and during which some of the music has been other than traditional Tango music. However what was striking about the above discussion of *tandas*, was David's absolute commitment to demonstrating and maintaining a particular Buenos Aires way of doing things within the Market Harborough group. He felt strongly about the *tanda* system and when I suggested (at a later date) that Tango has become a different thing, he said, "But it's not to my taste" (July 2010) and, making it absolutely clear about wanting to maintain links with Buenos Aires, he added:

Under no circumstance would an Argentinian stay on the floor to dance with somebody who would then possibly be critical of him . . . if he didn't know the song inside out. Part of what you are doing is . . . improvising, but . . . to something you know from your mother's milk (Discussion, Leicestershire, 4/7/2010).

David's evaluation of the status of Tango in the United Kingdom was that:

one of the big, big problems with Tango is that it evolved from a mish-mash of cultures at a time when it was absolutely essential and had a social function. People have then picked up certain elements from it and bolted that onto our culture and it doesn't work, simply doesn't work . . .

The other thing is the absolute refusal to use a tanda system. For instance, in the tanda system I know there are going to be four D'Arienzo instrumentals. Then I will leave the floor because I don't know what is going to be in the next tanda. I'm not going to dance to any old thing, but people don't understand it. They simply will not understand it.

When I was running the group . . . I ran it my way . . . with a strict tanda system with cortinas and I ran it with the sort of music you would hear if you went out in Buenos Aires to a milonga or a practica and that's what I liked, so that's what you got (4/7/2010, 1.06'00- 1.09').

Apart from the above discussions about *tandas* and how people would have been taught in the 'Golden Age' of Buenos Aires, other debates also arose, such as whether it mattered if you danced to music that was not written as Tango music; whether 'they' taught/ teach like this in Buenos Aires; whether women can or should lead; and whether people should be taught exclusively to lead, as opposed to learning figures.

These views demonstrate a link with a Buenos Aires of the imagination, at a particular, though undated point during a vague historic era which certain participants were seeking to hold onto. They are implicitly critical of contemporary followers (women) who do not behave in the way that Denniston suggests women would have done in the Golden Age: women should not think

about what they are going to do next, nor help themselves to decorations (*voleos, ganchos*, or any other adornments) unless clearly invited.

Sally, however, does not share Gary and Helen's understanding about leading and following:

Other people, I feel they are trying to lord it over me a bit. Just follow, just follow is not going to cut it (Discussion, Leicester, May, 2010, 46'08").

In contrast to Denniston's perspective however, it is evident from Savigliano's description of being taught to dance Tango as a child in Buenos Aires by her 'abuelo Alberto', or grandfather, that female resistance is and has always been a part of the dance which she performs:

When we danced tango, he was serious. So was I. Only now I understand that through our tango I was being initiated into the spectacle of sex, class, and power of everyday life. . . . For him all women were blank pages on which to write his story. He wrote his story on those feminine bodies . . . He led, I followed. My eyes on the floor, attentive to the intricacy of the footwork. Tight embrace, straight torsos, never leaning on each other. Our gazes never met, nor should they. . . . Female bodies are, actually, docile bodies in rebellion (1995, pp.208-209).

These two differing perspectives from Denniston and Savigliano demonstrate clearly that assertions of authenticity cannot therefore, be regarded as either definitive or authoritative.

THE PURPOSES OF AUTHENTICITY

Discussion of authenticity implies difference or distance. It may be to do with time and history; it may be geographical; political; social; cultural². Furthermore discussions of authenticity might occur even when a practice is active and continuous, in 'full-flow' as it were. If this is the case, it is likely to be because different people are trying to assert authority about accuracy, or to fine-tune details such as dance steps or figures; they want to achieve different outcomes for different reasons (eg. social dancing as opposed to a public show) whether the

² For Felföldi (2002) the focus on authenticity relates to the attempt to preserve a dance in its true (original/old) form or prevent it from being lost, or in order to preserve a cultural history, heritage or identity. The fundamental preoccupation with authenticity for Van Zile (2002) and Nor (2002) arises from the felt need to ensure transmission and thereby continuity of otherwise threatened intangible dance practices.

aim is for fun, to display virtuosity, national solidarity; or even that certain personalities are more assertive than others.³

According to Maria Papapavlou (2003), the question of origin for the Flamenco dancing Gitanos of Jerez de la Frontera, and the consequent issue of authenticity, is only raised by other people (mainly outsiders, e.g. researchers about Gitano lifestyles or origins) who hold specific perspectives and ideas about what would constitute a legitimate proof of origin (and thereby of authenticity). Ironically the issue only becomes important to the Flamenco performers from Jerez, at the point at which the question is asked.

Shows such as *Riverdance*, *Tango por Dos*, *Tango Fire*, *Lady Salsa*, and *Flamenco* stake out their authenticity by means of phrases such as 'direct from' Ireland, Buenos Aires Cuba or Spain. Such performances provide exotic representations of dances from faraway places, rather like tourism without the travel. Spectators generally want to believe that the dance movements are the ones the Gitanos do; that the music is being played or has been recorded by genuine salseros; that the costumes, the songs and the way the performers behave in relation to an audience are not just realistic, but true. The implicit message is that the show is genuine and the entrepreneurship of the performers or producers merely incidental, but not significant, in terms of the very fact of its existence and of their motivation in bringing it about. Depending on one's beliefs or interests, however, such shows may raise questions about the authenticity of the product and its relationship with another kind of dancing in another place or time, and the meanings associated with it.

The views of East Midlands participants such as Gary, Helen and David suggest a resistance to change and the erosion of what they regard as genuine practices and authentic tango, such as by the introduction of new music, different methods of teaching and any adjustment in the gender roles of the Golden Age. It hints at a desire to revive, or at least continue to play out

³ Buckland (2001) and Bakka (2002) demonstrate how authenticity can feature as a local concern to do with rival claims between local groups as to how a dance should traditionally be performed and, intrinsically tied in with this, about who is allowed to, perform, teach or change the way it is danced. This amounts to a question of ownership and is strongly associated with another, related idea about whether the practice can be considered authentic unless the teaching is transparent and has evolved along legitimate lines and is performed by appropriate people.

the practices of a former era, despite a complete change of context, population and access to the dance, and in this respect follows Denniston's own intention.

People like me, well-meaning and genuinely trying to be as true to the Tango as possible (2007, p.98) . . . What I have tried to do . . . is find the common ground that united all Tango dancers, and made Tango one dance, rather than several different ones. And I have tried to explain the common experience of the majority of Tango dancers, as far as I can understand what that was (Denniston, p.185).

By contrast, Gary and Helen's adherence to what he described as the "official Argentine way" (July 2010, 38'30") does not extend to a willingness to adopt the *cabaceo* (a method of inviting a partner to dance by making eye contact) described by Denniston:

completely fair and equal, as a leader cannot catch a follower's eye if the follower chooses not to dance and the follower can initiate eye contact as easily as the leader can (2007, p.194).

Gary and Helen had recently attended a *milonga* at another venue in the Midlands at which the theme had been 'Buenos Aires' and at which the use of the *cabaceo* was actively encouraged. However they claimed that:

It just doesn't work, it's not English, the culture thing . . . people are not actually looking at anyone . . . other than in awkwardness of it (Helen, July 2010 ,9'45").

Gary and Helen were evidently happy to adopt and praise one aspect of a cultural practice, whilst not another. This apparent contradiction is interesting: it indicates that participants are selective about those aspects of an adopted, transcultural practice which they deliberately choose to adopt or reject. There are undoubtedly good reasons for adopting or rejecting either of these practices in the context of the East Midlands in the twenty-first century, but being selective about what one takes and what one leaves was the first sign of a theme which was to recur – that of attaching to and identifying with certain aspects of an imagined Buenos Aires and of an imaginary dance, as a way for a participant to construct a particular Tango identity for him or herself.

IMAGINARY CONNECTIONS: ROLE PLAY AND FANTASY

Apart from the connections formed with (and performed) in relation to an imagined Buenos Aires, participants also revealed aspects of role play or fantasy which were incorporated into their dancing. Oliver was quite clear about what was happening when people were dancing.

“It’s not earth-shattering, but somewhere in the recesses of their mind some fantasy is going on which is working” (Discussion, Uppingham, 12.07.2010).

Oliver does not want to be himself when he’s dancing, and explains that Tango gives him the chance to be someone different. *“I don’t go out there to be me, I go out there to listen to the music”*. He doesn’t dance Tango to confirm things he already knows, but to find out things he does not yet know, like an artistic journey or exploration. He explained how:

Different kinds of [Tango] music make you into a different person . . . For example there are certain milongas which make me feel that I’m just home from the sea. I’m a sailor . . . doing a jaunty little dance with some mole that’s in the bar . . . a smoke-filled room, full of atmosphere, probably the 1930s . . . could be a photograph by Brassai . . . black and white . . . and it’s just one of those nights. I just kind of imagine that I’m a jaunty sailor just home from the sea (July 2010, 21’10”).

Brassai’s photographs did not actually depict Buenos Aires, but Oliver’s fantasy reveals a fascination with the place where tango originated and includes the idea of himself returning to the old port area where the immigrants arrived, worked and lived, as if it is where he too feels at home.

Likewise another dancer, nick-named ‘The Colonel’, a very proper, English, ex-military officer in his sixties, invited me, one evening (before I had begun to make the recordings for the purpose of this research) to dance a *milonga* - a fast, cheeky genre of Tango – suggesting that we *“imagine we are in some seedy smoky bordello in Buenos Aires,”* once more harking back to an idea of the specific origins of the dance.

Sally and Karen, independently of each other, both described how they can be transported away from the mundane English buildings in which the East Midlands groups regularly danced, to another place more conducive to the imaginary of Tango.

I love that we all kind of share in the illusion in horrible grotty venues and buildings and smelling of gyms . . . there are some really, really grotty venues that are so uninspiring really . . . I don’t mind old and worn-down buildings, but some of them are just beyond . . . I wouldn’t imagine spending an evening of my life there and it just doesn’t matter once you get in (Sally, discussion, Leicester, May, 2010, 2’51”).

In other cases and places, efforts are made to create an illusion of Buenos Aires: a Tango group in Bedford regularly offered social evenings, *milongas*, in which they would set the stage by using gingham checked tablecloths, dimming the lights, serving *empanadas* and setting up the

expectation that dancers would only use the *cabaceo* as the way of inviting followers to dance by making eye contact but not asking in words.

In the following chapter I discuss whether dancers are clutching at signs in a bid to dance better, to conjure up a different world, or in a desperate state of postmodern identity crisis? Are participants constructing, or attempting to recreate cultural or social identities for themselves? Or perhaps these seemingly contradictory activities and processes are together instrumental in the transformation of culture and the creation of new identities of practices and people.

It is my contention that such practices of fantasy and the imagination reveal the extent to which, by becoming dancers of Argentine Tango these people are making choices, which, if they continue to dance, are reiterated and re-enacted, tending to become more significant and important to them, and often bringing about lifestyle changes, such as beginning to travel further and farther afield in order to dance more; studying YouTube clips; spending money on shoes and clothes; buying music; attending workshops or having private tuition with iconic Tango dancers; and, for some people, planning, anticipating and then embarking upon a single pilgrimage to Buenos Aires, as the site of an iconic cultural Mecca; or on regular return visits to the city as an adopted "*second, spiritual home*" (unknown dancer, 'Go Global', Nottingham, December 11th 2010); similarly Ted and Nancy who shared their plans to buy an apartment in Buenos Aires in order to be able to return there regularly for longer periods of time.

Participants' identification with Tango, however, does not simply amount to symbolic behaviours signifying the direction of their practice, but is also demonstrated in the ways in which people talk about their dancing and the dancing of others; ways of talking which indicate subtle alignments with, or perspectives on, the practice of Tango: perspectives which came to light as the participants watched video of themselves on and off the dance floor. In particular what comes to light through their discussions and practice - the evidence upon which this study hinges - is that, whilst being members of the Tango dancing community in East Midlands, there is no single way in which these dancers identify themselves with Tango; there is not one single way, but a mesh of overlapping strands which link the common themes and symbols for these participants: to go a step further, individual participants may also demonstrate or voice co-existing, sometimes contradictory or opposing positions within the same discussion regarding their identification with the dance.

In pursuing this research - watching the participants dance, sharing their dances and discussions, and transcribing their words, I have been able to address my own questions and in doing so have become increasingly aware of the fragility of the way in which imagination, desire and experience are literally and fantastically enmeshed: how dancing Argentine tango is a performance produced by means of various shared beliefs, intentions and practices, not all of which are embraced by all the people, but which are sufficiently sustained by desire and motivation that the gaps and tears, to use Daphne's metaphor, are largely rendered insignificant or else carefully repaired, or disguised.

CHAPTER 6: IN THE SPACE OF A DANCE

A great deal can happen within the space of a dance. In this chapter I endeavour to find a way of theorising some aspects of the experience of dancing Argentine Tango, including behaviour surrounding the dance floor, the experience of being on it and of stepping away from it. In particular, it continues the discussion of what I described as ‘tango-moments’ in Chapter 5: sublime moments for those lucky enough to identify them, in which a powerful connection is made between two dancing partners. However I am also interested in what appear to be certain emerging aspects of the idea of space connected with the way in which the dance takes place: whether the space is geographic, temporal, ritual, alien, imaginary, liminoid, psychic, virtual or merely the literal, physical space of the dance floor. Some of these aspects of space have already been referred to, either by participants or myself, although thus far without further elaboration. It is my intention to do so at this point.

I endeavour also in this chapter to place the practice of dancing Argentine Tango within some kind of contemporary framework in order to examine how the process is contingent with the post-modern environment and instrumental in the creation and performance of identity in the post-modern context. I continue to draw on data from participants’ transcripts, which I attempt to relate to certain key terms and concepts. These include the concept of ‘*communitas*’ as set out by Victor Turner, in the context of his distinction between ritual and play, the liminal and liminoid; Bryan Turner on the culturally inscribed body and the creation of identity; John Urry on the post-modern pursuit of leisure, pleasure and play; Appadurai on modernity, globalisation and the work of the imagination, and Skinner (2007) on the creation of identities in Salsa dancing. With direct regard to the postmodern practice of Argentine Tango I return to Savigliano’s work (1995), alongside that of Verdecchia (2009) and Podalsky (2002) on cosmopolitanism.

Previously in Chapter 5 I referred to links made by participants to a different geographical space and historical context, namely to Buenos Aires, as a space of assumed originary and historic authority. I cited one participant’s description of the hostile or foreboding (hence alien

or invasive) space of the dance in which strangers encroach on or invade her personal space, with, as she saw it, an assumed licence to, and expectation of an intimate dancing experience. I have alluded to the physical and temporal space (the actual dance floor upon which it takes place and the length of time from the start to finish of a dance or *tanda*) and to the codified behaviours associated with and surrounding the dance floor; to the spaces within the dance, between legs and between partners; to the dance as a space of fantasy and imagination for some participants, who conjure a fantastic or imaginary Buenos Aires; a romantic or nostalgic space for the recreation of a former time, offering, in addition the reassurance and authority of authenticity; a liminoid space offering the opportunity for participants to escape the everyday and a performative space in which to create and enact new identities for themselves which differ substantially from those of their normal lives.

VIRTUAL SPACE AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE TANGO COMMUNITY

Whilst watching the video, people talked about newcomers and absentees, thereby suggesting the sense of a group, or community, especially as it gave rise to further personal discussion about individuals' activities: for example, about one couple who were absent because the husband was at a magician's conference in Blackpool and another from the New Forest in Hampshire who were only attending that day, because there was to be a *milonga* later with a visiting teacher with whom they had booked a private lesson (as a birthday treat for the man).

Other spaces were thereby evoked in relation to that before our eyes, in which the identity of these individuals is given further depth and dimension, such that the lives or narratives of participants exceeded the walls of the Charles Wilson Building, persisting even in their absence. The couple from the New Forest were known to some of the group as occasional attendees at Market Harborough: their presence at the Saturday session was extremely unusual (and thus remarked upon) but reveals an example of the extent and reach of the online Tango network in the United Kingdom which dancers use to find out about events. This represents another, virtual space to which the dancers are connected, advertising and drawing them from one geographic place to another in order to pursue their interest. Whilst invisible, the online network is nevertheless powerful, and emails and Tango websites as well as blogs and references to Facebook and YouTube are frequent topics of conversation around the edge

of the dance-floor. There is therefore a sense in which this specific physical space is connected to and included within a broader, virtual space of Tango.

Furthermore, even when absent, participants' identities remain a part of the scene and are important to those present in terms of affirming its community and purpose which is so strongly bound to the space. Once again it is evident that the purpose and practice taking place are more significant than the material location. For the most part, participants were drawn from within the region broadly defined as the East Midlands, mostly from Leicester and Leicestershire, but a few from opposite sides of the county. Other regular visitors came from Northampton, Rugby and Coventry with more occasional visitors from Nottingham and elsewhere. Younger participants tended to live in or closer to Leicester. Not only was the geographical area very large, but also their occupations, ages and backgrounds were varied.

Given the distances travelled and the range of people involved, it is clear that this group or "community" would not have met or come together apart from their leisure interest in Tango and their willingness to travel. This is an important characteristic of the group. With such disparate ages and occupations, and the distances separating them, most people had little face-to-face contact during the week, although some maintained email and facebook contacts. Therefore in addition to the virtual Tango space, many of the group were part of a broader, virtual, Tango community (some more actively than others) overlapping with other groups around the country, in what Appadurai might describe as a 'community of sentiment' (1990), 'a group that begins to imagine and feel things together' (1996, p.8).

One particular participant, a university business lecturer with a professional interest in communities, observed:

It is a community, a definite community. Quite a lot of people would quite like . . . I quite like that. . . . People will travel to be on this community circuit . . . You can probably go internationally to a spot and you'll find somebody . . . I have other interests where that also applies and you'll go to a particular location and you'll see the same 6 faces you saw 500 miles away. . . You're talking lifestyle as well, it's all part of that travelling Lifestyle is cybergraphic, so you'd look at things like activities, interests, demographics, and like there'll be a common string of lifestyle common threads. I could do a similar one [study] in the business school, what would be the lifestyle of an Argentine Tango dancer. I think it would be an interesting exercise (Roland, 5.10.2008, interview, Market Harborough).

Thus the material dance-floors in both Leicester and Market Harborough were circumscribed and supported by the virtual space of the online Tango network and other such Tango

communities. This has the result of making the physical locations of such dance venues somewhat insignificant, given that so many participants demonstrate a willingness and commitment to travel. This would also explain the relative lack of commentary about the physical appearance or condition of these dance venues: this aspect appears largely irrelevant, for, in fact, nobody commented on the untidiness of the rehearsal room, nor on the inconvenience of its being on the tenth floor and from time to time unreachable if the lifts broke down; nor on the fact of the toilets being back down on the second floor.

MATERIAL PLACE AND RITUAL SPACE

Through observing and discussing the practice of dancing in both venues in the East Midlands I began to consider the material space in a different way. Apart from my own regular attendance and consequent familiarity with both spaces (a music rehearsal room and a modern leisure centre), I became increasingly aware of other aspects of these spaces as a result of reviewing the videos with participants during playback sessions.

The key video clips captured the doorway through which people entered the music rehearsal room at Leicester University, a row of chairs along one end of the room and approximately a third of the dance-floor. In the course of feedback, various participants remarked that the whole dance floor was not visible, leading to observations about what was taking place around the edge and along the sidelines of the dancing. Such observations elicited comments about people who were sitting, talking, waiting to dance, not dancing, and even what they were talking about; about non-Tango dancers who came into the room to put away instruments; about people standing talking; about people leaving or arriving; about people's awareness of the video-camera; about someone who apparently did not pay; about people who were new members and where they were from; about infrequent visitors and why they were there; about people who were absent and where else they might be; the date on which the clip was filmed and the weather. There were also comments about this venue and others, where people danced more or less regularly.

Whilst the majority of observations were centred on people actually dancing on the dance floor, it is hard to separate them categorically from those mentioned above, as discussion

ranged freely back and forth between the dancing itself and themes and activities surrounding it. The sessions at Leicester were *prácticas*: consequently the videos viewed for the feedback sessions were of free social dancing rather than classes. In general the comments from participants suggested a degree of familiarity and ease within the space, as well as a sense of belonging in it, of having appropriated it for their use every Saturday afternoon and of it no longer being available for its original purpose. This was clear from light-hearted remarks about several musicians who entered the room half-way through the recording and are regarded in a slightly jokey way as intruders.

There was activity and regular changes amongst those sitting alongside the dance floor, but it was taken for granted that people would be respectful of the dancing space and careful not to step out in front of dancers or to walk directly across the dance-floor, instead threading around the edge of it if they wanted to get from one part of the room to another. Shoes and bags were tucked away underneath the chairs which remained in a straight line and were not pulled away from the walls into huddles which might have obstructed the dance-floor. There were no instructions or rules to this effect: these behaviours were implicit and carried out without thinking.

By contrast the musicians referred to above are not aware of these unwritten rules. They arrive in order to put cellos and other instruments away and, briefly, people are obliged to stand up, pull chairs away from the wall and then wait until the cupboards doors are closed again and the chairs replaced. This disturbance interrupts conversation and, momentarily, the layout of the room. Potentially it could also have obstructed the dancing. Although they apologise for the inconvenience, the musicians are oblivious to the way that their interruption is regarded, because they are unaware of the specificity of the layout of the room, with the chairs in a line, and of the nature of the practice taking place within the room. Unwittingly, the mundane intrusion contrasts with the way of behaving within this Tango space. It is brief and unproblematic but underlines the fact that certain behaviour is understood implicitly within the space of Tango, and differs from that which would be implicit in the context, for example, of its being used to rehearse an orchestra.

There are other behaviours (or more or less tacit rules) related to the space, some more obvious than others. It is fairly well-known, for example, that Tango dancers, like ballroom

dancers, always move around the dance-floor in an anti-clockwise direction, mostly avoiding the centre. It is bad manners to bump into one other and, if possible, one should avoid overtaking other couples. It is considered bad practice to step backwards into the 'line of dance' and blatantly rude for a person who is not dancing to walk across the dance-floor. Some of these rules are explicitly taught during lessons, others picked up in the course of dancing. From these codified behaviours a spatial understanding of the room emerges, in which the actual dance-floor holds a hierarchical position of the greatest significance, as does the dancing taking place upon it. People entering the space avoid venturing onto the dance-floor unless they are dancing. If they have to move from one part of the room to another for another purpose they do so respectfully to avoid disruption.

The dance-floor is thus considered a space of performance where it is understood that performers will be watched. It is the focus of the room, separated from a narrow audience space consisting of the single line of chairs facing the dance-floor. However the audience cannot be relied upon to behave whole-heartedly as an audience: it is not fixed; it does not always give its full attention to the dancing; it sits and chats; changes its shoes; it comes and goes. In fact, very far from being a whole-hearted audience, it is also apt to switch roles. When a piece of music comes to an end, some dancers cease to be performers and step out of their dancing roles as they walk back to the chairs, whilst members of the audience exchange their roles for those of the retiring dancers, taking their turn as performers on the dance-floor. Therefore the boundary between the dance-floor and the audience space is porous, not fixed: the distinction is understood and surrounded by codified behaviours, and yet at the end of each dance or *tanda* these cease to apply, momentarily, until the next dance begins. The physical limits and features of the room do not therefore dictate the practices and behaviours taking place within it. To some extent the physical limits are rearranged by participants, in order to create the desired space, but are notional and abstract.

Certain aspects of the dance space for dancing Argentine Tango have prompted me to consider the practice as occupying a kind of ritual space, and also to consider the whole practice from the perspective of ritual. There is extensive work written on the subject of ritual, particularly

with regard to its relationship with performance¹, including dance. However, for my purpose, with a particular interest in Victor Turner's concept of *comumunitas*, with which I deal later in this chapter, it is possible to argue that the participation in and performance of social Argentine Tango in the East Midlands exhibits at least some features of ritual as described by Turner (1982).

A ritual appears to impose a structure and order to an event which contrasts with normal everyday life. It produces certain kinds of behaviour which are out of the ordinary and transient. It also involves a sense of performativity in the presence of a specific group, or community of people who have access to a certain kind of knowledge and experience which, at certain points is passed onto new initiands, in specific ways: by cyclical repetition, by instruction or by storytelling; by using signs or symbolic behaviour which, once understood, are responsible for giving meaning and significance to the activity.

Similarly in the practice of Argentine Tango there is a community of people who participate together in a shared performance, involving elements of preparation, certain expectations and a shared understanding of the process. The practice of dancing is governed by codes of behaviour and signs, some linguistic, some visual, some auditory. Participants use special linguistic terminology and wear particular kinds of clothes (or at the very least, special shoes – with high heels for ladies and smooth leather soles for both men and women). There is a particular repertoire of stylised music accompanied by specific instruments – in this case the *bandóneon*, and a stylised vocabulary of moves with which participants respond to the music and which varies slightly depending on precisely which kind of music is being played. There is a clear demarcation of space within the setting, such that stepping onto the dance floor with a partner is like stepping over a threshold between roles and the activity of a being a spectator,

¹ Grimes (2013) provides a general discussion of the scope of ritual studies and of theoretical ways in which to study ritual, including a section in which he considers ritual in relation to performance; Turner (1982) and Schechner (1985) offer complementary perspectives on ritual and performance, with Schechner delineating a seven-phase performance sequence along similar lines to Van Gennep; Bell (1992, 2009) undertakes an analytical exploration of the fact that the concept of ritual exists and of the meanings attributed to it; and Hughes-Freeland (1997) considers anthropological approaches to ritual in relation to cultural, performance and media studies, with some specific focus on dance performance.

as opposed to being an active participant.² There are particular ways of behaving both on and around the dance floor: women tend to sit along the side of the dance floor, waiting for men to invite them, in a certain codified way, to dance, for a *tanda* at a time (3 – 4 dances) using a particular kind of embrace, during which time there is a clear leader (usually the man) who chooses where and how to dance and what figures or moves are to be incorporated in the dance. In fact an occasion for social Tango dancing is designated by the particular term *milonga*, indicating both a place and an activity, but also incorporating all the coded ways of being and behaving which go with them.

Turner's work stemmed from his anthropological attention to ritual in pre-industrial societies. He was concerned with the use of symbols and how they 'are essentially involved in social processes' (1982, p.21). He contrasted ritual with play and the post-industrial practice of leisure which comprises a range of different activities. Turner's key terms liminal and liminoid demand consideration in the light of the practice of Argentine Tango in the East Midlands.

Turner's analysis follows van Gennep's distinction of the ritual process into three separate phases: separation, transition and incorporation.

[Separation] clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and time (. . . there must be in addition a rite which changes the quality of time also, or constructs a cultural realm which is defined as "out of time,") . . . [D]uring transition, called by van Gennep "margin" or "limen" (meaning "threshold" in Latin), the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo; the third phase . . . "reaggregation" or "incorporation" includes symbolic phenomena and actions which represent the return of the subjects to their new, relatively stable, well-defined position in the total society (Turner, 1982, p. 24).

Turner was interested in particular with features of liminality, associated with the transitional phase of ritual. In the liminal phase of ritual, participants are separated from normal social/working life as a group whilst they engage in activities peculiar to the ritual, which also allow them a period of freedom from normal social rules and often the associated chance to

² Similarly Alfred Gell (1985) notes the impalpable threshold between dance and non-dance which is 'less a matter of movement per se than of meaning' (p.191) and differentiated by its specific style of movement in contrast to 'the world of mundane actions.'

be subversive and upturn the social order: 'in liminality people "play" with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them' (1982, p.27). He writes of rituands who run around during this time engaging in behaviour which at other times would be considered socially unacceptable and disrespectful.

For Tango dancers, attending a *milonga* or *práctica* and dancing, could be interpreted as corresponding to Turner's separation stage of a ritual, when a liminal zone is entered into, in which rituands experience a break from normal behaviour, enjoying a certain freedom to assume a different identity and to behave differently. Similarly an Argentine Tango dancer's role as a dance participant may indeed be quite marked and involve a break with aspects of a coherent quotidian identity in which, for example, contemporary women understand themselves as independent agents who would normally expect to make decisions and take on proactive roles, without having to wait for a man's invitation/permission to be able to participate, nor to be wholly guided/led by the decisions of a man.

Stepping onto the dance floor and dancing in a way which involves a change of role as well as adopting the style of movement and practices of Argentine Tango might be said to resemble the transitional phase of a ritual. It may be accompanied by a euphoric and shared state of heightened sensual awareness, accompanied by music and a changed perception of the quality of time. This is the point in a ritual process in which *communitas* is achieved: the sense of shared engagement in a practice whose values and meanings are believed to be held in common. I will return to *communitas* in due course.

The third phase of ritual 'reaggregation', takes place as participants leave the ritual space, possibly changed or affected by the experience of the ritual, to resume their normal personas and return to their everyday lives.

LIMINOID SPACE: WORK, PLAY AND A BREAK FROM THE EVERYDAY.

It is evident within the practice of dancing Argentine Tango that there are indeed codified behaviours and symbols signifying meaning or marking associations of meaning, much as is the

case within the practice of ritual. They are clearly important and without these codes of behaviour the dance would possibly cease to be Argentine Tango.

However, in other respects comparing Tango dancing with a ritual in a strict sense is tenuous. It is obviously not a calendar event, nor a religious ceremony or rite of passage. Whilst the practice is shared by a particular community who meet for the specific purpose of engaging in the dancing event, they are not otherwise a cohesive community who live and work together as described by Turner, observing the same breaks from their normal, shared, structured time of work, in order to participate in a ritual practice, which actually has symbolic significance within their shared, everyday lives. By contrast, whilst the participants of Argentine Tango in the East Midlands might be described as belonging to a virtual community, sharing a common interest, in other respects they amount simply to a group of diverse and heterogeneous individuals, who meet regularly in a specific context disassociated from their everyday lives.

Turner distinguishes between ritual and other practices, by means of a distinction between the terms liminal and the liminoid. It is in understanding the difference between the two terms that the sense of Argentine Tango as being other than a ritual process becomes evident. The strict ritual takes place within a community who lives and works together, share the ritual observance and have similar understandings of its form, meaning and significance. The practice and significance is woven into the everyday life of the whole community; it contrasts structure with anti-structure; and demands a break from everyday routines in order to undergo a different, shared experience in which participants may behave in markedly different ways. The ritual requires a specific time set aside from everyday activities; it involves certain preparation and produces particular behaviours. The process is significant and has to be enacted properly in order to maintain its significance: to ensure this happens a key individual or group may be seen to oversee what takes place. In particular the liminal zone is protected and significant; some aspects of it may be hidden or take place in secrecy; but it takes place in a definite space, both physical and temporal. Non-rituands may watch, with more or less knowledgeable eyes and expectations, and make judgements about the correctness or properness of what they see. Once the process is drawn to a close, normal life resumes, but with a sense of a significant event having taken place.

Some activities share a stage similar to the liminal of ritual. An activity might manifest codified behaviours, rules and symbolism, but if it does not take place within the context of a

community in the same social structure, but only occurs when a group of people meet in their free time, then it cannot be considered a ritual. Turner explains that this has only become possible in societies where work is distinct from leisure, which individuals are entitled to spend as they wish: unlike ritual, which is not optional and over which the society in question presides, even though ritual may to some extent feel like leisure as it takes place in a break from everyday work and routine.

Optation pervades the liminoid phenomenon, obligation the liminal. One is all play and choice, and entertainment, the other is a matter of deep seriousness, even dread, it is demanding, compulsory (Turner 1982, p.43).

Turner insists that the term '*liminal*' is primarily and only properly associated with 'a phase in the processual structure of a *rite de passage*' (p.30) and that, 'when used of processes, phenomena, and persons in large-scale complex societies, its use must in the main be metaphorical' (p.29). By contrast, the term '*liminoid*' is used to refer to practices bearing some similarities of feeling and features with ritual and practices producing '*liminality*'. In particular Turner uses the term to refer to activities conducted strictly within the sphere of leisure - itself a post-industrial concept. Leisure is opposed to the structured and imposed nature of ritual, despite the latter's apparent positioning as being in contrast to work.

Turner also notes that 'the liminoid can be an independent domain of creative activity,' [which] 'takes place in neutral spaces or privileged areas - set aside from the mainstream of productive or political events' (p.33). He quotes Isaiah Berlin's distinction that:

Leisure-time is associated with two types of freedom, "freedom-from" and "freedom-to" freedom from a whole heap of institutional obligations and a chance to recuperate and enjoy natural, biological rhythms again. Leisure is also: freedom to enter, even to generate new symbolic worlds of entertainment . . . freedom to transcend social structural limitations, freedom to play . . . with ideas, with fantasies . . . with social relationships (p.37).

There are clearly aspects of Turner's analysis of play, leisure and the liminoid, which are much more applicable to the activity of dancing Argentine Tango than the idea of it as ritual. It is more appropriate that aspects of the practice be described as ritualistic, which admits some similarities with ritual, whilst acknowledging that it stands separate from everyday life. Ritualistic behaviour also appears to follow an internalised framework and process. The ritualistic aspects of Argentine Tango are evident in the codified behaviours described earlier and the framework within which they occur. In Chapter 7 I further discuss this relationship of

Tango with ritual with reference to Elia Petridou's research (2009) on Tango in Athens in which she writes of a Discourse of Ritual with respect to Tango in a transcultural context.

In the next section I consider Argentine Tango as a liminoid activity in an attempt to clarify the use and relevance of Turner's term '*communitas*', which I have used at various points to describe the experience of so-called 'Tango moments'. In doing so I echo its use by other writers³ regarding uplifting, shared, ecstatic experiences during the course of dancing when the difference in social status between individuals is temporarily dissolved. It is also of course a defining characteristic of Turner's analysis of ritual performance, which has similarly been addressed by various writers.

COMMUNITAS AND TANGO ECSTASY

The sense of communitas (Turner 1969) that is frequently triggered by performance and absorption in sport and dance can suddenly and viscerally connect individuals who would otherwise be unlikely to associate with one another in any manner, let alone these ways (Dyck and Archetti, 2003, p.17).

Discussing their most memorable or pleasurable 'tango moments' (discussed previously in Chapter 5) certain Tango dancers described experiences similar to that of *communitas* as described by Turner: particularly of being purely in the moment; the sense of losing track of time or place; an intense concentration on what one is doing to the extent of losing awareness of what is going on outside the experience; a feeling resulting in enjoyment, pleasure, an escape from the everyday into a few minutes with a heightened sense of the present.

Participants used words such as 'fragile', 'intact', 'trust' suggesting vulnerability, intimacy and sharing. Such moments may include any or some of the following: a close and rewarding connection with another person, such that both feel they are dancing and responding to the music as one; of being so focused on the dancing, their partner and the music that they lose

³ Spencer (1985) makes use of the concept in his analysis of the Samburu dances of Kenya (pp.140-164); O'Connor (1997), Gore (1997) Archetti (2003) and St John et al (2010), make explicit use of the term '*communitas*' with reference, respectively, to Irish set dancing; underground rave culture, which, Gore claims, 'creates spaces for deterritorialization, for the transcendence of identity, for the celebration of communitas' (1997, p.65); Argentine Tango; and 'psytrance'.

track of anything going on around them and indeed, have no interest in anything other than being in the dance, the shared experience and of not wanting it to end.

There may be a shift in feeling when the dance comes to an end, which can involve release of tension, possible embarrassment or self-consciousness; a feeling of returning to reality, which may be a sudden jolt or a depressing realisation that the moment is over; a shift from having finished performing one role and the resumption of a previous, habitual or mundane one; and, on occasions the overwhelming desire to repeat the experience in order to recapture and relive the sensation again. It does not occur with every dance, nor has every dancer ever experienced it. For those who have, it is clearly something memorable which different dancers described in various ways (chapter 5).

Turner positions *communitas* within the experience of liminal or liminoid phenomena, both of which occur, as he claims, in contrast to normative social structures. This concept demands further exploration with regard to Argentine Tango in the East Midlands, as a useful means by which to capture and articulate a somewhat intangible, but nonetheless forceful experience which sometimes takes place on the dance floor.

Liminality, Turner claims, may be creative or destructive, but:

where it is socially positive it presents, directly or by implication, a model of human society as a homogenous, unstructured communitas When even two people believe that they experience unity, all people are felt by those two, even if only for a flash, to be one. . . . The great difficulty is to keep this intuition alive [which leads to] the paradox that the experience of communitas becomes the memory of communitas (1982, p.47).

The compulsion to repeat itself immediately weaves in with other threads teased from my data, namely those of addiction, desire and the drive to continue in an endless quest of repeated tango dancing encounters, in what Oliver described as a journey:

It's a journey that you will never bottom, it's always a journey. The further you go the further the journey will go (Discussion, Uppingham, 12/ 07/2010).

Turner (1982) identifies and describes three forms of *communitas*: spontaneous, ideological, and normative. Of these the first resonates particularly with aspects of the experience of dancing. There is 'a direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities' (p.46) a deep rather than intense style of personal interaction:

It has something 'magical' about it. Subjectively there is in it a feeling of endless power. . . . a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level important to

relate directly to another person as he presents himself in the here-and-now . . . free from culturally defined encumbrances of his role, status, reputation, class, caste, sex or other structural niche. Individuals . . . become totally absorbed into a single, synchronized, fluid event,” (p.48) . . . Communitas exists in a kind of “figure-ground” relationship with social structure (p.50) . . . an alternative and more “liberated” way of being socially human (p.51).

However described, *communitas* in the sense in which I use it in relation to the experience of ‘Tango ecstasy’ represents a positive energy experienced by individuals within a group with the effect of reinforcing the perception of membership of a community and thereby strengthening the cohesiveness of the group. In the next section I explore the consequent attempts by participants to reproduce and the pleasurable experience of *communitas* and the nature of pleasure.

REGIMES OF PLEASURE AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF DESIRE

In fact, the experience of pleasure, fleeting and frustrating as it may be, is key to the sustenance and perpetuation of Argentine Tango as a new cultural practice. Participants frequently used language (quoted in Chapter 5) suggesting how the sensation of pleasure achieved through dancing Argentinian Tango continuously drives them to seek it out further. Participants used words such as ‘quest’, ‘journey’, ‘addiction’, and ‘fix’ to indicate an experience, which can be intensely satisfying and rewarding, but is difficult to find and necessarily short-lived, thus compelling them to endlessly repeat and relive it. Certain dancers actually describe themselves as ‘Tango Tourists’, implying a constant and restless travelling between Tango venues, often in foreign cities in search of evermore Tango experiences.

In this context I consider the discussion by various writers about the nature of post-modern pleasure and its relevance to dancing Argentine Tango. John Urry (1990) observes that:

Postmodernism involves a dissolving of the boundaries, not only between high and low cultures, but between different cultural forms, such as tourism, art, education, photography, television, music, sport, shopping and architecture.” (p.82) . . . it [postmodernism] refers to a system of signs or symbols, which is specific in both time and space . . . characterisable in terms of a specific regime of signification in which particular cultural objects are produced, circulated and received (p.83).

Thus in different contexts, activities or cultural objects which might once have held clear cultural values, in what Bourdieu (1979) described as a cultural economy based on the

differentiation between distinct cultural forms such as art, classical music or dance, are now subject to de-differentiation. According to Urry it is 'de-differentiation' which Lash identifies as 'the fundamental structuring trait of postmodernism (Urry, 1990, p.84). By this process value is disassociated from previously differentiated cultural spheres and transformed by new significances which may be layered up or juxtaposed in contradictory associations contingent upon each and every particular context in which they occur.

The relevance of this analysis of postmodernism to a cultural practice such as dancing Argentine Tango is to do with the blurring of boundaries between cultural spheres (such as artistic and social dance, music, travel and tourism) and the way in which participants become engaged. 'Postmodern culture affects the audience via its immediate impact, through what it does for one, through regimes of pleasure,' (Urry, 1990, p.85).

Thus participants, who may have no formal experience of dance training, nor even any particular competence, choose Argentine Tango, as a kind of novel cultural phenomenon. Participants may arrive in a position in which, by a process of what Urry describes as the 'romantic gaze' involving day-dreaming, imagination and access to layers of signification gleaned from various 'ideal' representations of cultural objects⁴, they become attracted to, drawn into, involved and some even describe themselves as becoming 'addicted' to the dance. The possibility of choosing such a novel cultural phenomenon in turn leads the way to their becoming individual authorities on the subject of its authenticity and the manner in which it should be practised. They have, in most case, no direct experience of Tango in Argentina and yet they form strong imaginaries, which may only be realised in their actual dancing experience.

Appadurai (1996) observes that in the contemporary world 'the imagination has broken out of the special expressive space of art, myth, and ritual and has now become a part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people' (p. 5). No longer is the imagination the prerogative of artists, but has become equally that of anyone who cares to exercise it, no matter how incongruous it might appear.

⁴ This could be in the form of Argentinian dance teachers or demonstrators, live shows, T.V. or the internet.

Whilst Urry's focus is on the changing face of contemporary tourism, his analysis is nonetheless useful as an explanation of how otherwise surprising and novel activities, such as Argentinian Tango, are adopted. Likewise his elaboration of postmodern 'regimes of pleasure' with reference to Bourdieu, Campbell and Feifer is relevant to the experience of dancing Argentine Tango. Following Bourdieu, Urry argues that the increase in scale of the new petit bourgeoisie, 'who are stronger on cultural than on economic capital' has provided 'much of the audience for ever-new cultural phenomena' (p.88) and 'furthermore, Bourdieu argues, 'these groups also have a quite different approach to pleasure' (Urry p.90). In contrast to the old bourgeoisie, whose morality was based on duty and who held 'a fear of pleasure,' the new petit bourgeoisie demands:

a morality of pleasure as a duty. This doctrine makes it a failure . . . not to 'have fun' . . . Pleasure is not only permitted but demanded . . . The fear of not getting enough pleasure . . . is combined with the search for self-expression and 'bodily expression,' (Bourdieu 1984, p.367).

Karen explained how:

You get a real buzz and there's a bit of playfulness in the dance usually, but it's that feeling of being together and being one, that feels so satisfying and the interpretation of the dance works for you (Interview, Market Harborough, 14.09. 2008).

She does not feel guilty about seeking out a pleasurable experience, but expresses annoyance if it is compromised. 'Margaret', in O'Connor's study of Irish set dancing (1997) explains that dancing provides the opportunity for physical closeness which is not risky, observing that:

It's a kind of safe way of still having some physical intimacy without . . . the kind of, you know, attachment or whatever (1997, p.159).

Reiterating Urry's morality of pleasure as a duty, O'Connor speculates that:

this quest for intimacy without responsibility, or at least, over which one has some control, is a part of the post-modern sensibility, and that set dancing within this framework is a form of sexual 'grazing' in which women can now participate (p. 159).

Whilst Bourdieu's new middle class has learned no longer to feel guilty about outright pleasure-seeking, Urry cites Campbell who argues that, 'Romanticism has provided that philosophy of 'recreation' necessary for a dynamic consumerism in which the search for pleasure is viewed as desirable in and of itself' (1987,p. 201). This results in 'a widespread taste for novelty' and a 'calculating hedonism' (Campbell, cited in Urry, 1990, p. 90) as an analysis of

contemporary consumerism, in which day-dreaming, imagination and the anticipation of pleasure are key factors. Featherstone (1991) describes 'modern' individuals as people:

who have a sense of adventure and take risks to explore life's options to the full, who are conscious they have only one life to live and must work hard to enjoy, experience and express it (p.86).

Bryan Turner argues that, following the 'consumption ethic' which evolved as a result of increased mass production:

[L]ate capitalism . . . is organized more around calculating hedonistic choices, . . . the stimulating of need and luxury consumption . . . it does not so much suppress desire as express it, produce it and direct it towards increasing want satisfaction (1997, p.50).

Like Urry and Bourdieu's references to a 'widespread taste for novelty' and 'ever-new cultural phenomena', Turner also observes that 'cultural pluralism is characteristic of late capitalist societies', brought about by the 'commodification of fantasies and pleasures' (1997, p.28) which manipulate and guide consumer choices.

Indeed certain participants, for example Sally and her partner, who had young children to care for, expressed a certain resentment, almost jealousy of other dancers, such as Oliver and Daphne who were in the position of being able to travel back and forth to other venues in different parts of the country, which they could not do. Another participant, Samantha, who was dancing either Tango or Salsa every day of the week, had not quite made up her mind which she preferred, but thought she would probably go on a Salsa holiday to Cuba the following year if she could save up for it, because she was more friendly with the Salsa teacher who would be able to take them round to all the 'proper places'. It appears that 'cultural pluralism', coupled with opportunism, is indeed a feature of late capitalist societies, in this instance clearly demonstrating the post-modern expectation of being 'omnivorous' and able to sample and experiment with a wide range of 'ever-new cultural phenomenon' in a kind of cultural smorgasbord, limited only by one's affluence and available leisure time.

SPACES WITHIN THE DANCE: A STEP TOO FAR

Amongst the most striking visual characteristics of Argentine Tango are the invasive steps and moves: steps typified by the *saccada*, *entrada*, *mordida* /*sandwich*, *gancho/hook*, *enganche* and *piernaza* (variations of leg-wraps). All these are characterised by the illusion of one dancer bringing about a move involving an invasion of their leg between the legs of their partner.

There are degrees to these steps, and at their most extreme, for example, the *gancho* or the *enganche* can look as if a dancer has forced an invasion of their partner's space, thrusting a leg between their legs and resulting in the familiar 'hooking' or 'wrapping' of one leg around another: their legs seem to entwine around each other, writhing as in an intimate act. Similarly the *piernaza*, which is a leg-wrap placed much higher up the partner's body, around the hips or waist, can look as if the dancer performing the move has taken control in a sexually provocative and intimate way. By contrast, the *mordida*, can appear as a gently teasing 'bite' of a partner's foot, effectively sandwiched between those of the leader.

Mary stood out as the participant who voiced the strongest distaste and even revulsion at certain physical aspects of Argentinian Tango, despite being a long-standing and regular participant. Describing her first experience of dancing Tango, Mary said:

I was very intimidated, I couldn't get my head around the sequence, not that they were sequences, but the steps that one took, why one took them, watching men's chests move. Very often the men's chest didn't move, mostly it was their shoulders propelling you and then suddenly propelling you back again and always being told not to look down at the man's steps and watching other women demurely, supposedly looking at men's chests, when in fact they were looking down at men's feet. (Interview, 7.09.2008, Market Harborough).

Being an improvised dance, a follower never knows what moves to expect next, which might include a *gancho*, *sacada* or *mordida*. A competent leader with a sense of musicality and good timing can lead these dramatic steps without warning, and indeed, as a follower, part of the pleasure is the breath-taking element of surprise, as well as the warm and firmly assertive thigh-to-thigh contact of a *gancho* or the exciting placement of a foot producing a back *sacada*. For Mary, who had had to overcome her inhibitions about dancing with strangers and the physical closeness of the embrace, an unanticipated invasion was a step too far and a prospect which she dreaded almost as much as a sexual violation.

However, the invasion of these spaces is somewhat illusory: such invasive steps, whilst often performed suddenly and with intense drama, are not as violent or intrusive as they look. They require skill, timing and a good lead to execute, but are essentially illusions brought about when a non-weight-bearing lead leg prevents the follower's *collection* (the moment when the ankles and knees are momentarily drawn together between each step) and thus produces a deflected continuation of their step, with diverse dramatic nuances. This can only be achieved

safely if the weight on a dancer's leg has already been transferred and their movement displaced.

Invasive steps are both exciting and intriguing to watch, begging questions as to how they are possible, and what they would feel like to perform. They undoubtedly provide the drama of Argentine Tango, adding a mood of arrogance, control, provocative sexuality and a frisson of excitement to the appearance of the dance. They are the bread and butter of stage shows and the steps by which non-Tango dancers most frequently identify Argentine Tango, adding to its dangerous, passionate appeal. When beginners arrive to learn Tango these are often the steps they want to master. They are not easy, however, and can look clumsy when performed badly.

There are, furthermore, spaces within the spaces of a dance: momentary spaces offering opportunities of opposition to the leader by the follower:

The Tango is sublimated warfare . . . tenderness and physical passion are mutual between the dancers, but the tango is a line of separation not crossed by either. There are, in the sideways short marches, twirls, and intertwined limbs, invitation and rejection, suspicion and submission, confrontation and avoidance. The tango dictates that men lead and women follow. But true to life's war of the sexes, dominance has a way of looking one way but being another. (Holland, 2004,p.1, cited in Olszewski, 2008).

Alternatively there are spaces which can be stolen or taken advantage of by an experienced 'milonguita' in order to assert her identity, demonstrate resistance, to play or adorn her dance.

Milonguitas could challenge their male partners with the trust and energy invested in the walks; manipulate their axis of balance by changing the distance between the bodies, the points of contact, and the strength of the embrace; play with diverse qualities of groundedness in their steps; modify the "front" given to their partners, choosing to "face" them in misaligned angles of torso and hips; disrupt the cadence sought by their partners by not converting their trampling cortes at the proper musical time (thus imposing a need for skilful syncopation in order to keep up with the music); and add unexpectedly fancy ornamentation (adornos) of their own to the figures marked by their partners . . . complicating the timing of the conversions, creating anxiety, and even causing their male partners to modify their plans for upcoming steps (Savigliano, 1995, p. 60).

Savigliano explains that in the early days such behaviour could be dangerous to a dancer's reputation: traces of such disapproval is evidenced earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 7, in disapproving comments made by Gary and Helen about twenty-first century followers' behaviour, regarding their anxiety about the proper, or authentic way to dance.

With regard to artistic and spatial aspects of the dance, Oliver described his visualisation of space whilst dancing:

in my mind there's great geometry going on . . . you're on the floor, you're tracing lines and making circles and performing arcs and working against the follower and making impressive kind of geometry (Discussion, Uppingham, July 2010, 48'16).

Oliver's description prompted me to share a dream of mine to do with the space whilst dancing. When I first started I would frequently dream about Tango: one in particular was really clear. It involved tile tessellations and tango steps and the way in which they fit together exactly. There was no end to the pattern: the tile was there but the pattern carried on into the next tile and all the steps flowed from one tile into the next and there was no beginning or end. In a sense, for both Oliver and myself, the space on the surface of the floor was being defined by the lines being traced by our feet; we were imagining and creating invisible shapes on the floor in response to the music and our dancing; drawing fleeting designs which could be felt or imagined, but never actually seen, on an old wooden floor: transforming a material place into an artistic space.

A SPACE OF CONSUMPTION: CHEEK BY JOWEL WITH COMMODIFICATION

Tango desire, whether produced by the exotic appeal of passion or by the fleeting moments of Tango ecstasy is interesting for the reason that it ensures further participation and further consumption, some of which may occur somewhat outside the main channels of capitalist fashion and consumption. At every class or *práctica* there is an entrance fee to be paid, always in cash, either on arrival or just before the end. This is accepted practice, though some venues may be more expensive and others considered better value for money. Occasionally, visiting Tango teachers are invited to teach special workshops or classes, to which they lend the desirable qualities of their own authenticity. Such workshops are unlikely to entail large-scale advertising being only aimed at a specialist minority (any such advertising is likely to be achieved by means of emails, Facebook pages, paper flyers or word of mouth). They may, however, necessitate the purchase of international flights and transport; venue hire; food, drinks and accommodation. Entrance fees vary from workshop to workshop and teacher to teacher, depending in large part on how well-known, and regarded they are; previous performances in shows or television appearances; YouTube clips; competition wins; connections with Buenos Aires (or other Tango capitals) and other such markers of

authenticity. In turn the teachers are paid a negotiated fee based on the number of teaching hours and the number of participants.

Participants contribute to the Tango economy in particular by means of the purchase of entrance tickets, also in cash; a few may purchase private lessons with a visiting teacher, which are relatively more expensive; in addition they purchase new clothing or shoes (possibly as internet sales from Argentina or elsewhere, or else from an impromptu shoe stall set up at a tango venue). Events are advertised, mostly by word of mouth or the distribution of leaflets by visiting dancers or teachers. Connections are made and a network of names and faces is created, offering the possibilities of dancing in other places with other dancers.

Sadly the experience of the endless quest for a perfect Tango reflects a downside of Campbell's 'imaginative hedonism': when reality does not measure up to one's anticipation and the perfect pleasure of one's imaginative experience, disappointment follows, which might either drive one on further, or switch one off entirely. In Urry's words, 'There is a dialectic of novelty and insatiability at the heart of contemporary consumerism' (1990, p.13). I would argue that this extends beyond Urry's remit of tourism as consumption, to include certain contemporary, post-modern leisure activities, such as dancing Argentinian Tango: whilst offering a tantalising promise of pleasure and personal satisfaction, it is at the same time imbued with an inevitable sadness and longing, echoing the sense of loss and melancholic dissatisfaction of many Tango lyrics. As Olszewski (2008) notes, 'The movements of the dance and the lyrics of the music reflect a sense of romantic longing that is an integral part of Argentine history' (2008, p.78) but which, according to Savigliano persists on into postmodern existence:

The melancholic longing of Sartre has finally been resolved in the stubborn lack of Lacan. Passion and excess are there, only to flush humans – whether in a state of ecstasy or bored to death – down the flowing abyss. This unavoidable postmodern drive is called Desire (2005, p. 217).

The idea of the commodification of an activity such as Argentine Tango, does not sit well with the experience and spirit of participation. Their attraction to and fascination with Tango was not explained by the dancers in the East Midlands in terms of social trends or fashion. By contrast, as already explained in Chapter 5, their engagement was as a result of what they understood Argentine Tango to convey: its meaning for them; the story it created for them in their imagination; a romantic projection away from everyday life. There was no indication that

participants felt they were there as a result of the structure and function of late-capitalist/post-modern society; nor that their interests were somehow the product of the contemporary cultural or economic context. By contrast, most participants were specific about why they had joined, mentioning other dances, music or experiences such as holidays abroad which had led them to Tango; friends who had encouraged them to seek out a new leisure activity. From one couple there was a hint of irony that they had tried so many other dances and now this was one more, perhaps more exotic or unusual than the last to add to their collection. Some were impressed by the skills demonstrated by Tango dancers they had watched and unembarrassed by their ambitious intentions, against the odds of age and lack of dance training, to aspire to such skills.

There was, however, a clear sense in participants' responses that their decision to learn Argentine Tango was at once a highly individual choice yet also a perfectly congruous, if unusual one. There was an assumption, largely tacit, but implicit in participants' accounts and attitudes, that one's leisure is entirely one's own, and that virtually any activity is available to anybody, dependent only on the limits placed upon their leisure time by the constraints of work and their financial means. No searching questions are asked of new members upon joining: the reasons for their decision to dance Tango are a matter for each individual. There is no prerequisite that one has danced at all before: the desire itself is sufficient. Such a choice, as an act of self-identification is a prelude to the performance of self taking place on the dance floor.

PERFORMANCE SPACE: CONSTRUCTING SELF AND IDENTITY ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Appadurai's theory of rupture (1996) in the context of his discussion of the nature of modernity and the global, 'takes media and migration as its two major, and interconnected, diacritics and explores their joint effect on the work of the imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity' (1996, p.3). Alongside the massive movements, migrations and displacements of people during the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, he argues that the mass media, and electronic media in particular, facilitate:

the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds . . . are resources for experiments with self-making in all sorts of societies, for all sorts of persons. They

allow scripts for possible lives provide resources for self-imagining as an everyday social project (pp.3-4).

Certainly the aspect of dancing Argentine Tango in which participants appear to be taking on, and engaging with exotic identities recalls Victor Turner's observation that:

immersion in communitas seems to be an indispensable human social requirement. People have a real need . . . to doff the masks, cloaks, apparel, and insignia of status from time to time even if only to don the liberating masks of liminal masquerade (2002, p.99).

Talking to participants about the experience of being on the dance floor and of dancing, it became clear that there was a diverse range of performances taking place. Whilst not evident from simply watching the video-recordings, the process of sharing and discussing what was happening was revealing. Without this phase of the research, the imaginaries of the various dancers would not have become evident.

A variety of narratives emerged regarding the individual's understanding and perspective on their personal practice of Argentine Tango. Whilst there was a degree of overlap of themes between these narratives, there were also interesting distinctions between them.

David Turner's imaginary, for example, was clear from his teaching, the information he provided about Argentina and the fervour with which he expresses his disappointment and frustration: it was to convey and reproduce a version of his focus on a particular version of Argentine Tango, involving close connection, intimacy and the ability to dance as one with a partner. In his words, 'It is an entire body language, in which two people communicate a wide variety of emotions to each other' (Turner, D., 2006, xi). He dismissed showy figures and teachers who attempted to teach them, always emphasising the music and the improvisational nature of the dance. He disliked the idea of couples practising and performing routines of any sort, particularly if they involved ostentatious moves or figures.

One must not forget, however, that he founded the Market Harborough group in the beginning out of a wish to convey his new-found passion to others and share the pleasure of dancing with them. In the epilogue of his book his passion is evident:

I wrote compulsively, almost as if the words were bursting out of me. I was excited and some days I had difficulty thinking of anything other than tango (Turner, 2006, p.259).

Though 'eager to dispel the myth that there is some sort of 'authentic' tango' (p.3) he admits to preferring:

the image of the lonely, homesick dock worker dressing up in his only decent suit on a Saturday night and going out to the dance hall, hoping to meet the woman of his dreams. .. He will have practised his floor skills with a friend all through the week. . . . At the dance hall he sees a girl who attracts him. .. as he walks towards her she appears for a while to look in his direction but as he gets nearer she quickly and positively looks away. He gets the signal; he has been rejected (ibid.p.9).

Here is a clear narrative of the context, the people, and the era, of men practising with men and of the *cabaceo* in action which might have led to a dance and ended in seduction, had it not been for the glancing rejection of the woman. Though not a dateable historical moment, the comment nonetheless depicts David's imaginary and highlights all that went with it for him.

Inevitably he was destined to be dissatisfied by his own imaginary, given the physical and conceptual distance between the East Midlands and Buenos Aires; the fact that neither he nor the other participants were skilled dancers and that some people did not share his narrative about what Argentine Tango meant to them. Eventually he became jaded by his long-standing commitment to teaching Tango: it did not live up to his imaginary because he felt other dancers did not appear to care.

An entirely different imaginary is that of Christina, an academic at Leicester University who had also worked in other universities outside the UK, and who projected herself as a well-travelled, cosmopolitan dancer. She shows little interest in the subject of authenticity, but is far more concentrated on the technique of dancing. She frequently refers to places where she has danced or learned Tango, and to the teachers she considers to have been instrumental in her learning. Like other participants, Christina was quick to notice aspects of her own dancing on the video clips which she did not like, (such as 'slouching' for example), but unlike many others, was also critical of other people's technique (posture, embellishments, ability to lead).

Christina's evaluatory comments reveal her interest in improving her own technique, but, more broadly, that she was embarked upon a journey towards being a skilled and discerning dancer, who clearly felt expert enough to make critical comments about other people's dancing and experienced enough to be able to judge a teacher's competence and credentials. Two years prior to this study, a group of dancers, including myself, started an impromptu

practice night in a physics lab at the university. Christina was keen to join. She would arrive, excited to try out the YouTube clips she had been watching. Largely they were of experienced performers and too advanced for any of us. Undaunted (and unaware of the level of technical difficulty required) Christina was determined that we try.

Although she was not a woman who was keen to lead, her comments in the audio-recording about the men with whom she dances are revealing of her confidence in her own skills. At one point she admits that she is happy with her technique. She says, *“I dance very well with Gary,”* upon whose progress she then comments, *“he’s made a lot of advance in his dancing”*. Attempting to analyse why some men had been disappointed at observing their performance in the video clips she said, *“if they had worked a lot more from the giro, if they did a lot more moves from the giro then it would look a lot faster”*. Watching a part of the video clip in which the same man attempts, unsuccessfully, to lead the tiny, quick-paced steps of *Milonga*, she remarked that, *“This is how you show whether you are dancer or not . . . the small ones, they are the ones that show if you are a real dancer”*. Later she explains how she reacts if men do not lead a move properly:

I don’t go backwards in my dancing, not an inch . . . obviously with other men, if they don’t do it, I don’t do it . . . I know what they want to do, but I wouldn’t go into it unless they lead perfectly . . . which makes them really annoyed . . . so when they ask me, so why don’t you do that? Did you lead it properly? No. (Discussion, Leicester, 7.11.09).

By her own admission Christina is happy with her skills:

I don’t think I want to change my technique anymore . . . I have a problem with people giving tips, how to change my technique and how to do this and do that because it took me 8 months to change into what I am now, so starting all over again . . . I am not going to do it (7.11.09).

Her discussion is sprinkled with references to the teachers with whom she had taken lessons. She praised Carlo from Nottingham, who *“is fantastic”* as he was *“the one who taught us Tango and allowed us to arrive in Berlin”* (7.11.09) and to be able to dance there. She referred to a couple of teachers from Brixton in London who, *“taught me my voleos - my voleos are nearly perfect now.”* Similarly she praised Googi whom she described as an *“excellent dancer in Berlin. She’s a very, very young dancer, early twenties actually, with a ballet background. Very, very good . . . I had one lesson with her. One.”* (7.11.09).

Christina had also had lessons from Miguel Angelo Zotto, an acclaimed Argentinian dancer of *Tango por Dos* fame. However she had reservations about the experience:

We took three workshops with him, fantastic dancer, fastest dancer I have ever seen in my life . . . he cannot explain how to move, he cannot explain the basics . . . He cannot even recognise the mistakes. Sometimes, because I was dancing with [my partner], I said there is a problem here because I am not doing the move. He couldn't solve the problem for us which is surprising at his level (7.11.09).

Thus Christina's narrative was not one of nostalgia or of recreation, but represented a personal exploration and project involving actual travel to other places in order to learn from those she considered to be the best teachers, alongside a belief in herself as a good dancer. She also confided, that:

Telling the truth I feel much more comfortable dancing in Leicester. Yes I would dance in Athens or dance in France or in Berlin or whatever but I prefer Leicester easily, even though the level is very low here . . . (Leicester, 7.11.09, 56').

In some ways her comment suggests that her desire to project herself as a skilled, cosmopolitan dancer does not quite deliver what she hopes for elsewhere, and that she is actually most comfortable dancing amongst those with whom she is most familiar. In qualifying her statement, however, she once again demonstrates her confidence in her own dancing:

I know the people and they have fun. I don't have to excel. I can make as many mistakes as I want because they will make more than I do (7.11.09).

Although considered to be one of the best followers, with whom most men enjoyed dancing, Kirsten's imaginary contrasted with that of Christina. She was not concerned with technique, except insofar as it had a bearing on the sensual experience which she was able to have in the course of a dance. Nor was she concerned with nostalgia. Her agenda was the pleasure of dancing, connection, the music and of being able to escape from everyday life. She was clear about aspects which might jeopardise her experience and upon behaviours which interrupted it for her, such as men quizzing her about her dancing history; talking whilst dancing; the inconvenience of having to dance with beginners and her frustration of there not always being a sufficient number of good leaders to dance with. *"I don't enjoy weak leads, I get frustrated by that, and don't particularly like dancing with beginners"* (14.09.08, interview at Market Harborough). She expressed a dislike of garish lightning and a desire for the dancing environment to be conducive to the possibility of removing her from her everyday life and of being able to dance intimately with one's partner:

I don't like . . . you have to suspend, you have to play a bit of fantasy in your head . . . I don't like the bright light, I really like dancing with the lights dim . . . I want to see a bit of atmosphere, with dimmed lights, . . . you want a bit of special (14.09.08, Market Harborough).

Despite knowing something about the renowned and beautiful salons in Buenos Aires, Kirsten wasn't particularly interested in visiting Argentina because she was wary of what she had heard about people not being friendly to dance tourists and of coming face to face with poverty and hardship. Overall she was content to seek out good connection with competent leaders through the embrace and the music in order to enjoy pleasurable dances, without the need for irksome small talk. Essentially hers was an imaginary centred on the pursuit of a pleasure; she was not concerned about being sociable, and would leave if things did not suit her.

Daphne's narrative was similarly of her quest to create and sustain a close and intimate connection with her partners, as well as to enjoy the sense of improving and developing her own dancing ability. She felt strongly that she was part of a community of dancers with whom she could meet and dance in a variety of venues. However, like Kirsten, she shared similar reservations and dissatisfactions about aspects of the dance which she felt were obstacles to her goal: her feelings of awkwardness about being older and taller than many men; not being asked to dance at unfamiliar venues; the veneer of friendliness from other women who were really only intent on dancing with her husband. For her what mattered were the social interactions with other dancers and the pleasure of connected, satisfying dances. Her best dances were those in which she and her partner were able to maintain a connection and to move as if they were one on the dance floor, *"when our dances are really good is when I really feel that two bodies are just together and it's all one"* (discussion Uppingham, July 2010, 56'); when she could leave her individualness behind and reach a state where only the here-and-now mattered and she was no longer able to tell who was leading. Her imaginary was not about becoming someone else, or of switching roles, but about losing her normal self and merging her emotions, movements and responses with those of someone else:

for me the dances that work are the ones where you don't even have a pair of feet, you haven't got a clue where your feet are or what they're doing (July 2010, 57'17).

The experience was more about submerging her own identity in order to become part of a different kind of being, or take on a different identity in connection with someone else.

Her husband, Oliver's fantasies and projections of himself on the dance floor demonstrated a strong, almost surreal fantasy world, comprised of characters depicted in pictures and paintings, with associations from fine art and music. He loved the opportunity to perform as someone else, deliberately switching roles according to the mood and the music:

[Y]ou can play at being so many people. And I very seldom go out onto the dance floor to be who I am. I don't want to be myself. I know who I am normally. You can explore some of the other things, aspects of yourself (July 2010, 22').

His narrative was steeped in art and his own interest in the performance of self and very far removed from everyday life:

We are not performers really, we're not on stage, we're not actors, or even trained to do that but we all have that capacity, the same sort of thing that makes an actor work, that we all have in us and . . . Tango is really good because you can explore some of those fantasy worlds (July 2010, 24'25).

Oliver was also keen to perfect his skills and loved to learn challenging new moves. He had little interest in nostalgia or authenticity and later established an alternative monthly milonga elsewhere in Leicestershire, at which he would present an eclectic play-list of traditional and non-traditional music, set against distinctly non-tango images on a screen in the village hall. His explanation of his interest and purpose demonstrates, not nostalgia or authenticity, but connection and the mastery of skill:

On YouTube there are these old boys and matronly-looking ladies who are doing their tango in their 70s and 80s and they've not got much disassociation but they can do an incredible dance. I want to get so good at milongas that I can still be doing it in my 70s and 80s and still keep it going like those old boys (July 2010, 66').

In Chapter 5 Gary and Helen's views on the subject of authenticity were discussed. From these it was also possible to learn of their imaginaries. Whilst at heart a sociable, social dancer, Gary's references to Denniston's book, revealed a perspective of his dance imbued with nostalgia and history, which at other times he was happy to disregard. He loved the music, regularly attended workshops in order to improve his skills and would help others with theirs. He was happy to dance with anyone and everyone: more importantly he was energetic, friendly, frivolous and flamboyant at times and rarely stopped dancing. For him, being a member of the Tango groups was, "to come together to dance"; an opportunity to meet with people aside from work; to be cheerful, jolly, to enjoy the pleasures of a few good dances and the "really good social mix" (Interview, Autumn 2007, Market Harborough).

Helen's understanding of Tango, also apparent from her views on authenticity and how it should be taught properly, was more serious than that of her husband. In her imaginary there were clear ways to learn, practise and perform Tango. She cared for markers of a teacher's lineage. She accepted Denniston's view that the progress of a tango dancer is inevitably a long, slow process. She was happy to make steady progress, putting in time and effort to perfect her embrace, her ability to stay on axis and her following skills. She watched a wide variety of YouTube clips, sharing them with other dancers and overall it was clear that she wanted to do it 'properly'. Her imaginary was based in a nostalgic past but actively practised in the present, with an emphasis on the acquisition of solid, unshowy skills.

These narratives of the imagination exemplify a few of those presented by the dancers and are as diverse as the personalities involved, albeit with themes which overlap or even contradict each other. They reveal an invisible aspect of transculturated Argentine Tango which photographs or unsupported video-recordings would have been unable to do. Nevertheless it is an aspect, which, whilst invisible, is crucial for meaning-making and in order to understand what is actually taking place on the space of the dance floor.

PLAYFULNESS AND THE SPACE OF THE 'OTHER'

Urry refers to a concept of tourism in relation to postmodernism which is analogous to the practice of Argentine Tango: that of Feifer's "post-tourist" who is at liberty to flit playfully between activities associated with high culture and those associated with pure pleasure in a knowing and self-conscious way but, as a result, 'Resolutely realist, he cannot evade his condition of outsider' (Feifer, 1985, p.271). This resonates with comments, often by teachers, in Tango venues about what 'they' do in Argentina and how 'they', the exotic and fascinating Other of an imaginary Argentine Tango behaves/learns/dances. I have already referred to themed *milongas* in the U.K. (such as Bedford) in which the use of the *cabaceo* is established and demanded as a marker intended to imaginatively (and historically) connect the here and now with Buenos Aires. I have mentioned the insistence by the founder of the Market Harborough group that only traditional 'Golden Age' tango music be played at *milongas*, and that these be divided by *cortinas*, because "no self-respecting Argentinian would dream of stepping onto the dance floor without knowing the music" (Discussion, Dingley, July 2010) or how many dances he might be expected to dance with a partner.

This practice of 'othering' or of looking out towards a site of authenticity indicates a self-conscious distance which is epistemologically impossible to overcome and produces a new cultural phenomenon in which, understood in a certain way, there sometimes appear to be no insiders. In Chapter 7 I turn my attention to the way in which this unavoidable distance produces the 'psychic space' to which Verdecchia refers, giving way to 'complex multi-dimensional negotiation among culturally coded practices' (2009, p23). I examine Podalsky's consideration of Argentine Tango and the motivations of contemporary dancers of Argentine Tango.

It appears that Argentine Tango, danced in places unconnected with Argentina and by people who deliberately choose it as a new activity, is actually a different, transcultural, phenomenon positioned in a different relationship to Tango danced in Argentina. New meanings are consequently produced, some of which simultaneously and inevitably combine a nostalgic attempt to recapture or recreate old meanings associated with authenticity and origin, with an unavoidable awareness of the fact that that is precisely what one is trying to do. There is therefore an inherent contradiction within the practice, tied up as much with the identity of the dancers as with that of the dance itself: one may be trying to travel back to a 'Golden Era' to sustain one's imaginary and ephemeral Argentine Tango, whilst at the same time being firmly rooted in postmodern territory - if that is itself not an impossibility.

CHAPTER 7 BORDER CROSSINGS AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF MEANING

LOCAL ENGAGEMENTS AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter I explore how the participants of my study perceive the globalisation of Tango or view Argentine Tango as a product or a defining cultural practice characteristic of Buenos Aires or Argentina and their relationship with Argentine Tango and Argentina.

In many ways my interest in the globalisation of Argentine Tango has less to do with the means of transmission in the 21st century, so much as with the ways in which meaning is transformed as it translates and reterritorialises into new transcultural settings. Similarly I am interested in why it has the propensity, not just to cross borders and reterritorialise, but also to spread and to attract increasing numbers of new participants. This involves not just the way in which the dance itself may be transformed within new settings, but also the relationship which participants have with it. Finally, in connection with Savigliano's disquiet about colonisation, appropriation and representation, I am interested to understand the political relationship of participants in local settings such as the East Midlands with Argentine Tango.

Of course the ways in which participants identify themselves in relation to the globalisation of Tango is political, whether or not this is acknowledged, or even thought of in this vein. It determines whether they choose to see themselves as outright consumers of goods which happen to be available in numerous different locations around the globe; as cosmopolitans or tourists, exploring other cultures, curiously, voyeuristically or educationally, in pursuit of the discovery and experience of difference; as genuine lovers of the dance with (enough money and) a strong/ compulsive/ insatiable desire to improve their practical skills, extend their Tango knowledge and broaden their dancing experience; as seekers of the exotic on the lookout for extraordinary pleasures and sensations, new thrills and excitement; or of a different kind of exotic, in order to experience the feel of "slumming it", like 'the General', from positions of middle-class privilege, temporarily experimenting with a fantasy, if not the actuality, of a dance which developed in the poor quarters of a town overflowing with European immigrants, vying with local Blacks and Gauchos for the attention of an insufficient population of women. In the latter case the exotic appeal is the fantasy and thrill of a (safe)

dalliance with prostitution, crime and the low-life surrounding such existence; of behaviour considered sexual, taboo and unacceptable in the reality of dancer's lives here in Britain. In no other circumstance could such a proper British ex-military officer have suggested imagining that *"we are in a seedy bordello in Buenos Aires"*.

I refer to texts by Pelinski, Savigliano, Petridou, Jochen Dreher and Silvana Figueroa-Dreher, Verdicchia, Kimberley DaCosta Holton, Podalsky and others who have also considered the transculturation of Argentine Tango. I note the resonances between their studies and my own, and also draw out and attempt to highlight what I feel is lacking from these accounts: namely a strong sense of the role of imagination in the practice of dancing transculturated Argentine Tango.

AUTO-EXOTICISATION AND REPRESENTATION

In Savigliano's view, the process of exoticisation and auto-exoticisation has been a major contributing factor to the global spread of Argentine Tango, both in the early part of the twentieth century and latterly into the twenty-first century. In connection with this process by which means Argentine passion was first identified as an object of desire by the colonizers at the beginning of the twentieth century and around which developed an "economy of passion", Savigliano writes further with regard to issues of representation and misrepresentation, as the product, Argentine Tango, travelled and continues to be consumed around the world. This involved not only the entrepreneurs who were promoting and touring music and dance shows, but later also the self-exoticising process by which Argentinian dancers marketed, and continue to market themselves, reflexively, as exotic products available to the West/Northern Hemisphere.

Exoticism and autoexoticism are interrelated outcomes of the colonial encounter, an encounter that is asymmetric in terms of power. . . . Exoticism creates the abstract, unfulfillable desire for completeness in the colonized while extracting his or her bodily passion (Savigliano, 1995, pp.75-76).

The focus of Savigliano's quest to 'decolonize' Argentine Tango, was not simply a question of revisiting the history of Tango's origins in Buenos Aires and explaining its spread around the world, from 1910 or so onwards, with regard to the balance of power and cultural dominance embedded in that context; nor indeed of simply explaining the mechanics of later waves of Tango transmission around the world. Whilst her declared intention is a project of

decolonization, Savigliano's critique in *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* does not end simply with an analysis of power and colonization; she continues to question the significance of the transculturalisation of Tango, and more importantly, of the political/cultural role of those who 'appropriate' and/or 'represent' its Others, as a contemporary issue of decolonization just as valid in the twenty-first century.

Via the fictive persona of Manuela Malva, Savigliano (2003) analyses issues of the misrepresentation of Argentineness by means of Tango. Manuela, a film-critic described as being 'obsessed with the ways in which Argentine-ness is misrepresented and disfigured through exotic tangoesque clichés' (p.191) considers these issues in her two articles, 'Evita: the Globalization of a National Myth'; and 'Cinematic Sex Tours: On Potter's *The Tango Lesson* (1997) and Saura's *Tango, no me dejes nunca* (1998)'. The purpose in both is to explore and identify the ways in which Tango is represented and made use of by contemporary film makers.

Manuela's/Savigliano's analysis of the film *Evita*, starring Madonna, notes how it resulted in 'a whole new global packet of "Evitist" commodities' (Savigliano, 2003, p.205). More disturbingly, in the process of 'Madonnification' the central character is effectively stripped of controversy and political intent, downsized, personalized and her life transformed into a spectacle. Manuela/Savigliano notes that, despite the fact that Evita did not in fact dance Tango, the 'dance sequences are precisely the sites where the globalization of Evita takes place and where the Argentine national myth becomes transnationalized' (p.198). The presence of these sequences in the film have the effect of representing Evita as a universal woman by emphasising her personal and intimate aspects and, in particular of her as a 'femme fatale, devoid of specificity, except for that frivolous exotic touch (the tango) that makes femmes fatales fascinating in their difference' (p.198). By focusing on these sensuous dance sequences, viewers are encouraged to ignore 'intellectual appraisals of Evita's life' in favour of spectacularising 'the female body and its desires' (p.199).

Savigliano objects to the way in which Evita is identified as Argentinian by portraying her dancing tango which has the effect of disempowering her, emphasising her femininity, and 'diverting attention from her politics' (p.200). Savigliano's disquiet is that the association of Evita with Tango, the national symbol of Argentineness, 'renders an aura of primitiveness and alterity' which distances and exoticises her in order to fascinate a global audience. 'Evita thus

enters the transnational scene through a powerful medium that generates a new myth capable of reproducing old myths about Latin American history' (p.205): it is to this aspect, of glossing over political truth and sweetening the history of Argentina, that Savigliano's objects.

In her analyses of the two films Manuela/Savigliano sets out to discover what it is about Tango which attracts global audiences, by examining the 'sophisticated ways in which spectators are invited to engage' in 'cinematic smart sex tourism . . . with a "cultural" edge (p.209). Defining 'culture' as 'difference', Manuela/Savigliano identifies that it is the erotics of

"cultural difference" [which] structures non-tangueros' tango pleasure . . . the desire to enjoy the pleasures experienced by "others" – the pleasure of "difference" (p.209).

This is the recurring theme of exoticism in the service of the cinematographers' aims of creating a tango 'product' for a world spectatorship fascinated by cultural difference.

Manuela/Savigliano further analyses how the commodification of Tango disguises the economic exploitation of colonized and exoticised Argentinians behind a fashionable facade of neo-liberal, multi-cultural values, such that "'Culture" has become a comfortable way to talk about "difference" and leave inequality out of the picture' (p.210). She notes how 'culturally thirsty' consumers collaborate with the exotic natives themselves in the processes of commodification and exoticisation. Together they manage to produce a product which 'has come to symbolize transgression . . . to convey a dangerous flirtation with the dark side of desire' (p.211) and this symbolic capital is appropriated and exploited by film-makers for their own commercial interests 'with little interest in its sociopolitical moorings' (p.211).

Clearly Manuela/Savigliano is uncomfortable with regard to the appropriation of Tango as an exotic product, which requires the self-exoticisation of its 'natives' in order for them to make a living, and for tourists to savour the multi-cultural 'pleasure of sampling worldwide "authentic" experiences' (p.212) without either responsibility or political awareness. There is a strong sense that this so-called 'collaboration' is a kind of North/South, postcolonial 'exploitation'. The powerful, self-conscious film-makers, Sally and Mario are well placed to attract and influence global attention by representing native tango artists authentically in ways which, in fact, only serve to perpetuate myths of exotic eroticism and passion, and at the same time to assert their own privileged, worldviews. The relationship between cinematographer and native is therefore not an equal one, and nor, despite apparent 'collaboration', does it assist in redressing inherent inequalities: instead it reinforces the cycle of exoticisation alongside

nostalgic stereotypes to be served up to spectators. Savigliano's analysis reveals that the global fetishisation of Tango may produce financial benefit but this does not amount to equality, nor is it interested in accepting 'difference'. In the end Manuela/Savigliano invites us to rethink:

the logic that suggests that "cultures" are out there, in the world, for us – privileged, smart tourists/ethnographers/artists – to grab' . . . [and to consider that] . . . 'nowadays, identifying "cultures" is from the start done with appropriation in mind (p.224).

THE MEANS OF TRANSLATION: NOMADIC TANGO AND TRANSCULTURATION

Osumare (2002) claims that the 'significance of global economic trends that dictate behaviour from the individual to the national levels cannot be over-emphasized' (p.33) and identifies several interconnected trajectories of the era of late capitalism, including individuals' increased mobility with regard to travel; the impact of multi-national entertainment and music corporations in the global economy ; the increasing porosity of national boundaries, as well as their growing economic interdependency.

These factors contribute to what has become a global phenomenon and transnational subculture of break-dancing. Whilst Osumare's focus is on break-dancing, the same forces apply with regard to the global spread of Tango. Furthermore her concept of the Intercultural Body – 'the synthesis of globally proliferating popular culture body styles with local movement predilections that have been present for centuries' (2002, p.38) could likewise be applied to local dancers of Argentine Tango.

Appadurai argues that the result of the two 'diacritics' of modernity and the global, media and migration, is that the imagination is increasingly a feature of how people live their lives and that '[m]ore people than ever before seem to imagine routinely the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born' (p.6). This applies equally to those forcibly displaced or exiled, as to those who voluntarily migrate or relocate, whether within the same country or across continents. These displacements 'bring the force of the imagination, as both memory and desire, into the lives of many ordinary people' (p.6). The prominence of the effects of mobility and migration (or at least of immigration and displacement) in the media ensures that people in the 21st century cannot be unaware of it,

even if they have not experienced it themselves. In fact many participants, as I explain below, had themselves relocated for jobs or else had family or friends who had.

The choice of and focus on Tango in participants' respective imaginary worlds, is obviously not because they are exiled Argentinians, or Latin Americans in diaspora: these were journeys or explorations, whose imagined destinations were deliberately and intentionally pursued, by people with no obvious connections with Argentina nor any cultural history of dancing Argentine Tango. Pelinski (2000) draws together various analyses of the processes of translation or transculturation with specific regard to Tango, defining transculturation as the gradual and often conflictive process by which a new culture is created in negotiation with a prior identity and the diversity of other cultures. It is ongoing and innovatory and entails a change of relationship with the Other. He argues that:

Transculturación es devenir a través de la alteridad, deriva de la identidad primera hacia una "autoalteridad"; es mestizaje cultural, cosmopolitanismo e identidad 'débil' (Vattimo, Amorós y Rovatti 2988); es 'demagnetización del espesor histórico', proceso de 'amnesia parcial controlada', 'transgresión de códigos' (Robin 1989:31). Es, en fin, experiencia del 'no-lugar' nómada (Pelinski, 2000, p.37). Transculturation is to become across difference, originating from a first identity towards a self-defined alterity; it is a cultural hybrid, cosmopolitan with a weak identity; it sheds historic density, a process of partially controlled amnesia, breaking rules. It is, to sum up, the experience of a placeless nomad. [My translation.]

Pelinski refers to the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization as used by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari; to Appadurai's categorization of globalization into flows and 'scapes': mediascapes, ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. He also makes use of the concept of 'imagined communities' proposed by Anderson, in order to explain the ways in which its followers reterritorialize tango, creating or recreating new cultural practices with diverse intentions, in new places. He argues that it does not make sense to try to understand the transculturation of Tango apart from its global context, and furthermore, that it would have been inexplicable for Tango to survive unchanged as an isolated practice, unaffected by the intertextuality of intercultural influences. Dividing tango roughly into two forms, territorialized and de/reterritorialized Pelinski makes further distinction between '*tango nómada*' and '*tango itinerante*', the difference between the two being largely to do with the motivation of their respective followers to either reproduce traditional '*tango porteño*' or to bring about and value local, deterritorialized change.

Following Appadurai's (1996) analysis of global flows and the cultural impact of electronic media insofar as they affect and transform the reach and influence of the mass media, and provide 'resources for self-imagining as an everyday social project' (p.3), Pelinski discusses the capacity of technology and the mass-media to spread and effect changes on microcultures such as traditional '*porteño*' tango. He analyses how the music and film industries have been instrumental in making traditional tango music and images of tango dancers available across the globe; how the trend for authentic World music, using acoustic rather than electronic instruments has given traditional 'territorialized' tango a new prominence, because of the driving postmodern themes of authenticity and nostalgia.

In the twenty-first century a vast amount of Tango content available via the popular culture industries: the internet, TV, Hollywood, the recording industry, stage shows and advertising. Shows such as *Forever Tango* and later, *Tango por Dos* were influential in exporting a particular idea and style of Argentine Tango across the globe.

El exilio y la emigración no sólo hacen conocer el tango en el mundo sino hacen que el tango conozca otras músicas urbanas; le abren, . . . posibilidades no realizables en el territorio de origen Nuevas fuentes de trabajo invitan a la creación, y músicos, bailarines y cantores descubren una nueva identidad tanguista (Pelinski, 2000, p.39)
Exile and emigration did not only introduce tango in the world but also put tango into contact with other urban musics; they opened up possibilities not realisable in the territory of origin New sources of work invited creativity, and musicians, dancers and singers discovered a new tango identity. [My translation]

Many of the East Midlands participants named such shows as the initial spark of interest which prompted them subsequently to find and join the Tango group. Mary explained:

We went to the Argentine embassy with the book launch with Christine Denniston and they had that show that had come over from Argentina and were doing Tango por Dos. It was their night off and they came to the embassy as part of the book launch and the man who runs Tango por Dos did the history of Argentinian tango with old slides and films all in sepia and it was really wonderful (Interview Market Harborough, 7.09.08).

Prior to this, partner dancing had become more popular as a result of the Salsa wave¹ which ‘emerged from the Latin quarters of New York in the 1960s and 1970s’ (Skinner, 2007, p. 486) and became fashionable in cities in Britain and in Europe in the 1980s, and an interest in Swing, both of which preceded the wave of interest in Tango by at least five years. Since 2004 the British show ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ has undoubtedly played a role in stimulating and reviving interest in ballroom and Latin dance styles and in partner dancing generally. In 2006 Argentine Tango was added to the repertoire of dances which competitors were expected to perform in the ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ competition. A significant number of participants referred both to the shows *Tango por Dos* and to *Strictly Come Dancing* as having had an influence on their own interest in learning the Tango.

The music industry has ensured an availability of World Music across national and genre boundaries and includes digital re-workings of previously unavailable historic recordings in many genres, including recordings of Argentinian Tango bands, complete with Spanish lyrics and nostalgic scratchiness, from the so-called Golden Age. Pelinski explains how electroacoustic reproduction and mass communication, ‘el paisaje tecnológico’ (p.42) enables the globalization and spread of cultures beyond their borders.

It was always striking amongst the East Midlands participants, that for the most part, whilst highly educated, they neither spoke nor understood Spanish, the language of most Tango lyrics. However this language barrier was scarcely mentioned, and was not, generally, considered a problem. It was only when asked if they had a favourite Tango song that it became evident that, for many, the inability to speak or understand Spanish also meant they could not recall either the titles or words of the songs they liked best. When I first interviewed Mary, for example, a comparative old-hand at Market Harborough, she could not remember the name of her favourite Tango, and said I would have to ask her husband, who would be more likely to be able to tell me. Similarly Kirsten said, “*I like quite a lot, although I don’t know the names of them.*” Rather more surprisingly, Peter, one of the teachers, when asked if he

¹ See Boggs (1992); Waxer (2002); Renta (2004); Skinner (2007); McMains (2015) all of whom have provided historical and geographical detail about the emergence and development of Salsa around the world.

had a favourite song, admitted, “I have – ‘Silencio’, but Annie can reel these names off. . . I don’t know Spanish” (Peter, interview, Leicester, 9.10.08).

Pelinski describes this as a global consequence of the flow of technology and of Spanish language Tango songs being distributed outside of Argentina: the hurdle of language becomes less significant and people are willing to listen to music such as traditional *porteño* songs without understanding the words.

It certainly was the case that this new form of attention to music was at play in the East Midlands as Pelinski describes, in which not understanding the meaning of the words was unproblematic. Steingress (1998) likewise, claimed that:

Today’s industrialized high-tech communication induces not only new ways of intercultural communication; it also stimulates a new feeling for other musical styles, assimilated into the processes of one’s own artistic creation . . . a new kind of musical sensibility (p.159).

Tango music was quoted as a primary reason behind participants’ initial interest in Tango. In the contemporary context with regard to the spread of ‘micromusics’ across the globe, the ease, speed and nigh-ubiquitous availability of MP3 downloads and digital streaming in the twenty-first century now make it possible for almost anyone, anywhere to access an unprecedented range of music at a moment’s notice. Playlists can be created and shared and consequently the possibility of building a varied collection of Tango music, becoming a leader or DJ for a Tango group or a *milonga* is easily realisable. Pelinski goes so far as to state that, ‘Hoy los discos son el verdadero tango itinerante’(2000, p.42); Today recordings are the true itinerant tangos [my translation.]

YouTube, furthermore, makes available a wealth of visual material including music videos, clips from films and live performances, self-posted videos, private and promotional video recordings of professional Tango dancers/teachers at demonstrations, Festivals or workshops, as well as self-contained Tango lessons for online study. There are Tango blogs and hundreds of Tango web-sites which together provide a quantity of detail about what is happening anywhere that Tango is danced. For those with access to the technology there is no limit to the amount of information which can be gleaned. Nor, in 2015, is this a revelation. The internet has been widely used for at least a decade and in this time the media and entrepreneurs, including professional Tango teachers and dancers have made much use of it to promote their own interests in spreading the Tango net, as well as in capitalising on the extent of its reach.

Meanwhile interested Tango dancers regularly use the internet to search for and share information regarding Tango venues, events, classes and more.

As with Salsa from the 1980s onwards, touring shows and the enforced mobility of professional Tango dancers and teachers in order to earn their living have resulted, more or less directly, in a profusion of festivals, camps and other such focused and extended tango events (tangathon, tangoyoga) around the world. Festivals such as those in Amsterdam, Athens, Berlin, Cheltenham, Croatia, Dublin, Dubrovnik, Istanbul, London, Mantua, Marseille, Paris, Sicily, Sitges, Totnes . . . to name some in Europe which East Midlands participants had attended, provide occasions where Tango professionals gather in an annual cycle to present performances and teach hundreds of would-be Tango dancers, followed by the opportunity of social dancing at large *milongas*. Such events resemble the plethora of Salsa Congresses around the world which generate a continuous source of work and income for the teachers and promoters involved. McMains (2015) has argued that the commercialisation of the salsa 'industry' has substantially changed the relationship of dance to music as well as the social and employment hierarchies in operation amongst dancers and teachers. 'Salsa has become a transnational community that convenes in cyberspace and at congresses worldwide' (p.107).

Nevertheless the many Tango congresses and championships which take place each year produce winners and resulting honours to enhance the international status and renown of those performers. On YouTube it is possible to view clips featuring teacher/performers from such festivals who have become quasi-celebrities of the Tango circuit. These clips score 'views' and 'likes', which translate into a following of Tango enthusiasts, some of whom may, literally, follow these teachers/ performers from country to country, from festival to festival, to take their classes, and watch them dance. Whilst not all 'views' or 'likes' are necessarily recorded by active Tango dancers, they nevertheless demonstrate a significant global wave of interest in Tango, whether dance or music, which is both produced and sustained by the internet. The virtual Tango community is clearly visible through this lens and highlights the way in which the sense of community is created.

The power of the media now makes just about everybody a little more cosmopolitan. And one may in the end ask whether it now may even be possible to become a cosmopolitan without going away at all (Hannerz, 1992, p. 255).

THE LINEAGE OF DANCE TEACHERS

There is a sense in which travelling Tango teachers are eagerly anticipated as celebrities. During the time that I was involved with the Market Harborough and Leicester Tango groups, the groups hosted well-known teachers and performers including: Kicca Tomassi, Diomar 'Giraldo' Escobar, 'Mina' Myriam Ojeda Patiño; Rodolfo Aguerrodi and Miho Omaki; Jenny Frances and Ricardo Oria; Alexandra Wood and Stefano Fava; Chan Parks, Ruth Zimmerman, Isolde Kanikani and Octavian Janner. They were not all Argentinian, but if they were not, they had either had professional dance training, were associated with an Argentinian partner, time spent dancing/training in Argentina ,or ran their own Tango websites, teaching venue or regular milonga event.

Participants were asked if it was important whether teachers were Argentinean, to which Kirsten replied:

In as much as most of the teachers have some Argentinian connection . . . I think . . . it will probably make me pay attention and think, oh wonder if they are any good . . . and after having experienced them I'll think, were they any good? . . . initially there's a draw, there is a draw (audio interview, Market Harborough, 14.9.08).

Discussing the interculturality of Tango in Toronto, Brandon Olszewski (2008) referred to a phenomenon familiar amongst Tango groups around the world, including those of the East Midlands:

Many of the teachers [in Toronto] are themselves Argentine or have studied in Buenos Aires. In addition, most of the Toronto based teachers claim a lineage of important Argentine teachers and dancers through which embodied knowledge is transmitted. In terms of interculturality, this lineage and connection is important for students and dancers practising in the community centres, church basements, clubs and other spaces that lack a tango context (Olszewski, 2008, p. 74).

Such itinerant teachers arrive in venues such as Market Harborough; are friendly and encouraging in their teaching; amazing in their performances; they share food and drink; dance with those brave enough to ask for dances in the milonga; renew acquaintances; make pleasant conversation, in which they inadvertently divulge 'exotic' details of their professional dancing careers; stay in people's spare rooms or local bed and breakfasts; and then are gone.

Local dancers can thus enjoy a vicarious taste of these teachers' quasi-celebrity status, in exchange for the price of the workshop.

I like demonstrations, when there are workshops, like Jenny and Ricardo, they always bring tears to my eyes, I just think they are so amazing, I think it's always worth seeing them dancing, it puts you on a higher level, and I think how can they possibly do that? I love that - it's really inspiring (Kirsten, 14.9.08).

With their fees paid, however, the visiting teachers leave the mundane remnants of a *milonga* behind and set off to their next Tango assignment in some other town or foreign city. Learning a little from them may light up the lives of local dancers temporarily. The chance to dance with them in person is certainly exciting, but in the end we are left in awe of their skills, so far beyond our reach; and, once they are gone and we have returned to our jobs and everyday lives, there can be a feeling of being let down by the return of hard reality and the realisation that we will never be tango dancers like them. As Kirsten recalled:

We had that lady . . . tiny woman, Kicca, . . . I can't do that . . . I just thought that was a bit . . . I can't go to class 5 days a week . . . do I really have to hold my body quite like that? . . . so I don't really want somebody being . . . [telling me] to do something impossible and setting their [sights] really high, and you've got to do this and got to do that (Market Harborough, 14.9.08).

In our imaginations the lives of visiting tango teachers have an exotic existence, consisting of successive journeys from one tango encounter to the next, teaching the skills of passion, imparting their exotic eroticism and performing passionate tangos, 'spectacularised', to use Savigliano's term, for the benefit of tango-hungry audiences like ourselves in the East Midlands. Inevitably there is a disjunction between the imaginary and reality, which creates the tension and slight disillusionment which Kirsten expressed. In fact she was one participant who was ambivalent about the idea of visiting Buenos Aires: whilst wanting to be transported away from the bright lights [of the leisure centre], admitting, " *You have to play a bit of fantasy in your head,*" she also said, " *there's beautiful dance floors, and I'd love to go and see the dancing but I also get stories that people are not very friendly and you can't break into it, so that puts me off,*" (14.09.08). She is clearly aware of the contradictory aspects of imagination and reality with regard to Argentine Tango.

TANGO TOURISM AND DISILLUSION

Exoticism is an industry that requires distribution and marketing (Savigliano, 1995, p.3).

From another perspective, Cecilia Sosa, of the Argentinian couple in the group, provided a revealing picture regarding the business prospects and opportunities being produced by the engagement of foreigners with Tango in Buenos Aires. In the introduction to her article 'Caras Extrañas' which appeared in the Buenos Aires newspaper *Página 12* in June 2005, she describes new practices arising as a direct result of Tango tourism, including: men and women who rent themselves as taxi dancers; flats decorated in La Boca style; family houses being converted into Tango hostels; electronic tango; gay tango and even tango shopping trips. As a result of the internet there is a new phenomenon of tango package tours invading the city: 'los tango tours'.

There is no doubt from her '*porteño*' perspective that there is a flourishing tango tourist trade in Buenos Aires and that, furthermore, it is not simply the locals who are taking advantage of it. She writes about at least two visitors to the city who subsequently took advantage of the phenomenon to set up their own Tango tour operator businesses, Charles, an Englishman and Ken, a gay dancer from California.

This is a commodification of the dance for sure, and it is actively perpetuated by people with the time and the means to make it their own, to be able to travel to such places and pay the entrance fees. Tango 'tourism' to foreign countries is expensive, but the promise of passion and the lure of the exotic warrant the price and do not deter real Tango aficionados. Tango tourists have an increasing range of options of where they might dance next, but require a flexible work-life and a good income in order to do so. Within the East Midlands groups it was easier for certain people to have access to foreign festivals and workshops, for example those who were retired, like David, Glenn and Mary, teachers and students like Poppy with long summer holidays.

Christina, an academic at Leicester University and previously at Galway University, for example, described her distinctly cosmopolitan Tango habits:

One of my friends I started [learning] with, Barry, is an excellent dancer now, he has turned to Tango Nuevo and I keep meeting him either in Berlin or in London, . . . he's gay, he dances often in London, and we meet him occasionally abroad . . . somewhere in a tango venue. . . . but you know it's amazing because I thought I left Galway behind me and I keep finding it in front of me because of Tango (Interview, Leicester 7.11.09).

Unfortunately, one such 'tourist' was disillusioned during the course of his trip to Buenos Aires by what he had believed to be his close relationship with Rodolfo 'El Chino' Aguerrodi and partner. Having personally taken lessons with this professional Tango teacher, organised workshops with him at Market Harborough for the dancers there, offered him accommodation and hospitality in his own home, David then sought and accepted Rodolfo's offers of assistance in planning a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Buenos Aires. The trip was a reasonable success, but nevertheless, at the end of it, David felt betrayed by his realisation that the relationship he believed he had with 'El Chino' was in fact a business relationship, and not purely a friendship forged from a shared love of Tango:

The other thing is this, for all these people , we've had quite a lot of close relationships with tango teachers, it's purely commercial. Argentinians can be incredibly warm people and everything is, you know, you're best friends instantly. That [woman] who ripped us off with that room in Buenos Aires . . . It's just all about money, all about money. So you go out with Rodolfo and he gets totally pissed off. First off he tells where you should go and what you should do and he's obviously taking a cut, so we decided we were going to fly up to Igazu and he says we'll meet you at such and such at the travel agents and we missed him so we just went to what we thought was the travel agents and booked tickets. Absolutely fuming. Didn't get his cut. It's not friendship. It's purely business, so you're buying into that relationship (David, Market Harborough, July 2010).

David's disappointment is evident: he finds the commercial and financial aspects of these relationships hard to stomach; his sense of betrayal is palpable; along with the unhappy realisation that, as a consequence of the commodification of Tango, he is engaged in a business transaction not a friendship.

Needless to say, not everyone in the East Midlands Tango community had the opportunity, or even the possibility of dancing in Buenos Aires or elsewhere on a regular basis, although in a bid to maximise their tango opportunities locally and minimise the time and costs of travelling elsewhere, some local dancers became teachers or organisers locally. Such was the case when James, who first discovered his love of Tango through playing the cello, set up the original Leicester Tango group. Similarly, Anna, the organiser of the Saturday *practica* in Leicester gave up her day job in order to concentrate more fully on her Tango activities and her dream of

creating her own Tango school. In 2009 another couple set up a monthly milonga event in Blaby, a village just outside Leicester, and sometime after the end of my field-work in 2010, another young Tango enthusiast set up a further weekly Tango class in Leicester, with visiting teachers. However the intention of these local organisers, none of whom were professional dancers or dance teachers, was not to make profit, but to provide greater opportunities for dancing in the area, for themselves as much as for other dancers.

There appeared to be reluctance amongst dancers in the East Midlands to entertain or admit to the idea of commodification. What was more evident was a desire to hold onto a belief in a spontaneous, unstudied, natural practice, effortlessly exuding passion and intimacy, such as is portrayed in stage Tango, rather than to discuss the long-term costs of lessons necessary to master the complexity of leading and following; the unavoidably long learning process needed to gain competence in the critical aspect of connection; the number of Tango miles it is necessary to travel around the *pista* in order to gain sufficient experience to create the impression of passion and intimacy. Hard realities seen this way were down-played and avoided, whilst the romantic and social aspects of the practice were emphasised. Whilst a weekend of Tango workshops with a maestro teacher might easily cost over £100, the relatively affluent participants did not openly complain about the cost of entrance fees to classes and milongas; they do not refer to themselves as consumers; they do not even talk, let alone complain, about the business aspects of the Tango trade: they understand that there is a price to be paid, but are unlikely to be unduly concerned whether the teachers are making a profit or loss.

East Midlands participants furthermore, were happy to purchase Tango paraphernalia, such as shoes and clothing. New Tango shoes in particular had the capacity to create an excited stir amongst friends at a *milonga* or *practica* when first revealed from their shoe-bags branded with Buenos Aires addresses. Prices would be confided, and, since the most desirable ladies' Tango shoes are those imported from Buenos Aires, these can be high. However it is a small price to pay for the beauty and elegance one acquires, in addition to the enhanced dancing experience, the possible improvement of one's skills, not to mention the authenticity symbolised in a pair of shoes from Argentina.

However the commodification of Tango is not as straightforward as the purchase of a pair of shoes (weekend workshop/ trip to Buenos Aires or some other foreign city) but goes much

further: monetary value is of less significance given such over-riding qualities, which incorporate far more in terms of depth and imagination to the overall experience. There is symbolism in the consumption, so that alongside the financial exchange of goods or services, an additional quality is present, which softens the rude transaction, adding romanticism, nostalgia, desire.

VOICES FROM BUENOS AIRES

Savigliano's analysis of the process of exoticisation and auto-exoticisation explained the continuing spread of Argentine Tango on the global stage, and also revealed her disquiet regarding misrepresentation and auto-exoticisation. By contrast, her concerns were not reflected in the views of Ceci and Matias from Buenos Aires, who had, between themselves, also danced in Berlin, Caen in France, London and the Midlands. Like the self-confessed Tango 'tourists' of the East Midlands groups, they were also happy to have been able to take advantage of the global spread of Tango to gain access to Tango groups in new cities, where, despite being Argentinian, they found themselves strangers, but could feel a little bit more at home:

It was really nice because when you get engaged with a new city you can dance tango, you are exploring the city in another way because it's a way again of being at home. (Ceci, discussion, Leicester, 6.3.2010).

With regard to the scene in contemporary Buenos Aires, their view was of an eclectic and growing range of Tango possibilities, to suit all sorts of styles, proclivities and age-groups, set against an enduring practice of traditional Tango which had persisted, quietly, throughout the dictatorships, preceding the new wave of Tango.

In turn this 'boom' has created a major attraction for tourism to the city, which Ceci described with amusement in her article and to which Matias also referred in connection with a devastating fire which occurred at the República Cromañón nightclub, killing nearly 200 people in 2004. The fire had the immediate effect of closing down all night-clubs in the city in order for safety regulations and precautions to be effected. However it was the clubs catering for Tango tourism which re-opened the most quickly, because:

It was this thing also which is cultural inheritance and also economic reasons so tango places were the only ones at some point that could open whilst others remained closed much longer (Matias, discussion, Leicester, 6.3.2010).

He explained that, together with a strong policy to support tango, and an assumption that those people who had always danced tango would somehow continue to do so anyway, national government and local authorities pushed to re-open those clubs most frequented by tourists, because this was good for business and important for the livelihood of those involved in the promotion of tango to foreigners. The state was therefore, committed, even prior to the inscription by UNESCO of Tango as Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009, to promoting and supporting the consumption of Tango by tourists, regardless of the nature of their use of, interest in or knowledge of the dance.

In the circumstances which Matias described above, business clearly came before concerns about the representation or misrepresentation of the citizens of Buenos Aires and Argentina, in much the same way as was also evident in Ceci's article. The focus of her writing was to highlight, in a humorous way, how Tango tourism has brought about bizarre changes in the local economy: new employment opportunities such as the availability of taxi-dancers for hire by tourist dancers willing to pay for the security of a competent dance partner, rather than risk the embarrassment either of not being invited or of landing an awkward dancer; work for artists painting *La Boca*-style murals and jobs in the property market. As an Argentinian journalist, her article, on one hand, describes with amusement how this and other such cultural developments have come about as a direct result of the global interest in Tango; on the other it takes a gentle swipe at the plight of bewildered pilgrims arriving in the city of Tango in search of authenticity and fulfilment, who are being gently prised apart from their money in return for services dedicated to the satisfaction of their needs. However the tone of her article was of fond amusement regarding a cultural observation, with little evidence of more serious political disquiet as to how the world views Argentina. Tango tourism is clearly good business for some, even whilst others, such as Savigliano and Denniston are disturbed by the uses to which it is put and the changes to which it is subject.

The provision of Tango services dedicated to tourists acknowledges the Otherness of the cultural practice of Tango in Buenos Aires from the local point of view, and could be regarded as part and parcel of the process of auto-exoticisation about which Savigliano feels so uncomfortable. These developments nevertheless serve both a financial and a cultural purpose for those whose living involves the promotion and representation of Tango to foreign visitors, as well as sustaining it as cultural heritage.

In some ways these conflicting voices from different sections of the Argentine population are similar to the negotiation between the traditional and the modern to which Renta (2004) refers in discussing the transculturation of Salsa in New York City:

the transculturation inherent to salsa dance in New York, due to the combination of its colonial history and its diaspora context in the imperialist United States, necessitates negotiation between both resistance and compliance (Renta, pp.150-151).

With regard to Tango, it appears that the divergent Argentinian views about the uses of Tango are voiced, on one hand, by Tango dancers identifying with a traditional community, centred on a particular place - Buenos Aires – and seeking to maintain a cultural practice and a particular dance aesthetic who are therefore resistant to the feeling of Tango being appropriated by a new ‘transnational’ community. On the other hand, this new, ‘transnational’ community, which may well lack traditional embodied knowledge and any identification with place, nevertheless seeks actively to embrace the Otherness of Tango and take advantage of its post-modern possibilities for the creation and performance of new identities and connections. The latter position, despite, or perhaps, because of its ‘post-modern possibilities’, clearly continues to identify the city of Buenos Aires and Argentina with particular ‘exotic’ significance on the global landscape, and this identification operates strongly even from a distance, such as that between Buenos Aires and the East Midlands.

Historically, such oppositions and resistance go hand in hand with cultural change, whether of a dance practice or of other forms, such as music, language, technology. Different responses to change are evoked, which may either be expressions of outrage and demonstrate conservative efforts to reinforce tradition and resist change; or, alternatively which acknowledge and accept change as an inevitable consequence of the movement of people and their interactions in new contexts.

RITUAL, PASSION AND PLAY: TRANSFORMATIONS OF UNDERSTANDING IN ATHENS

Petridou’s research (2009) one of very few other ethnographic studies of transculturated Tango apart from my own, was based on her own experience of Tango dancers and of dancing Argentine Tango in Athens. Her study originates from questions not dissimilar to those which prompted my research: questions such as, ‘What kind of experience is it to be dancing tango

seven thousand miles away from Buenos Aires? What kinds of meanings are associated with a *milonga* in Athens? What kind of discourses construct Tango as experience and how do they become manifest' (2009, p. 58). Many of her observations reflect perspectives articulated by participants in my study.

Petridou identifies three discourses framing the experience of translated Tango at three different levels: Tango as Passion, Tango as Ritual and Tango as Play. The discourse of Tango as Passion evolves from its representation in stage shows and through the media; the discourse of Tango as Ritual arises as teachers of Tango and more experienced dancers seek to distance themselves from the 'myth of passion' and to reconstruct tango as a social dance. This is brought about by replacing the discourse of Passion with one of Ritual based on a different myth, that of how Tango was danced authentically in the milongas of Buenos Aires and is associated with the 'experience of emotion, a sense of collectiveness and sacredness, and a process of transcendence' (p.63). The discourse of Ritual makes recourse to setting, hierarchy, rituals, rules and respect and at the same time is intolerant of music, behaviour or styles of dance considered to be 'inappropriate, profane, polluting' (p.63). It favours small steps, Golden Age music, the imported structures of *tandas* and *cortinas* and a dress code which self-consciously shuns the glamorous look of stage Tango. Furthermore there is an ascetic of initiation in which dancers learn, slowly, to walk, and to reach understanding and appreciation of the old style music and are not taught fancy steps.

The third discourse identified by Petridou is that of Tango as Play emerging towards the end of the 1990s and widely known as Tango Nuevo. It is associated with *nuevo* music (dating forwards from the music of Piazzolla, including recent electronic and Tango-fusion music) as well as music not strictly understood to be Tango music; an open hold (embrace), a shifting axis and in particular, an experience of dancing which is exploratory and playful and 'centers on the individual as active player in a dynamic relation' (p.68). Generally favoured by younger dancers, the focus 'on acquiring a sense of achievement and self-satisfaction' appeals to 'supporters of a more equal relation between the genders' and in fact Tango Nuevo has 'served as a field for various expressions of gender politics' (p.68). It is thus characterised by freedom: from tradition, rules, hierarchies, gender stereotypes and the dress codes associated with show tango, instead featuring casual, baggy pants and dance sneakers in place of heels.

Petridou points out that whilst these discourses of Passion, Ritual and Play may appear to be divisive within the Tango scene, they do not necessarily distinguish mutually exclusive groups of dancers: dancers may cross from one discourse to another, even within the space of a dance. However the contradictions between the discourses of Authenticity and Play tend to produce conflictual positions, surrounding the teaching and learning of steps, the codes of behaviour at milongas and the subject of music. Petridou sees Tango as a field of politics in which different social actors (the media and entrepreneurs, tango teachers and individual dancers in local Tango venues) identify and reinforce such distinctions depending on their interests and engagement. In fact conflictual relations did indeed develop between certain individuals at Market Harborough as I explain below.

DISCOURSES OF MEANING IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

Analysed in this way, aspects of all three of these discourses were evident amongst the East Midlands dancers. As in Petridou's experience, participants' comments can be interpreted within these discourses, although not necessarily exclusively within any single one. People, such as Gary and Helen, who express strong feelings about authenticity and the proper way of conducting oneself at a *milonga*, as well as disapproval of dance behaviour that is more aligned with Petridou's discourse of Play, are nevertheless also prepared to dismiss the *cabaceo* out of hand as "*just not English*". Anna was on the whole more inclined to teach within the discourse of authenticity, promoting a conservative style of dancing generally understood to be more like that of older dancers in Buenos Aires. Yet she was also happy to dance with other women (as both leader and follower) and, occasionally, to lead her own (male) partner. Similarly, whilst she would tend to play more traditional Golden Age tango music in the Sunday classes, as the DJ for the Saturday *práctica* she would happily create playlists comprising new electronic and fusion tango tracks.

Petridou's analysis of the discourse of Play is defined by the theme of individual engagement and freedom, and by the shift away from a collective sense of community and the experience of shared emotion defined within the discourse of Ritual. It does not however, consider the more psychological aspects of imagination, fantasy and self-identification with Tango as expressed by some participants in my study, demonstrating a playfulness with regard to roles and possibilities; of playing with the idea of other identities; of role-playing, to the extent of taking on fictive personas or of stepping outside of the gender roles or identities associated

with their everyday lives. Petridou's emphasis is on the physical aspects of the dance and the way in which these demarcate different discourses, or fields 'for the expression of relations of power' within Tango.

Whilst Petridou's analysis of Tango as Ritual bears similarities with my comparisons between Tango and Turner's discussion of ritual and Tango, I consider the practice as ritualistic, rather than as ritual, hinging on Turner's distinction between liminal and liminoid experience because of the fact that these Tango participants in East Midlands were engaging in a playful leisure activity, distinct from their everyday working lives. The concept of the *milonga* as ritualistic as opposed to ritual, accommodates the fluidity and the possibility of change within the practice; it also acknowledges that the practice is translated and removed from a context in which it may once have been construed as social ritual, but nonetheless makes constant reference to a set of symbolic behaviours, *el código*, derived from an imagined idea of an authentic *milonga* in Buenos Aires.

Nevertheless, it was certainly apparent amongst East Midlands participants that there were those, such as Petridou describes, who wished to nurture the idea of the milonga in more conservative terms, resisting change or transformation, regarding it as detrimental, not as innovative or creative: others such as Oliver, Kirsten, François, Anna and Sally were happy to make use of Tango as they wished, in order to dance more freely and experimentally. For them this was the point of dancing Tango: rather than a preoccupation with the rules or on the idea of Buenos Aires, it was the physical and musical experience which mattered more.

It is significant to note that such differences as Petridou describes within the discourses of Ritual and of Play were at the heart of a rift between core participants which appeared in Autumn 2008, during the course of this study. There was a considerable amount of animosity between a group of ten to twelve key participants, which resulted in heated email exchanges, tension, several impromptu meetings and a subsequent change of attendance patterns. The chief area of disagreement was the teaching content, and to some extent, style of dancing. Subsequently there was also debate about entry prices and the use and payment of different teachers. At the core of the problem, however, was a conflict between the different viewpoints amongst participants and the direction of their individual motivations.

The retired, original founders, David and Sarah, for example, were invited to one such meeting in order to share their experience and to some extent to arbitrate in the disagreement. They

were keen to reassert the importance of teaching connection and walking, as opposed to showy figures; the use of *tandas*, *cortinas* and traditional etiquette on the dance-floor; the mutual experience of shared movement and music and generally to produce an 'authentic' overall experience for students who might not otherwise learn how Tango was danced in Buenos Aires. This was contrasted by other participants, who later went on to set up their own practice sessions and to establish a new monthly milonga venue, but who, at that stage, were keen to employ more showy, professional Tango teachers on a much more regular basis in order to attract new dancers, as well as to move their own dancing on technically.

What emerged from this rift, apart from some new dancing opportunities, was the divergence of views within the same group, and even within individuals. Oliver and Daphne, Gary and Helen felt they had outgrown the teaching, and wanted the opportunity for more dramatic and challenging learning, although they acknowledged the importance of beginners being able to dance with, and learn from more experienced dancers (such as themselves). Gary and Helen, who had been members of the original core of Market Harborough dancers, wanted to emphasise connection and dancing 'on axis', as they had been taught by David and Sarah, but were less concerned about the arrangement of playlists into traditional *tandas*, or the use of the *cabaceo*, but still insistent that female beginners should be taught about following in the traditional way. Meanwhile Oliver and Daphne, already 'nomadic' in their dancing habits, were unconcerned about tradition for the sake of it, but keener to reinvent the set-up along lines they had encountered and enjoyed in other Tango venues, such as Cambridge.

THE RITUAL EMBRACE: SYMBOLIC CONTENT AND BORDER CROSSINGS

Verdicchia (2009) considers Argentine Tango as cross-cultural performance, emphasising the multiple ways in which 'crossings' have constituted a background to the development of Argentine Tango. From the historic content of Tango's origins, Verdicchia points out that from the outset there were crossings over of class, race, and linguistic barriers; of gender barriers; and later of national boundaries as Tango began to translate to different parts of the world. Other meanings of 'crossings' suggest contradiction, mixing, deception, misrepresentation, opposition or betrayal and Verdicchia claims that, '[e]mbedded in tango's patterns, movements, lyrics and above all attitude, are many of the conflictive senses of "crossing"' (p.18).

Like Savigliano and Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher (2009), Verdicchia agrees that Tango at its origins was intra-cultural. There were migratory crossings of the *criollo* population from the interior to the city and of immigrants from Europe to Argentina; crossings by *compadritos*, who 'mimicked and menaced the upper classes and mimicked Afro Argentine dances' (Verdicchia, p.20) grafting parodic elements onto the dance; crossings between classes and genders; an intercultural crossing from Argentina to Paris and the rest of Europe where Tango gained respectability and refinement; and then a further 'intercultural exchange, where a cultural product of the *arrabales* was transported to Paris and then fed back to Argentina as a symbol of the nation' (p.22).

This ability and propensity to cross borders continues to exert powerful effects on people all over the world. 'Today, tango is global' (p.22): one can watch shows, take classes, listen to concerts and dance Tango in all the major cities and others besides. 'An affinity for tango takes people . . . across culturally determined boundaries, allowing us to hear, feel and know the world differently' (p. 22).

In a paper originally presented at a conference in Hamburg, Germany in 2007 specifically on the theme of *Tango in Translation*, Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher (2009) also consider the capacity of Tango to cross cultural boundaries or borders and to exert such a powerful effect on its participants as to ensure its continued spread and practice across the globe. The authors point out that from the outset Tango was not simply born into, but of a multi-cultural society in which, not just the possibility, but indeed the necessity of overcoming boundaries between individuals was a pre-requisite. The multi-culturalism of the society in that time and place required that there were means with which to get along with strangers and as such the development of the Tango represented one aspect of a society's response to meet its own needs. Consequently the evolution of what Dreher and Dreher-Figueroa also describe as the 'ritual' of the *milonga* constituted a framework within which people could come together without the need for verbal communication and with the security of guaranteed inclusion, despite being strangers.

Multi-culturalism was a feature of the society at the time and the ritual symbols and behaviours of the *milonga*, having been born of this context, consequently equip the Tango perfectly with the potential for border crossings (in the sense both of overcoming differences

of origin, language and race, as well as of breaking down barriers between individuals) and for being inclusive in the presence of difference.

In particular the authors identify the Tango embrace as the central symbolic element, 'die 'Umarmung von Fremden' als zentrales Strukturmoment des Tangotanzes' (2009, p.40) which overcomes "Fremdheit" [*being strangers*] and brings about a feeling of belonging, 'ein Gefühl der Zugehörigkeit' (2009, p.40). Incorporated in this intimate and transient action in which strangers embrace strangers, are symbolic as much as performative tensions (nearness/distance; standardized/ improvised) and other contradictions (loneliness/ togetherness; fleetingness/continuity).

Whilst the authors acknowledge that Tango has become 'vor allem 'Konsumobject' geworden' - a consumer good with an international market, 'als exotisches 'Kulturprodukt'' (2009,p.40) - an exotic product of passion and sensuality, they maintain that this does not sufficiently explain the reach of Tango into other cultures outside of Argentina. In contrast to Savigliano's argument that Tango was brought about as a result of the encounters and tensions between diverse social and racial groups and reflects these in its ethnic, class and gender conflicts, Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher claim that it is particularly the rituals of Tango which offer the possibility of dissolving differences between individuals on a symbolic level. It was therefore possible for people from different class and ethnic backgrounds to come together in the salons of Buenos Aires in such a way that did not require words, but simply an understanding of the ritual of the milonga. The authors maintain that:

In der heutigen Zeit ermöglicht das Symbol des Tangos aufgrund der Offenheit seiner rituellen Form . . . die Inklusion kulturell Fremder, die nach Argentinien 'pilgern' und in die Gemeinschaft der Milongeros aufgenommen werden können" (2009, p.53); Today the symbolism of Tango based on the openness of its ritual form enables cultural strangers on pilgrimage to Argentina to be included and accepted into the community of milongeros [My translation].

Although their analysis of ritual is based on the model of a Buenos Aires *milonga*, where certain collective symbolic behaviours are understood to be the norm, this is also the case in the contemporary situation in tango venues all over the world beyond Buenos Aires. The symbolic content of key behaviours associated with dancing Tango enables complete strangers, so long as they have a certain amount of Tango experience, to come together to dance, without risk and with the security of understanding the framework within which Tango takes place.

It is also the case, however, that not all of these symbolic behaviours prevail in every venue in which Tango is danced. The *cabaceo*, for example, is not practised everywhere, and verbal invitations to dance are considered acceptable in some places. Nevertheless, the shared knowledge and understanding, in imagination if not in practice, of these collective symbols, and particularly that of the embrace, is ubiquitous, enabling an intimate, though fleeting union between strangers. Alongside the music, which calls up emotions to be artistically incorporated within the dance, it is the harmonising effect of this central symbolic action, the embrace, which, according to Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher, overcomes contradictory tensions and sensations, and allows individual streams of consciousness to tune into one another, producing an intense and highly satisfying bodily and spiritual experience without the need for words. It is the inherent openness and flexibility of the Tango ritual to accommodate difference, overcome boundaries, generating *communitas* within the dancing community which ensures its continued and flourishing existence around the globe.

Certainly it was true of the East Midlands Tango groups that strangers would sometimes appear at milongas. They would be welcomed with interest and questions would not specifically be asked at the door (though information might be freely volunteered) about who they were or where they were from. Anyone is able to enter a milonga, for a fee; anyone is entitled to dance. The appearance of newcomers would obviously be noticed and would almost certainly promote discussion amongst regulars; their dancing skills would be observed and quietly commented upon. But provided strangers showed themselves willing to fall in with the behaviour of the milonga and to invite or accept invitations from regulars, they would be accepted and people would be happy to share dances with them, despite knowing little or nothing about them. In this respect the observations of Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher hold good regarding the openness and inclusivity of the Tango, made possible by the knowledge of codified behaviours, or as they would have it, of the framework and symbolism of the ritual of the *milonga*.

One evening in Market Harborough, for example, during the course of a monthly *milonga*, a young man appeared whom nobody knew. It transpired that he was on the return leg of quite a long tango quest. Being a stranger, he caused something of a stir, but was intent on dancing with as many people as possible. His style was unusual, technically advanced and very imaginative. Some people enjoyed dancing with him: others did not. Sally was one who clearly remembered her dance with him:

the best dance I have had so far . . . was at a milonga with a man who comes up from somewhere in Devon or something, I don't know where and I only danced with him for like one trio of dances . . . he worked out what the connection was . . . so I trusted him . . . I don't know his name (Sally, Leicester, May, 2010).

Not only had this been Sally's best dance ever, it also typifies the kind of experience which is possible for strangers at venues into which they have never previously set foot: I myself have had personal experience of such euphoric dances in places as diverse as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Tewkesbury and Trondheim. Furthermore, many members of the East Midlands groups would travel to other *milongas* in the region or even further afield to international venues. They would carry with them the same expectations of being at liberty to enter a milonga, as strangers, with the hopeful expectation of being able to dance, despite not knowing anyone, and of being accepted and included in a pleasant social event. There is thus an underlying understanding within the Tango community which enables dancers to cross boundaries, enter new places and make connections with people whom they have never met and may never meet again. In foreign venues not knowing the mother tongue of one's partner may make one feel a little apprehensive, but in principle does not represent an impediment to dancing, other than perhaps a slight feeling of awkward self-consciousness between dances, should it transpire that one has, indeed, no words in common to exchange. That possibility is in itself accepted, but need not deter dancers from inviting each other to dance.

EXCLUSION AND COMPETENCE

In principle at least this is the case in *milongas* everywhere. In reality, however, it has to be said that whilst the principle holds, the experience may not always be as welcoming and inclusive as Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher suggest. It would be surprising for strangers to be turned away from a milonga, but participants from East Midlands have described feelings of embarrassment and awkwardness whilst sitting, seemingly endlessly waiting to dance in venues where they have been relative or complete strangers such as Daphne and Oliver in Cambridge, myself in Amsterdam, and Peter and Anna in Berlin (despite her being German). This appears to be the reverse of openness and inclusivity and, according to Savigliano and other writers on Tango in Buenos Aires, as likely prevalent in the home of Tango as anywhere else. As in Savigliano's discussion of 'wallflowering' (1998) participants shared feelings of isolation, inadequacy and disillusionment as a result of the experience of not being able to get dances in a venue where they have few or no allies.

Thus it would seem that the framework of a Tango *milonga*, whether described as ritual or not, does indeed offer the opportunity for people to come together with others whom they do not know. The lack of a common spoken language should not, in theory, present an obstacle, given the codified behaviours of the *milonga*, and, assuming that one has at least some dancing skills, the possibility of sharing dances with others is largely taken for granted. However, as people seem to feel more comfortable generally with people they do, as opposed to those they do not yet know, there is a conservative tendency for friends to dance with friends and familiar dance partners rather than to invite strangers.

There is another aspect of dancing Tango, however, which Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher largely overlook, which is that experienced dancers tend to seek out other skilled dancers with whom to dance, because they are searching for the best possible dance experiences, as opposed to mediocre ones. It is a sad (for the less-experienced) but inevitable fact that skill plays a significant part in the pleasure which it is possible to derive from dancing Tango and other social dances. For example, Ceci, from Argentina, explained what she liked about dancing Tango in Buenos Aires :

there are so many ages all together it's kind of really nice way of intergenerational sharing thing. When we were coming to a milonga with so different people that you have to dance with the fat one and the old one and with the one that you have never come across in a different way. (Discussion, Leicester, 6.3.2010).

However, her partner Matias was quick to respond to her comments and my suggestion that dancing Tango is a democratic experience:

not necessarily democratic because in tango there could be the old very ugly guy that dances very well is actually taking, probably, I don't know is taking more [dances], or everybody is looking . . . to dance with him and not with a young good looking guy. (Matias, 6.3.2010, 21'10").

Christina and Kirsten were both quite blunt about not enjoying dancing with beginners. Similarly Oliver admitted that he deliberately avoids eye contact with certain people in order not to be invited to dance with them. Daphne described how she is sometimes drawn into a downward emotional spiral during some Tango events, if she is not invited to dance and can end the evening feeling demoralised and undermined by anxieties about her height and age.

Whilst the practice of Tango may seem to be accessible to all and inclusive of difference, there are nevertheless factors at play making this possibility somewhat less straightforward than Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher suggest.

IMAGINED CROSSINGS: CONJURING MYTHOLOGICAL SPACE WITH MARKS OF AUTHENTICITY

With regard to the practice of Argentinian tango by social dancers in the East Midlands who lack experience of the dance in the context of Buenos Aires, the issue of authenticity emerged most often in the process of teaching or of scene-setting for special *milonga* nights. Geographic and historic distance separates Argentine Tango in the East Midlands from Argentine Tango in Buenos Aires. The underlying, insurmountable distance both contributes to, and threatens the formation and cohesion of the group's identity; the common understanding of the dance; and the practices which surround it. Thus calls for authenticity arose in attempt to be able to sustain the belief in the practice and that what one does is credible, creating the need for information, codes of behaviour and signs as visible and traceable connections with Buenos Aires. On one hand it is necessary to suspend belief in order to overcome the obvious, obstacle of distance: on the other to scaffold it with props and references to Argentina.

A clear example of this was demonstrated by David, the original teacher at Market Harborough, who would occasionally send out YouTube clips to dancers on his email list. In 2007 he sent an email containing a link to a couple dancing in Salon Canning, (a venue to which he frequently referred) accompanied by the message:

I know I keep banging on about the unique style of milonga but just take a look at this couple performing in Salon Canning. It's elegant, fun, perfectly possible for social dancing and none of the things they do are outside the grasp of 'normal' dancers. Notice how little bounce there is? (D.Turner, email, 1.5.2007).

With another link, he advises his male readers to:

look at how simply they dance and how musical this man is and how much time and space he gives her to be inventive. Watch it a second time to ask yourself what is he doing that is not merely modest step walking, mostly forward. (D.Turner, email, 1.5.2007).

To his female readers he suggests:

Women, look at the way she playfully interprets the music, clearly enjoying herself. Note her posture, the elegance of her legs, the stillness of her body line, (no breaking the line at the waist) how nicely she goes into the cross (D. Turner, email,1.5.2007).

Both of these links, apart from the interest in watching them, are performing another, symbolic function: that of reinforcing the connection with Buenos Aires, a place imbued with authenticity, where, evidently, dancers perform in a certain way. David, as teacher of the group, was focusing the understanding of our gaze: look on YouTube, you can see for yourself. For those of us who followed the links, we were being guided to particular examples and qualities of Argentine Tango: those which David wanted us to see.

Unlike Dreher and Figueroa-Dreher, Verdicchia (2009) does not seek to explain the capacity or the mechanics of Tango's propensity to cross boundaries, but tends to follow Savigliano's analysis of its conflictual background as being an integral part of Tango both historically and today. However he also acknowledges 'an affinity' and a 'psychic' role in the cross-cultural performance of Tango: an awareness of the part of imagination in a deliberate choice to cross certain cultural boundaries. Such choices also became highly evident from the participants in Leicester and Market Harborough, in comments such as Oliver's about wanting to be like someone in a painting or photograph; Sally's about role-playing; or The General's about dancing in a "seedy bordello". Whilst some of those dancers in Toronto may have known nothing of the origins of Tango,

they nonetheless manifest traces of that history as they improvise the filigrees of footwork . . . apprehend a psychic space [and] . . . intentionally move across cultural boundaries – putting themselves in someone else's (tango) shoes (Verdicchia, p.23).

Imagined crossings are translated into a cross-cultural practice with a focus geographically and spiritually elsewhere, in much the same way as described by DaCosta Holton in her discussion of the pedagogical strategies of Flamenco singer Tomás de Utrero and the charged cultural transfer between Andalusia and Chicago which he brings about in order 'to re-create the entire environment of Flamenco' (Utrero, cited in DaCosta Holton, 1998, p.305).

Using De Certeau's (1984) distinction between, 'place' and 'space' DaCosta Holton argues that:

[w]hen flamenco is performed in Chicago, two contexts are forever intermingled. The Chicago community of flamenco practitioners constantly negotiates the liminal terrain bridging the geographical place of Chicago with the mythological space of Andalusia (p.304).

Chicago is always construed as 'place,' a stable location in relation to the shifting 'space' of Andalusia. . . .subject to a variety of representations, where location is experienced only through others' memories, through multiple, overlapping, sometimes contradictory accounts (p.305).

The constant negotiation between the actual place of Chicago and the imagined space of Andalusia resembles an ongoing process amongst participants in the stable geographical location of the East Midlands to produce a similarly mythological space of Buenos Aires. There is an evident direction in the intentionality of their references and their use of signs such as certain modes of dress or mood creation. It is an active process of imaginative crossings, evidenced in their attempt to assume the poise, control and attitude of Tango; the importance of the lineage of their teachers; their public demonstration of a cross-cultural performance and efforts to put 'themselves in someone else's shoes' in just the same way as the dancers in Toronto described by Verdicchia.

This process also echoes Petridou's myth of authenticity and the discourse of ritual demonstrated by many of the participants in her ethnographic study. As important as the deliberate references and imaginative crossings, is the resistance of those anxious to exclude influences which might distract from, or compromise the purity of these imaginative and mythological spaces : the reluctance of Utrero to share his music with anybody, his determination not to compromise his practice, and the irritable complaints of David in Market Harborough with regard to the ignorance, lack of understanding, or, as he sometimes saw it, deliberate non-compliance of some of his students in relation to what he understood as the authentic practice of Argentine Tango.

There are tango dancers, perhaps among them those most committed to a sense of Buenos Aires as the site of origin and of authentic practices to do with Argentine Tango, who wish to visit Buenos Aires as a place of pilgrimage, imbued with symbolic significance in order to witness the 'roots' of Argentine Tango; to catch a glimpse of the 'authentic' dance; or to dance Tango in Argentina with Argentinians. Yet there lies a dilemma, in that, by visiting Buenos Aires as one of an increasing number of Tango tourists in search of some kind of authenticity, one might also, ironically, be responsible for jeopardising it. If everyone visits Buenos Aires to experience authentic Argentine Tango, the audience changes, the context changes, and consequently the performance changes. The relationship between the perceiver and what is perceived is dynamic and therefore renders the possibility that it might permanently transform that which is perceived.

As I discussed in Chapter 6, estimations of authenticity can shift, or be contradictory from perceiver to perceiver. Authenticity is therefore not situated within a performance, product or site itself, but has to do with the relative perspective of the perceiver and what he or she projects or invests upon it. It is created, or invoked with reference to a set of beliefs, or understandings which each onlooker uses for their own purpose and about which different perceivers may not agree. Authenticity is recognised only if it satisfies the purpose or intention with which that perceiver perceives; fulfils their vested interest and demonstrates the meaning or cultural significance which they wish to find. In the following section it is clear that followers must behave in particular ways in order to satisfy authenticity.

TRANSFORMATIONAL ANXIETY

During my study I was sent a parodic video clip by Helen, a participant. It is a comical YouTube clip about a female Italian competitor arriving at the World Tango Championships in Buenos Aires in which she is strongly taking her own path and effectively interrupting the man's lead, or ignoring it. The clip highlights the woman's performance, demonstrating a range of behaviours including, asking a man to dance; not allowing herself to be led; and incorporating her own choreography into the dance to the extent that the leader was able to step back from his role without interrupting her performance. The feelings of the *tanguero* meanwhile, are shown in his facial expressions and body language which indicate embarrassment and awkwardness about being verbally asked to dance; surprised amusement, leading to exasperation with the follower who is determined to do as she pleases; followed by resignation that he is no longer in control, and that all he can do is to get to the end of the dance.

The motive here was evidently to share an ironic joke about such inappropriate behaviour and complete ignorance of proper Tango etiquette. Helen's understanding of and implicit comment on the visual message intended in the clip is that the Italian tourist is to be laughed at because she is making a fool of herself with the Argentinian *tanguero* by not following his lead, whereas an 'authentic' tango dancer would know that the man leads and the woman follows. This is something to which Helen often referred in one way or another, and it suggests that she believes she shares an understanding with the Argentinian man that this is not how tango should be danced. Furthermore, Eileen's comment that these funny clips show how the "*dance 'morphs' when another culture tries to emulate it without any understanding of*

connection, disassociation or the loose free leg!" suggest, first, that she does not see herself as a person who lacks such understandings (because she **does** understand connection/disassociation/and the "loose free leg"); secondly, that by sharing the clip she is making it known publically that she is no such person; thirdly, whilst obviously being from another culture (other than Buenos Aires) she nevertheless discreetly identifies herself as a dancer who knows and follows the unwritten, insider rules which, she believes, pertain to Tango Argentino. That she can share the joke and laugh at the clip, demonstrates her greater understanding and insight than the female follower who is depicted.

Her remark that the dance 'morphs' when another culture emulates it, also deserves analysis from two different perspectives. '*Morphs*' means to change smoothly from one form to another, as epitomised by the animated figure of the same name² who appeared with Tony Hart in the late 1970s. Used as a verb 'morph' describes the seamless process of change from one form to another. What is interesting in Helen's use of the word is a possible hint of surprise, or disapproval and then suggestion that it is a problem that the dance has 'morphed', because people from another culture have not approached it or treated it as they should have done in order to prevent such changes from occurring.

Similarly her use of the word '*emulates*' might be interpreted in two different ways: in one way suggesting an attempt to copy, but in an ignorant or unknowing way and with no knowledge of the contextual background. Alternatively it could be that Helen assumes that we are all attempting to emulate Argentinian Tango, but in a way which ideally would not cause it to "morph". Once again such a use of the word would indicate an understanding of this cultural practice as something defined and fixed, which should be preserved and respected as the proper way of doing it. It suggests that Helen holds a clear belief in what is right and wrong, and believes her version of the dance to be authentic; that she assumes that other people would agree to it and therefore that the aim of dancing Argentine Tango is to do the utmost to adhere as closely as possible to this idea.

² *Morph* was an animated clay figure first created in 1977 by Peter Lord of Aardman Animations and made famous by his appearances with Tony Hart on the BBC .

Such a view of cultural practice seeks to resist change and would fall within Petridou's discourse of Ritual: it seeks to hold on to the past and an ideal model, and sees interactions between different groups of people or of individuals as potentially damaging. There is a constant danger that ignorant participants from "*another culture*" will gradually, but irrevocably contaminate the purity and disrupt the authenticity of the dance. This is to be avoided and dancers who do it, such as the Italian follower in the clip, should be held up and made to look ridiculous in order to remind others not to behave in such a fashion.

Helen's less-than-approving comments about the East Midlands Tango scene and to "*ladies*" going on to the floor and "*performing*", or "*helping themselves*" to *ganchos* or whatever they like were discussed in chapter 5. Her comments with regard to the teaching of technique, suggest the same sense of impropriety as voiced above and a firm belief instead that "*ladies*" should only do what is led in a very strict sense.

DANCING THE SAME OLD TUNE: OLD COSMOPOLITANISM OR NEW CONNECTIONS?

Savigliano's unease also underlies Podalsky's (2002) uncomfortable questioning about what is really behind the recent global uptake of Tango. She sets out to consider whether this recent interest represents 'a desire to reassert the fictive purity of the "other" against the rapidly changing ethnic composition of the US and many European countries' (p.131). Her wish is to explore whether new cosmopolitanisms manage to retrieve 'lost ethical potential – ie. providing a moral imperative to understand one's self in the world,' in contrast to more traditional understandings of the term.

In the light of Savigliano's disquiet (about appropriation and representation) it seems important to question whether the kind of representations made, and the significance of the imaginative journeys undertaken by the East Midlands participants do indeed demonstrate the distinction Podalsky (2002) makes between old and new understandings of cosmopolitanism. Do these dancers dance with a different outlook to those modernist Europeans who were first introduced to Argentine Tango in Paris or London around 1912? Or 'are we dancing to the same old tune, plodding through the same tired steps and positioning ourselves and the "other" in the same old ways?' (Podalsky, p.131).

With regard to Argentine Tango-dancing participants in the East Midlands then, it is difficult to know for sure where their cosmopolitan concerns lie. Certainly there were some whose behaviour could be said to accord with the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism (often associated with modernist aesthetics) as 'detachment from the bonds, commitments, and affiliations that constrain ordinary nation-bound lives'(p.131) whilst the term is 'often used loosely to describe just about anybody who moves about in the world' (Hannerz, 1992 , p.252). Many participants were indeed frequent travellers; several had homes abroad (in Turkey and Spain); close family members living overseas (Hong Kong, Australia); one divorced woman lived in Thailand and only came to dance Tango when she returned to England to see her children; one couple talked of buying a place in Buenos Aires; there was an Argentinian couple, a Greek woman and a German couple working/studying in Leicester. Most were relatively affluent and some, as I have explained before, had time as well as financial means at their disposal. Thus the term 'cosmopolitan' might be applied, although their motivations and engagement are less obvious. As Podalsky asks of these films, likewise I wish to ask whether dancing Argentine Tango, gives us 'some new moves by promoting "[i]dentifications not identities [and privileging] acts of relationship rather than pre-given forms?' (2002, p.132). Certainly there was the possibility of meeting new people. The physical and symbolic embrace of Argentine Tango, as discussed earlier in this chapter, undoubtedly has the capacity to overcome barriers between individuals and to make connections, whether simply for the space of a dance (or three) or of a more enduring nature. Connection, however, is not as easy as it (sometimes) looks and the embrace between two people does not always work, but there was nevertheless an expectation that the idea was to get physically close to one's partner in order to communicate the dynamic of the dance between each other's bodies.

In this sense these twenty-first century cosmopolitans would seem to be endeavouring to create new 'identifications' and to be 'privileging acts of relationship' with their partners, in their dancing. For many British men, the act of dancing is a new departure in itself: the idea of performing a dance perceived as 'erotic', in close physical proximity with a member of the opposite sex really pushes the boundaries. Thus dancing Argentine Tango can be construed as a new and creative experience for them, which, apart from the physical learning entailed in mastering the dance, does indeed open up possibilities for further artistic, imaginative exploration and improvisation, and does not simply offer a formulaic set of steps and routines to be learned by repetition. In some ways the current interest in Tango by British men

resembles that described by Buckland (2011) during the period of 'Tango mania' between 1912-1914³, in which young men returned to the ballrooms, enticed not only by the prospect of closer physical contact with women than had previously been allowed, but also by the opportunity to develop and show off deft footwork and masculine Tango prowess on the dance-floor. Whilst physical contact and public intimacy is no longer the issue that it was at the turn of the twentieth century, nonetheless being able to demonstrate unusual cultural knowledge and skills continues to hold cosmopolitan kudos and the chance to impress others.

With regard to cosmopolitan experience and knowledge, Podalsky claims that Solanas' film, *Tangos*, exalts:

travel and displacement as revelatory experiences . . . reifies the travelling body as a primary source of personal cultural renovation [and] . . . suggests that the type of artistic experimentation that emerges from the experience of travel has the ability to heal not only the wounded displaced subject, but also the fractured home culture (2002, p.137).

Bearing in mind that, for the most part, the East Midlands participants were engaged in what I am describing as 'imaginative journeys' as opposed to literal ones, it is nevertheless worth considering their significance in the light of Podalsky's discussion about old and new cosmopolitanism. Whilst not actually travelling, such mental journeys suggest at least a desire for personal renovation and creative exploration by participants, contained within dedicated time slots and enacted within protected venues.

In this contemporary, politically-correct, postmodern era, it is tempting to assume that of course we do it differently now and that twenty-first century participants are obviously not just seeking out an imagined essence but are engaged in a more ethically worthy pursuit in an altered reality of lifestyle in which people are obliged to accept and adapt to shifting relationship patterns and living arrangements.

Clearly there were some for whom ruptured, complicated or long-distance relationships were highly relevant themes: the woman living in Thailand, dancing Tango in England on return

³ See Buckland (2011) particularly pp.170-181 for detailed discussion of the shifts of fashion amongst the English classes with regard to the practice of social dancing in the early decades of the twentieth century.

journeys to visit her children, was in fact of Chinese origin who converted to Judaism to marry and live with her Israeli husband in Leicester; François was French, had worked and learned to dance Tango in Quebec, but was currently working in Leicester at the university, while his wife remained working in France; the Argentinian couple who came to Tango, partly as a way of being at home; Anna, an organiser, was German, previously married to an Englishman with a British son from that relationship; Christina, a Greek academic, who had previously worked (and danced Tango) in Ireland and Berlin, was recently divorced from her Italian husband.

Thus the question remains as to why Tango should be pursued either imaginatively or literally. The 'multiple' attachments described above, apart from those of Ceci and Matias from Buenos Aires, did not directly point to, or explain their reasons for dancing Tango, except insofar as Tango had been a part of each of their lives before they had had to move or migrate. They did not explain participants' identification with Argentine Tango in terms of nationality or association; nor could it, furthermore, convincingly justify their description as 'wounded, displaced subjects' in need of healing. Whilst certain participants might, justifiably, be described as displaced, such displacement was a matter of choice, and largely beneficial in terms of work or career, as opposed to being enforced. They were able to return to their own countries for visits on a fairly regular basis, without being endangered or having political constraints placed upon them. When compared to the experience of economic immigrants or people in diaspora, the idea that the participants in the East Midlands were seeking to repair a 'fractured home culture' at first sounds somewhat unconvincing.

However, there is certainly a sense in which the post-modern experience could be described as a 'fractured home culture' which individuals are seeking to heal. Whether or not one is actually a seasoned, physical traveller in the twenty-first century, the entire world appears to have been brought closer to one's front door by means of television or the internet, confronting individuals with images and stories of diversity and plurality on a daily basis. Contemporary patterns of mobility and migration mean that most people have encountered individuals from other parts of the world, heard foreign languages being spoken around them, tasted international dishes and listened to world music. Giddens states that, 'in a cosmopolitan world, more people than ever before are regularly in contact with others who think differently from them' (2002, p.45). Patterns of mobility within Britain also mean that many individuals no longer live close to the place where they were born. Many students move away from their home towns to attend university, thereafter relocating strategically in order to take up

employment, and frequently not returning on a permanent basis to the place where they grew up.

There is a common sense narrative of a shrinking world, across which people travel with increasing speed and decreasing time for a variety of reasons. At the same time, people within Britain are displaced, though perhaps somewhat less wounded by the experience of mobility and migration. Many people quite likely will inhabit a series of homes during the course of a lifetime which may not be in the same or even neighbouring towns. Family members do not necessarily live in close proximity to each other and children of separated parents are quite likely to live in two homes alternately.

The understanding of home as also entailing long-standing membership of a stable, geographical community has thus changed, giving way to new kinds of community which Urry (1995) observes :

are not like those of traditional communities since they are joined out of choice and people are free to leave. . . . They provide important sites whereby new kinds of social identity can be experimented with. They can empower people, they provide safe social spaces for identity-testing, and they may provide a context for the learning of new skills (pp.220-1).

The concept of a fractured home culture in the affluent heart of England is therefore plausible, even for those who consider themselves to be successful or professional 'natives'. With regard to a kind of malaise to do with one's home society, Wieschiolek claims that her:

study of salsa in Germany opens up a fresh look at German culture and the way it is perceived by its members. Their hunt for identity, exoticism, communication and different gender-role models reveals shortcomings, predicaments and dilemmas in their life outside the salsa scene (2003, p.132).

Undoubtedly the contemporary experience of travel has also drastically changed and tourism now encourages us to consider new possibilities, to day-dream and look forward to being in different environments, albeit for limited time periods. Thus the imaginary journeys and exploration into what is perceived as a practice from a different culture may be providing possibilities for personal and cultural revelation to the East Midlands participants, simultaneously offering the opportunity of healing the individual as well as their post-modern sense of displacement.

In a similar sense, the opportunities for 'disidentifications' which Pellarolo (2008) suggests were offered to female tango performers in the early twentieth century, might be similarly claimed by local participants in the twenty-first century: not specifically in the sense of a distancing from a hierarchically gendered society, as much as from the establishment of middle-class respectability, conformity and predictability. The liminal 'border-sites' occupied by Pellarolo's performers, furthermore bear resemblances to the marginal dance-spaces frequented by the Tango community in Leicestershire: places in which to escape from quotidian routines and values and experiment with alternative performative identities from those which are normally expected.

RESPONDING TO SAVIGLIANO'S SENSE OF DISQUIET

The role of the Other is performed by la Otra (the female Other). This Otra is guilty of Otherness or, to put it differently, is accused of being an Otra in that she lacks and exceeds in "something" compared to the male. Her excessive passion and her lack of control over it beg for the male's embrace and leadership (Savigliano, 1995, p.77).

Savigliano, an experienced *tanguera* and tango scholar with a professional academic career in North America, describes herself as a decolonized, 'Latina Otra'. However she feels compromised by being 'La Otra'. Whilst holding political reservations regarding the global appropriation and misrepresentation of tango, she, like the film-maker Saura, is paradoxically positioned, endowed with critical distance as a result of residing outside of Argentina for a long period of time and, consequently, returns to Buenos Aires with conflictual postmodern viewpoints which at once assert and subvert her own identity. In many ways she appears racked by the dilemma of her own split (postmodern) identity: insider and outsider; female; native and ethnographer; *tanguera* and tango scholar. Her viewpoints give her the advantages of understanding and of overview, but the vulnerability of the exploited native; the position of the *deplacée /émigrée* reaping the benefits of a life in the North, but open to criticism from those who never left Buenos Aires. Savigliano appears to oscillate between her roles as expert ethnographer and *émigrée* in crisis, constantly attending to the wounds of these rifts in an attempt to 'decolonize' herself and to expose the colonizers still engaged in their work of appropriation and misrepresentation.

Whilst I do not believe that Savigliano would suggest that Tango should not leave the shores of Argentina, nor that only a native of Argentina should be entitled to enjoy the pleasure of the

dance, she is understandably sensitive to its symbolism and the political and commercial uses to which it is put. There is a sense that for her it is difficult to separate, as Pelinski does, *porteño* from *nomadic* tango, with their respective emphases and practices. For her it is clear that the two forms are still interwoven and as such, still 'colonized' by the persistent threads of exoticism and appropriation.

It is Savigliano's inescapable proximity to, and undeniable distance from Argentina which place her in such a paradoxical political situation. Whilst it may be true that participants are uninterested in the socio-political moorings of tango, their involvement certainly does not appropriate or exploit Tango for commercial interests, as Savigliano claims of the film-makers Potter, Parker and Saura. Participants maybe flirting with 'the dark side of desire' (2003, p. 211) but their engagement hints at attempts to construct the 'moral imperative to understand one's self in the world', which Podalsky identifies in new cosmopolitanism. Their intentions and motivations are mixed up and far-removed from those of Savigliano: the search for authenticity, freedom, romance, connection, grace and pleasure are almost impossible to disentangle from each other, and in the end seem to hold together, like Daphne's fine tissue, by imagination, will-power and a willingness to listen for the heartbeat of the Other.

CHAPTER 8: REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this concluding chapter I revisit the original purpose with which I embarked upon this study; to consider other issues which arose from the study; to ascertain whether the initial objectives were met and the research questions answered and to conclude with my overall findings with regard to the data produced and its interpretation.

My intention was to answer my own questions which arose with regard to dancing an 'exotic', social dance in a new and apparently incongruous, cultural context so far away from Buenos Aires: what does it mean to be dancing Argentine Tango in the heart of England in a place in which such a practice has no tradition? What connections, if any, does the East Midlands practice have with that in Buenos Aires? Is this the same dance? Or else what is it? Does the interest of participants demonstrate a modernist fascination with the exotic 'other' or represent a new post-modern, 21st century cultural activity? How might Argentine Tango be taught to a group of cultural outsiders without professional dance-training, in order to do other than reproduce a nostalgic idea of tradition, endorsed with a handful of signs and iconic markers intended to reinforce its provenance and roots?

I will attend to these questions in the course of this chapter.

THE HAUNTING REFRAIN OF AUTHENTICITY

There were, in particular, questions surrounding the notion of 'authenticity' which I set out to explore, because of a vague impression from the beginning regarding the participants' motivations and engagement, coupled with my teaching concerns, that there were some for whom this concept represented a driving force. Part of my task, I felt at the beginning, was to gain a wider picture of what constituted the 'authentic' Argentine Tango for those to whom it mattered so strongly.

Considering my data however, in the light of work by Pelinski (2000), Urry (1990), Olszewski (2002), Felföldi (2002) and Buckland (2001), I came to understand, that the concept of authenticity is itself relational, and as such does not identify a fixed practice (in this or any other context) nor definitive criteria: instead, evidence of authenticity is determined by

whoever is asserting or seeking it, their motivations and the context in which this occurs. It is constructed by means of expectations which are variously framed, or invented, by assumed authorities. Felföldi (2002) points out that we speak about 'authentic behaviour' and how this notion is brought up quite often in relation to social and cultural traditions, where imitation of tradition or faithfulness to traditions is the basic criteria for authenticity. He states that 'Authenticity is important for everyone' (p.110), pointing out that everyone within his field including:

Researcher, choreographer, composer, organizer of cultural events, cultural politician, singer, dancer, each has his own point of view according to which they view this phenomenon (p.111).

It is evident that the concept of authenticity holds different meanings and has different implications depending on the context in which it is used: for example the use of the word 'authentic' or 'genuine' on a Tango website suggests and reassures site-visitors that their teachers can deliver a learning experience as it would be in Buenos Aires; the assurance that the show *Tango Fire* has come 'direct' (read –'untainted/ unpolluted/ untampered with') from Buenos Aires and therefore is the real thing. Whenever it is proclaimed or sought, the assumption is that the criteria for asserting authenticity are desirable qualities, whose criteria, if met, add value to a performance, site or product, of which (certain) people approve. However, like beauty, it 'lies in the eye of the beholder'. Felföldi's questions remain to be asked: 'Who is authentic?', 'What is authentic?' 'Whose authenticity?' 'Who decides who controls the question of authenticity?' 'Who has the power of interpretation and decision?' (2002, p.124). Each must be answered separately and specifically with regard to every occasion on which the concept arises.

This is not to dismiss the topic of authenticity completely, nor to suggest that it is irrelevant to this study. Clearly a large amount of data was produced by certain participants, indicating that, for some, authenticity in the sense of maintaining certain signs and codes of behaviour of Argentine Tango from a previous period, was of utmost importance and even appeared to be a driving force for their dancing, informing not simply a style, but a whole ethos and cultural context within which they wished to perform, providing a fixity otherwise lacked by transcultural Tango.

Having described in detail and written extensively of the views of those participants for whom authenticity was a matter of some seriousness, it became clear to me that their preoccupation

with authenticity was part of a wider picture in which the creation and incorporation of meaning in their performative practice involves a greater emphasis on an imagined history than that of some others. For them the perspective which gives their performance meaning involves a backwards gaze towards a place of origin, brought back to life and given depth by certain authenticating details to be included within the experience.

Such fastidious attention to detail of such a specific variety, in order to create and fulfil their own learning and performative experience, did in fact bring a core group of participants up against others for whom those kinds of detail were less relevant. From time to time differences were voiced and dissatisfaction expressed, whereupon the finely fabricated web threatened to be ripped by incongruities or discontinuities of imagined narrative detail. Alternatively differences were dismissed or ignored by others, who did not seek such a historical perspective for their own Tango journeys and whose narratives had an alternative focus, such as that of becoming an expertly skilled dancer, or of being a widely travelled dancer with many worldly experiences and knowledge of diverse styles and dances.

In the process it also became clear that there were those for whom the quest for authenticity was irrelevant or superfluous: these participants were less interested in origins or preservation, or in the reproduction of a fixed practice, but had a different outlook on their dancing. For these the desired outcomes might be the identification with a Tango community, or the experience of *communitas*; the feeling of connection or the opportunity for creativity.

It was with the awareness of such differences that authenticity became a concern of mine at the outset, which I believed to be of importance and which undoubtedly needed to be explored, but the significance of which I had misread with regard to this context and these dancers, as ultimately became evident.

IMAGINED COMMUNITIES AND THE WORK OF THE IMAGINATION

Dance and music, Blacking (1985) maintains, can:

stimulate the imagination and help to bring coherence to the sensuous life, the 'intelligence of feeling' . . . which in turn can affect motivation, commitment, and decision making in other spheres of social life (p.65).

Listening to their voices the most significant revelation for me was to do with the role of the imagination involved in the practice of being an Argentine Tango dancer in the East Midlands. I was surprised by the data which was produced, not just as it became evident that authenticity was by no means the overriding issue I had imagined, but also by the range of interesting perspectives which emerged.

Other themes proved to be at least, if not more interesting and revealing in terms of participants' motivation and participation in such a transculturated practice: themes such as those of the performance of identity, fantasy and play; the creation of, and purposeful engagement with a cultural practice. I have considered the creation and use of spaces in around the dance: material, virtual, ritual, liminoid, social, performative spaces, as well as the invasion of bodily spaces which takes place within the dance. I have discussed psychic space and the creation of mythological spaces by means of signs and markers; the connectedness of participants and the feeling of membership of a far wider tango community brought about by the internet and the consequent impression of shared purpose, if not physical activity; the insurmountable gap between the practice of the dance and participants' imaginaries; between desire and satisfaction; the sense of compulsion or addiction produced by the narrative of the dance or by the sensation of *communitas* or tango ecstasy; and the marked sense of contrast of dancing Argentine Tango, with the practice of everyday life.

In particular, however, it is the significance of the imagination which became of major interest to me, alongside the creation of cultural space outside and beyond the reach and rules of everyday life. The evidence gleaned from this study also incidentally illuminates questions I first had regarding Salsa, several years before becoming involved with Argentine Tango, which were carried over into this work.

I have referred to work by De Certeau on space and place and the everyday; Anderson on Imagined Communities; Skinner and Bryan Turner on the construction and performance of identity; Petridou on local discourses regarding Tango in Athens; Victor Turner on ritual and the liminoid; Urry on tourism and leisure; and Appadurai on 'the work of the imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity' (1996, p.3).

Anderson's discussion of imagined communities (although directed to an analysis of the invention of 'nation-ness') led me to compare the change of consciousness brought about by 'print-capitalism' which he described as in the fifteenth century, with the sense of

connectedness so readily experienced by means of the internet and the use of social networking in the twenty-first century. There is a similar awareness or consciousness of a community of people across the globe, sharing similar interests via the internet and social networking: whilst they may never meet, individuals are nevertheless enabled to imagine themselves as members of a global community. This imagined community is in fact more readily accessible to these Tango dancers by means of electronic media than was the case as a result of the spread of print languages described by Anderson. I have described the use made of the internet generally and regularly by Argentine Tango dancers, not just in the East Midlands, but much more broadly. This connectedness and availability of information is a mechanism which makes possible the trajectory of an individual's interest from a fixed place and time to any website across the internet, and thereafter and beyond to connect in the imagination with real cities and places where Argentine Tango exists and is being performed on the ground.

The connectedness of the internet and knowing of others who also view and share YouTube clips and other material reinforces a sense of community. There are many videos of expert dancers recorded at Tango festivals or events around the world and in the background a visible audience of festival-goers, often seated in a circle on the floor, watching the performance. There are particular Tango practices which enable visiting participants to slip easily into a larger or different Tango community. This sense of belonging to a widespread community of Tango dancers provides the opportunity for an imaginative exploration of a cultural practice, often from a distance, but nonetheless with some of the immediacy and realism comparable to that of viewing or actually visiting a holiday destination – a common enough experience for people engaged in Argentine Tango in the twenty-first century. Tango websites are like signposts to virtual and vicarious experiences in mythical and imagined destinations, offering possibilities and, at the same time, reassurance that one is not alone, and that the practice is real. Seeing others watching tango reflects the viewer's own and immediate experience. By watching such clips a viewer's identity as a *tanguera/o* is thereby strengthened and confirmed, adding depth to an imaginary of transcultural Tango.

The experience is not limited simply to viewing and wishing oneself there, but spills over into more creative projections: of imagining oneself visiting that place in reality; of dancing with the same skill or connection as that dancer in a certain YouTube clip; of attending a renowned salon or milonga in Buenos Aires; of feeling the same intimacy and passion as a certain couple

seem to exude; of being in the arms of Pablo Verón and feeling what it is like to dance with him; or simply of being elsewhere, other than the here and now of everyday life.

Furthermore the imaginative landscape opened up and accompanying one's internet browsing continues in one's dancing, as evidenced by the discussions of participants. Most participants have seen clips and shows and pictures of the many aspects of Argentine Tango, and carry this experience onto the dance floor. There, what they know and have seen is incorporated, literally, into their dancing: they fantasise; shake off or switch from their everyday roles; imagine themselves elsewhere than in the garish lighting of Market Harborough Leisure Centre, or the dusty, disordered rehearsal room at the top of the students' union; they step into their tango shoes to dance a dance, in which they construct a performative identity for themselves, divorced from real time and distinct from everyday life, created around a narrative of the imagination.

Both Verdicchia and DaCosta Holton write of the psychic or imaginative journeys made by Argentine Tango dancers in Toronto and Tomás de Utrero, the Flamenco guitarist in Chicago, in order to create meaning for a transculturated practice, by making connections with, and thereby invoking an imagined community and an imagined cultural space. Very few participants in East Midlands had visited, or intended to visit Buenos Aires, but the city nevertheless represented a focus in the direction of their performance which was made evident as much by their actions as their discussions. For example, the scene-setting which took place on special *milonga* nights, involving candle-lit tables; *empañadas*; and clothes denoting a certain Tango-look. Such signposts and markers of Buenos Aires are visible, but are accompanied by invisible, private narratives by which means each individual is independently constructing the transcultural practice

There were some lucky enough to be literal 'tango tourists', undertaking physical journeys; an affirmatory pilgrimage to Buenos Aires, by which to declare and demonstrate commitment to and membership of the Tango community; a Tango cruise to Croatia; festivals in European cities or other renowned sites of Argentine Tango, with the hope of enjoying extended periods of dancing, possibly in beautiful surrounding, in the company of hundreds of Tangueros drawn together by means of the online Tango network.

It could be said that the concern to discover, replicate and reproduce 'authentic' Tango expressed by certain individuals corroborates a modernist aesthetic. There was certainly evidence of participants being positively engaged and of gaining a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction through their dancing: equally of dissatisfaction and frustration at times. However I am increasingly brought to an understanding of Argentine Tango dancing as a creative journey into a post-modern, part-imagined, part-invented, cultural space in which participants make use of the various possibilities at their disposal to produce meaning, to fix a deterritorialised and transculturated practice and, in the process, to perform identity.

Returning to Urry, there is an obvious aspect of the experience of dancing Argentine Tango which, resembles twenty-first century tourism, in the sense of embarking on journeys of one sort or another with certain expectations of what one is setting out to experience and of what is to be included in the experience for it to be satisfactory. In fact, the pursuit of Argentine Tango literally is a part of twenty-first century tourism (recalling the self-confessed 'tango tourists' of the group and the content of Cecilia Sosa's article on the contemporary tango tourist scene in Buenos Aires). Even for participants who do not travel in a literal sense, they nonetheless embark on an imaginative exploration and experience of a cultural practice, enabled by twenty-first century possibilities such as the internet, technology, the financial means and crucially, an interest, for whatever reason, in this tantalisingly exotic dance.

For most participants I am considering journeys of the imagination. To this extent it is still relevant to consider them, with Podalsky and Solanas, as 'revelatory experiences' or opportunities of 'personal, cultural revelation'. It is not simply a case of looking at a practice from another culture in another part of the world, but also of joining in and taking part. There is a clear distinction between gazing voyeuristically on the practices of the 'other' (whether on screen or in the flesh) as opposed to endeavouring to take part and dance as if one was, or might become as good, or as passionate and thereby indistinguishable from this 'other'. Watching the 'other' demonstrates fascination, exoticisation, distance: participating on a regular basis, even from afar, demonstrates other intentions, amongst which a desire to overcome distance and to approach and encounter the 'other'; to endeavour to be like them, despite, or possibly because of, history; or to perform self, regardless of the 'other', pursuing one's own imaginary narrative, whatever that may entail. Thus the experience of embodied

participation can increase awareness, understanding and experience of the world, even from a distance.

Whereas some participants' concerns with authenticity demonstrate expectations and beliefs about Argentinian Tango which they are keen to have endorsed and perpetuated, the self-critical comments by others about their own dancing indicate a wish to become more expert dancers: they suggest a hopeful narrative of improvement. The intention to continue and to improve suggests simultaneous enjoyment and dissatisfaction. The regularity with which participants continue to attend demonstrates commitment and pleasure in a practice which, for many, becomes an obsession, or addiction. Their involvement allows them to step outside of their everyday roles and to become someone else; to change their awareness of the world and their place within it; to become somewhat unusual by doing so. Part of Wieschiolek's explanation of Salsa dancing in Hamburg is as 'an expression of the individuality and exotic particularity of Germans who want to distinguish themselves from their compatriots' (2003, p.132). This echoes the desires and performance of Bosse's (2007) Latin section American ballroom dancers wishing to try out a status other than the unmarkedness of white Americans: to be someone more interesting, unusual and symbolically marked as 'other'.

Thus participants became involved in a very deep and time-consuming way, spilling out over the boundaries of liminal space, back into everyday life, leading people to alter their everyday habits and adopt new ones: dancing in the kitchen, drinking Argentinian wine, shopping for particular kinds of clothes, ordering dance shoes online, watching YouTube clips, and travelling to different towns for holidays or weekends in order to take part in Tango workshops or festivals.

Throughout this work I have drawn directly on the words and experience of the East Midlands participants as they talked to me about Tango. By means of the various processes of interviewing, video-recording, reviewing, hearing their voices, transcribing their discussions and then writing about them as clearly and honestly as possible, I have been able to share their feelings, experience, knowledge, understandings and beliefs about what it is to dance Argentine Tango in this particular, transcultural location. I learned a great deal about the people who were involved, including aspects of their lives seemingly unconnected with Tango. I was struck by the great intensity of their involvement with Tango which was shared by nearly all the participants even though their individual experiences, both positive and negative, varied

greatly. Finally I was grateful for the friendship and good-natured willingness which they displayed with regard to my research and the lengthy discussions which it entailed.

In the spirit of ethnography and a commitment to letting the data speak for itself, I tried to listen carefully to the voices of the participants articulating their own concerns and interests and allowing them to self-theorize from these in order to understand the nature of transculturated Tango. They are fragments of a story, which seems to be understood as cohesive, but which I believe to be riven with fissures and fractures and which actually hangs together by a far more fascinating system of fantasy and furtive belief, than by a more concrete or objective reality. From their words I have pieced together and presented the various narratives of the transculturated Tango dancer's imagination which imbue their practice with meaning, enriching it with creative and artistic nourishment and driving them onwards on their respective Tango journeys.

CONCLUSION: MEETING MY OBJECTIVES

The questions posed at the outset, which were my loose initial concerns prompting the whole research, appeared to cluster around the theme of authenticity. This has been addressed and answered. However, in conducting an open-ended ethnographic study in which the concerns of the participants were foregrounded, rather than my own, what I anticipated as pressing issues at the outset transpired to be less important and were superseded by other themes. I have thus tried to focus on the themes which emerged as being more significant than others for the participants themselves in the East Midlands.

Thus in this study, the subject of race did not really arise, although participants displayed cosmopolitan involvement which included an interest in cultural difference and otherness. Nor was there much reference to, or evidence of knowledge of the history, politics or economics of Argentina by the majority of participants, despite being posed the deliberately broad and open question, "What do you think about Argentina?" at the semi-structured interview stage. Apart from a very few who had real intentions to visit Buenos Aires, most participants were not planning actual, physical journeys to the city.

Answers regarding the experience of dancing Tango so far from Buenos Aires emerged as a result of the overall consideration of the practice in the East Midlands. The relationship of participants with Buenos Aires became apparent not simply from their direct comments and knowledge of the place, but in the evident directionality of their dancing practice.

I did not set out not to address the history or origins of Tango; nor did I specifically deal with Tango music or lyrics: these areas have been previously addressed by other researchers. In any case most participants (apart from three) whilst declaring their love for the music, largely did not refer by name to bands, musicians, tracks or lyrics. This is absolutely not to imply that the East Midlands participants were ignorant of or insensitive to the music: the meaning of the lyrics was generally understood to be plaintive and melancholy, although most participants were unable to actually understand them. It points, however, to a new way of engaging and listening to music, referred to by Pelinski, which has come about as a result of the emergence of the category of music known as World Dance.

I referred to two new works on Tango by Skinner (2014) and Tateo (2014) in Chapter 2: Skinner's work is an anthropological study of expectation, imagination and anticipation amongst Tango dancers on a dance holiday in France. Whilst the context of his study was in a place removed from the dancers' normal milieu, on literal journeys to France as opposed to the largely imaginative journeys of the East Midlands participants, they nevertheless produced imaginary narratives and constructions of meaning regarding their dancing which bore remarkable resemblances to those of my participants.

Tateo's psychological study of Tango-dancers is an experimental means of dialogic analysis, in which he explores the varying I-perspectives of dancers whilst dancing. The 'gaze', about which both Tateo and Savigliano write, is active, even in the absence of an audience, being assumed by each of the dancers turned on themselves in a continually shifting oscillation of perspective and persona. Once again imagination appears crucial to the performance of dance: one is not simply engaged in a particular kind of physical movement, to a certain genre of music, but is simultaneously involved in the dynamic psychological activities of reflexivity, projection and the creative construction of self.

Finally, sociologist and Tango-dancer Kathy Davis (2015) also produced a study using ethnographic methodology as this thesis was being concluded. Using her personal involvement

of dancing Tango in Amsterdam and Buenos Aires, Davis explores the significance and contradictions of the transcultural phenomenon and 'cultural imaginary' of Argentine Tango which is currently practiced by an increasing number of people around the world in passionate encounters across many kinds of borders. All three of these works therefore encompass themes which stimulated my own research interests and which are explored in this thesis.

POPPY'S STORY

There was one dancer, whom I did not interview, but with whose narrative of the imagination I wish to conclude. Poppy was a young dancer who had started to dance at Market Harborough whilst finishing her A-levels, but soon moved away to go to university elsewhere, only returning to dance in the East Midlands during vacations. Nevertheless she had been 'hooked' from her very first lesson and quickly sought out Argentine Tango opportunities whilst at university, accruing Tango-miles on diverse dance floors and developing her dancing skills.

Poppy was studying English and inadvertently revealed a vivid imaginary which accompanied her Tango dancing. She was a keen dancer who regularly linked up with an adopted 'tango family' to go to workshops in Cambridge and Berlin, but had not however, visited Buenos Aires at that stage. (She may well have done so since.) Her fascination with the place was, however, clearly evident from the nature of the plot and the description in a piece of creative writing about dancing Tango in Buenos Aires, which she produced at university. Her story is thus an entirely fictional and imaginative piece of evidence which nevertheless manifests the nature of Poppy's imaginary and her engagement with Tango. In the absence of the opportunity to record a discussion with her in person, I was amazed at the way in which Poppy's writing, despite being 'fictional', resonated with so many of the themes expressed by other participants.

The story was entitled 'The Tango Dancer and the Cyclical Night' and included detailed references to the journey of a female dancer first by metro, and then on foot along the streets of Buenos Aires to a *milonga* where she dances until dawn. Not only does Poppy name the metro station and the streets, but she also depicts the interior of a salon, the 'Cochabamba' in the well-known district of San Telmo in Buenos Aires. The extent of detail included in her

description of the place, such as ‘the gold rimmed portraits’, ‘the antique chandeliers . . .down low, breathing a hazy yellow across the floor’, ‘the 1920’s faded, peeling walls, the 1980’s sound system’, ‘the floor . . . packed with fifty, maybe sixty couples moving anticlockwise’ all demonstrate Poppy’s fascination with Tango in Buenos Aires and the amount of online research which she must have undertaken in order to write her story. The dancer, whether Argentinian or foreign, is situated clearly in Buenos Aires. Poppy’s attention to detail reveals that, for her as writer, the city is significant in her imagination, a mythical space or place of pilgrimage which, furthermore, travelling back in time with 1920’s peeling walls, antique chandeliers and 1980’s sound system.

Narrated in the third person, her story clearly places the dancer, seemingly someone very like herself, in the shoes of the central character and relates the whole story from her perspective. How else would she be so intimate with the dancer’s thoughts and feelings? Early on she reveals the dancer’s intentions: ‘This is why she came out . . . She is seeking to escape life as she knows it, to break free from the perpetual pressures of reality.’ Struck by the music of Di Sarli in the entrance:

She anticipates the atmosphere of the dance floor even before moving up the stairs. It is light and airy just here; there is endless space. She savours the moment, though she knows it so well – that feeling of floating between two lives. The grim streets are behind her, but she has not yet fully entered the smudged compactness of the dimly lit, heady haven above . . . she braces herself to open the door at the top of the flight. Di Sarli raises his voice in welcome as she enters, initiating her into a new world.

Already by this point in the story there is a familiar theme, somewhat similar to that of Kirsten’s imaginary, in which the dancer wishes to leave her everyday life behind and deliberately seeks an escape into a different world. There is a clear statement that this is her intention, followed by description of the transition between the two separate worlds: a hiatus between the ‘grim streets’ and the ‘heady haven’ of Tango; between harsh reality and a euphoric, mythological space.

Once settled inside, seeing the couples on the dance floor, she ‘becomes transfixed watching as they touch one another’s souls, dance out emotions hidden deep’. The dancer then shares a skilful dance to a D’Arienzo number with her old teacher, in which:

The beat is fast; she is led in minute circles, forced to resort to intricate footwork. She sees the steps in monochrome; it is obvious where to place each foot. There is only

ever room, ever time to go with her instinct – and her instinct is always right . . . She smiles outwardly, enjoying the freedom of movement, the humour of the dance they are creating together.

Sometime later ‘she has had some wonderful dances – but she has not had *the* dance. She has not discovered gold.’ That is still to come. It is what every dancer yearns for. It is the point of the story.

He is a stranger . . . She raises her right hand, blindly, until it finds his . . . Elbows connected, her left, his right, she tentatively lays a hand on his shoulder, hardly touching, yet making that reassuring contact that she is there. . . . They fit each other well. She anticipates heaven . . . She feels her partner’s torso fill with the rhythm and instinctively starts to fit in with him, to feel the music in the same way as he does. His weight shifts, indiscernible to anyone watching . . . She is merging with him and learning what it’s like to share a body. . . .It is impossible to tell who is following whom.

The couple embrace and that elusive, but deeply satisfying feeling of connection voiced by so many participants, promises ‘heaven’. Whilst not obvious to an onlooker the dancers are ‘learning what it’s like to share a body’, evolving into that mythological being of Tango with two hearts and four legs, so that their movement becomes impossible to attribute to either individual. The golden light of the chandeliers raises her:

from the tribulations of everyday life, transforming [her] and her partner into great lovers, or heroes for a few precious moments. They can be anyone; the tango has shown them how.

Once again the creative possibility of role play or fantasy emerges as a desirable aspect of the Tango, enabling the construction and performance of new or imaginary identities on the dance floor.

Finally the band starts to play

the first teasing notes of ‘La Cumparsita’¹, signifying the last dance of the night. The melody spreads across the floor and smudges with the cosmos, playing on repeat in her mind . . . they reel together through space and time and inevitability.

¹ *La Cumparsita* is a Tango first composed as a march by Gerardo Matos Rodriguez in 1916 and subsequently adapted in the same year by Roberto Firpo, with lyrics by Pascuale Contursi and Enrique Maroni in 1924. *La Cumparsita* is possibly the most well-known piece of Tango music and traditionally it is the last song to be played at a *milonga*, signifying the end of the evening’s dancing and supplying yet another reference to Buenos Aires as the origin of Tango.

As the music ends:

she grips her partner's arm in affirmation of a secret and he fades into the throng . . . she reclaims her bag, moves into the hallway, anticipates the thud of the door as it closes behind her and edges out onto the street.

The last dance has been gold, but the door to the boundless world of Tango 'thuds' inevitably shut behind her as she re-enters the early morning light of the everyday world. 'She has travelled full circle in an evening and she will be back for more, because the tango is perpetual, for always, *'para siempre'*.'

Thus the thematic thread of Poppy's story expresses once again, the bittersweet mixture of joy and sadness, desire and loss, which guarantees the compulsive, addictive return of a tango dancer in search of gold. The pleasure of a perfect dance is always tinged by transience and loss at the end, such that memory continually conjures moments from the past into the present. As Poppy writes:

the tango holds a secret. It is opulence and it is decay. It is the beauty of a tainted body, stained irrevocably with the wrinkles of humanity . . . It reeks of smoke, of sweat, of the sweetest gardenias; and it resounds in the heart like a knife in a wound, like a bullet in the chest, like the loss of one's first great love.

I have chosen to conclude with Poppy's story because, whilst fictional, it weaves together in a single, seamless piece, the many themes voiced by the participants during the course of this research. There is the insistence of memory which drives the compulsive return to seek 'gold', the feeling of a perfect tango moment; the embrace and the search for connection with another person, to become one being, moving together in response to the music; the themes of desire and loss; of addiction and searching; the contrasting feelings of joy and disillusionment; the possibility of enacting different selves on the dance floor, of fantasy and role play; of journeys into other worlds, to liminal spaces removed from the everyday; the studied construction of mythical spaces by means of symbolic signs and markers; seedy origins; time passing in long drawn-out nights; the challenge of acquiring the particular physical skills and aesthetic vocabulary associated with Argentine Tango; a creative opportunity in which to encounter strangers and dance artistically and intimately with no expectations or demands beyond those of a *tanda* on a dance floor.

No single person alluded to all of these themes, yet surprisingly, in her entirely imaginative narrative, the youngest, and possibly the best, dancer of the group succeeded in incorporating

elements of almost all the imaginaries gradually drawn out and carefully pieced together from the other participants.

What remains clear, in the end, is that Argentine Tango continues to hold a tantalising appeal, luring participants to join in the first place. There remains something ‘unattainable’ and as such ‘fascinating’ to use words provided by participants in my study, which suggests an old-fashioned exoticism. However, aside from the neurotic quest for authenticity pursued by some, and the fascination with the cultural other demonstrated by others, it would seem that participants are embarking on an imaginative journey, in some cases elevated to the status of pilgrimage, as a means of constructing and performing identity. The possibility of escaping the everyday and opening up a space for cultural creation provided participants with the opportunity to explore and re-invent themselves, by dancing in a very different, non-English way with strangers in an incongruous cultural context. For those unconcerned with the meticulous detail demanded of authenticity, many were there to socialise, relax, learn new physical skills and enjoy dancing with a partner to beautiful music. Even for these, there was nevertheless a sense of being able to engage in a different kind of activity, with creative and artistic possibilities in which one might pretend to be someone a little bit different, or enact a different part of oneself, if only for the space of an evening a week or a Saturday afternoon.

REFERENCES

- Adler, P. A. & Adler, P. (1987) *Membership Roles in Field Research*. California: Sage.
- Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Archetti, E. (1999) *Masculinities*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Baetens, J. and Van Gelder, H. (eds.) (2007) *Critical Realism in Contemporary Art: Around Alan Sekula's Photography*. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press.
- Bakka, E. (2002) 'Whose Dances? Whose Authenticity?' in Felföldi, L. and Buckland, T.J. (eds.) *Authenticity, Whose Tradition?* European Folklore Institute: Budapest.
- Barrionuevo Anzaldi, F. (2012a) *Politischer Tango. Intellektuelle Kämpfe um Tanzkultur im Zeichen des Peronismus*. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.
- _____ (2012b) 'The new tango era in Buenos Aires: The transformation of a popular culture into a touristic "experience Economy."' Conference paper: *Second ISA Forum of Sociology, Social Justice and Democratization*, Buenos Aires, Argentina 01-04 August 2012, (pp. not known).
- Barthes, R. (1990) (tr. Miller, R.) *The Pleasure of the Text*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barton, B. (2006) *Stripped: Inside the Lives of Exotic Dancers*, New York and London: New York University Press.
- Bell, C. (1992, 2009) *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Blacking, J. (1985), 'Movement, Dance, Music and the Venda Girls' Initiation Cycle', in Spencer, P. (ed.) *Society and the Dance: The Social Anthropology of Process and Performance*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Boas, F. (1943) 'Recent anthropology', *Science*, 1998, pp.311-14,334-7.
- Boggs, V. (ed.) (1992) *Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and the Evolution of Salsa in New York City*. London: Greenwood Press.

- Boncher, P. (2010) 'Everywhere and Nowhere: A Personal Quest for Tango in Buenos Aires,' *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol.51, Issue 1, pp.195-203.
- Borges, J. L. (2001) 'A History of the Tango' in *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922-1986*. London: Penguin Books. [First published 1955 as 'Historia del tango' in *Evaristo Carriego*.]
- Bosse, J. (2007) 'Whiteness and the Performance of Race in American Ballroom Dance', *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 120, no. 475, pp.19-47.
- _____ (2008), 'Salsa Dance and the Transformation of Style: an Ethnographic Study of Movement and Meaning in a Cross-Cultural Context', *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 40, no.1, Summer 2008, pp.45-64.
- Bourdieu, P. (1979) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice (1984) Oxford: Routledge Kegan & Paul.
- _____ (1965) *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (In English (1990)).
- Browning, B. (1999) *Samba: resistance in motion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Buber, M. (1996) *I and Thou*. (Trans. Walter Kaufmann). New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Buckland, T. J. (ed.) (1999) *Dance in the Field, Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- _____ (2001) 'Dance Authenticity and Cultural Memory: The Politics of Embodiment' *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 33. pp.1-16.
- _____ (2002) 'The "Owd Pagan Dance": Ritual, Enchantment, and an Enduring Intellectual Paradigm', *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement*, Vol.11 No.4 and 12, No.1.
- _____ (ed.) (2006) *Dancing From Past to Present, Nation, Culture, Identities*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- _____ (2010) 'Shifting Perspectives on Dance Ethnography' pp.335-343, in Carter, A. and O'Shea, J. (eds.) *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (2nd edition) Oxford and New York: Routledge.

- _____ (2011) *Society Dancing: Fashionable Bodies in England, 1870-1920*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- _____ (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Castro, D. (1998) 'Carlos Gardel and the Argentine Tango: The Lyric of Social Irresponsibility and Male Inadequacy' in Washabaugh, W. (ed.) *The Passion of Music and Dance: Body, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Cazemajou, A. (2011) 'Shifting Positions: From the Dancer's Posture to the Researcher's Posture.' in Davida, D. (ed.) (2011) *Fields in Motion: Ethnography in the Worlds of Dance*. Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Chaplin, E. (1994) *Sociology and Visual Representations*. London: Routledge.
- Clifford, J. (1988) *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, J. & Marcus, M. (eds.) (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collier, J. and Collier, M. (1986) *Visual Anthropology: Photography as Research Method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Collier, S. et al. (1995) *!Tango!: The Dance, The Song, The Story*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Collins, J., Selina H., & Appignanesi, R. (eds.) (2006) *Introducing Heidegger*. Cambridge: Icon Books.
- Cowan, J. K. (1990) *Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- DaCosta Holton, K. (1998), "Like Blood in Your Mouth: Topographies of Flamenco Voice and Pedagogy in Diaspora", *Text and Performance Quarterly* 18, pp. 300-318.

- Daniel, Y. (1995) *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- David, A. (2013) 'Ways of Moving and Thinking: The Emplaced Body as a Tool for Ethnographic Research' in Harrop, P. and Njaradi, D. (eds.) *Performance and Ethnography: Dance, Drama, Music*. Newcastle –upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Davida, D. (ed.) (2011) *Fields in Motion: Ethnography in the Worlds of Dance*. Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Davis, K. (2015) *Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters in a Globalizing World*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Dankworth, L.E. & David, A.R. (eds.) (2014) *Dance Ethnography and Global Perspectives: Identity, Embodiment and Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Delgado, C.F. & Muñoz, J.E. (eds.) (1997) *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Del Priore, O. & Amuchástegui, I. (1998) *Cien Tangos fundamentals*. Buenos Aires: Aguilar.
- Denniston, C. (2007) *The Meaning of Tango; The Story of the Argentinian Dance*. London: Portico.
- Desmond, J. C. (ed.) (1997, second edition 2012) *Meaning in Motion, New Cultural Studies of Dance*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- _____ (ed.) (2001) *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on and off the Stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dils, A., & Cooper Albright, A. (eds.) (2001) *moving history/ dancing cultures: A Dance History Reader*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- Dodds, S. (2011) *Dancing on the Canon: Embodiments of Value in Popular Dance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dreher, J. & Figueroa-Dreher, S. (2009) 'Soñando todos el mismo sueño. Zur rituellen Überschreitung kultureller Grenzen im Tango' in Klein, Gabriele, (Hg.) *Tango in Translation: Tanz Zwischen Medien, Kulturen, Kunst and Politik*. Bielefeld, Germany:

- Dujovne, B. E. (2011) *In Strangers' Arms: The Magic of The Tango*. Jefferson, South Carolina: MacFarland.
- Dyck, N. & Archetti, E. (eds.) (2003) *Sport, Dance and Embodied Identities*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Edgar, I. (2004) *Guide to Imagework: Imagination-Based Research Methods*. London: Routledge.
- Emmison, M. & Smith, P. (2012) *Researching the Visual*. London: Sage. (First published 2000).
- Ericksen, J. (2012) *Dance With Me: Ballroom Dancing and the Promise of Intimacy*. New York: New York University Press.
- Fabian, J. (1983) *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Featherstone, M. (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage.
- Feldman, H. (2006) 'Stepping out of Bounds: the Tragedy of the Milonguita in the Tango-Song', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 March, pp. 1-15.
- Felföldi, L. (2002) 'Authenticity and Culture' in László Felföldi and Buckland, T. J. (eds.) *Authenticity: Whose Tradition?* pp.110-129. Budapest: European Folklore Institute.
- Ferrer, H. (1970) *El Libro del Tango: Arte Popular de Buenos Aires*. Buenos Aires: Ossorio-Vargas.
- Fetterman D.M. (2009) *Ethnography: Step-by-Step* (Third edition). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Flick, Uwe (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Foley, C. (2001) 'Perceptions of Irish Step Dance: National, Global and Local', *Dance Research Journal*, Vol 33 No.1, pp.34-45.
- _____ (2011) 'The Irish *Céilí* : A Site for Constructing, Experiencing and Negotiating a Sense of Community and Identity', *Dance Research*, Vol. 29, No.1 pp43-60.
- _____ (2013) *Step Dancing in Ireland: Culture and History*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate

- Foster, S.L. (ed.) (2009, 2011 paperback) *Worlding Dance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- France, M. (1998) *Bad Times in Buenos Aires*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Frosch, J. D. (1999) 'Dance Ethnography: Tracing the Weave of Dance in the Fabric of Culture', in Horton Fraleigh, S. & Hanstein, P. (eds.) *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*. London: Dance Books, pp.249-280.
- Frúhauf, T. (2009) 'Raqs Gothique: Decolonizing Belly Dance', *The Drama Review*, Vol.53 No.3 (T203) Fall pp.117-138.
- Geertz, C. (1997) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. (Reprinted 2010).
- Gell, A. 'Style and Meaning in Umeda Dance' in Spencer, P. (ed.) *Society and the Dance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Giddens, A. (2002) *Runaway World: How Globalisation is reshaping our lives*. London: Profile Books.
- Gift, V. (2009) *Tango: A History of Obsession*. Booksurge Publishing.
- Gilroy, P. (1997) 'Exer(or)cising Power: Black Bodies in the Black Public Sphere', in Thomas, H. (1997) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Gobello, J. (1999) *Breve Historia Crítica del Tango*. Buenos Aires: Corregidor.
- Gobello, J. and Bossio, J.A. (1994) *Tango, Letras y Letristas. Vol. 5*. Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra.
- Goertzen C. and Azzi, M.S. (1999) 'Globalization and the Tango' in *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 31, pp.67-76.
- Gore, G. (1997) 'The Beat Goes On: Trance, Dance and Tribalism in Rave Culture', in Thomas, H. (ed.) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- _____ (1999) 'Textual Fields: Representation in Dance Ethnography' in Buckland, T. J. (ed.) *Dance in the Field: Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*. London: Macmillan.
- Gorin, N. (2001) (Trans. Gonzalez, F.) *Astor Piazzolla: A Memoir*. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press.

- Grasseni, C. (2004). 'Video and ethnographic knowledge: Skilled vision and the practice of breeding'. In Pink, S., Kurti, L., & Afonso, A.I. (eds.) *Working images* London: Routledge.
- Grimes, R. L. (2013, second edition) *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*. United States: University of South Carolina Press.
- Grosz, E. (2001) *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Boston: M.I.T Press.
- Hahn, T. (2007) *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Routledge. (Second edition 1995. Third edition 1997).
- Hanna, J. L. (1983) *The Performer-Audience Connection: Emotion to Metaphor in Dance and Society*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hannerz, U. (1992) *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*. Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press.
- Hanstein, P. (1999) 'From Idea to Research Proposal: Balancing the Systematic and Serendipitous', in Horton Fraleigh, S. & Hanstein, P. (eds.) *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*. London: Dance Books.
- Harper, D. (2002) 'Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation', *Visual Studies*, vol.17, no. 1, pp.13-26.
- Harrop, P. and Njaradi, D. (eds.) (2013) *Performance and Ethnography: Dance, Drama, Music*. Newcastle –upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Harss, M. (2006) 'Let's Dance.' Review of *Tango: The Art History of Love*, by Robert Farris Thompson. *The Nation*, 18 September, pp.36-40.
- Holland, B. (2004) 'Passion for Tango: West Coast and East', *New York Times*, 3 March, Section E, p.1.
- Horton Fraleigh, S. & Hanstein, P. (eds.) (1999) *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*. London: Dance Books.

- Hughes-Freeland, F. (1998) *Ritual, Performance, Media*. London: Routledge.
- _____ (1999) 'Dance on Film: Strategy and Serendipity' in Buckland, T. J. (ed.) (1999) *Dance in the Field, Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Jordan, S. & Thomas, H. (1997) 'Let's Face the Music – and Dance?: Torvill and Dean – Champagne on Ice' in Thomas, H. (ed.) (1997) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Kaepler, A.L. (1999) 'The Mystique of Fieldwork' in Buckland, T.J. (ed.) *Dancing in the Field*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- _____ (2000) 'Dance Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance', *Dance Research Journal*, Summer 2000, vol.32, no.1, p.116-118
- Keali'inohomoku, J. (1970) 'An Anthropologist looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance' in Dils, A. & Cooper Albright, A. (eds.) *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press.
- Klein, G. (Hg.) (2009) *Tango in Translation: Tanz Zwischen Medien, Kulturen, Kunst and Politik*. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.
- Knauth, D. C. (2005) *Discourses of Authenticity in the Argentine Tango Community of Pittsburgh*. MA Dissertation: University of Pittsburgh.
- Kringelbach, H. N., & Skinner, J. (eds.) (2012) *Dancing Cultures: Globalization, Tourism and Identity in the Anthropology of Dance*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Leider, E.W. (2003) *Dark Lover: The Life and Death of Rudolf Valentino*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. London: Faber and Faber.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1961) (trans. John Russell) *Tristes Tropiques*. New York: Criterion.
- Lloyd, A.L. (1956) *Dances of Argentina*. London: Max Parrish.
- Lomax, A. (ed.) (1968) 'Dance Style and Culture' pp. 222-273 in *Folk Song Style and Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Luker, M.J. (2007) 'Tango Renovación: On the Uses of Music History in Post-Crisis Argentina', *Latin American Music Review*, Spring-Summer, Vol. 28, 1, pp.68-93.

- _____ (2009) *The Tango Machine: Musical Practice and Cultural Policy in Post-Crisis Buenos Aires*. PhD thesis, Columbia University.
- Malinowski, B. (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Malnig, J. (ed.) (2009) *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy, Sham, Shake: A Social and Popular Dance Reader*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Manning, E. (2007) *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Matamoro, B. (1982) *La Ciudad del Tango*. Buenos Aires: Galerna.
- McGuigan, J. (ed.) (1997) *Cultural Methodologies*. London: Sage.
- McMains, J. (2006) *Glamour Addiction: Inside the American Ballroom Dance Industry*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan Press.
- _____ (2009), 'Dancing Latin/ Latin Dancing: Salsa and Dancesport,' pp.302-322, in Malnig, J. (ed.) *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy, Sham, Shake: A Social and Popular Dance Reader*, Urbana and Chicago, US: University of Illinois Press.
- _____ (2010) 'Reality Check: Dancing with the Stars and the American Dream', in Carter A. and O'Shea, J. (eds.) *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (2nd edition) Oxford and New York: Routledge, pp.261-272.
- _____ (2015) *Spinning Mambo into Salsa: Caribbean Dance in Global Commerce*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- McRobbie, A. (1984) 'Dance and Social Fantasy' in McRobbie, A. and Nava M. (eds.) *Gender and Generation*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Moore, A. (1936) *Ballroom Dancing*. London: Pitman Publishing. Reprint (Tenth edition) London: A & C Black Publishers, 2002.
- Ness, S. A. (1992) *Body, Movement and Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

_____ (2004) 'Being a Body in a Cultural Way: Understanding the Cultural in the Embodiment of Dance' pp.123-144 in Thomas, H. and Amit, J. (eds.) *Cultural Bodies: Ethnography and Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Nor, Mohn Anis Md (2002) 'Dancing with Dance Masters: Shifting Roles and Contexts of Dance Research in Malaysia'. *Dance and Society: Dancer as a Cultural Performer*. 22nd Symposium of the ICTM /Study group on Ethnochoreology. Budapest: Akadémiai Mack.

Novack, C. (1990) *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

_____ (1993) 'Ballet, Gender and Cultural Power', in Thomas, H. (ed.) *Dance, Gender and Culture*. London: Macmillan.

O'Connor, B. (1997) 'Safe Sets: Women, Dance and "Communitas"', in Thomas, H. (ed.) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Olszewski, B. (2008) 'El Cuerpo del Baile: The Kinetic and Social Fundaments of Tango,' *Body and Society*, Vol.14 (2), pp.63-81.

Osumare, H. (2002) 'Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body', *Dance Research Journal*, Vol.34. No. 2 (Winter) pp.30-45.

_____ (2008) *The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip-hop: Power Moves*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pampin, M. (ed.) (1979) *La Historia del Tango*. Buenos Aires: Corregidor.

Papapavlou, M. (2001) 'Flamenco Dance and the negotiation of Oral History', in Alkis Raftis (ed.) *Dance and Oral History: Proceedings of the 15th International Congress on Dance Research*, pp. 41-52.

_____ (2003) 'The City as Stage', in 'Flamenco in Andalusian Culture', *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe*, Vol.3, No.2, Fall, pp.14-24.

Pelinski, R. (compilador) (2000) *El Tango Nómade: Ensayos sobre la Díaspora del Tango*. Corregidor: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Pellarolo, S. (2008) 'Queering Tango: Glitches in the Hetero-National Matrix of a Liminal Cultural Production', *Theatre Journal*, Washington: Vol.6 Issue 3, October, pp.409-432.

- Peterson, R. A. (2000) *Constructing Effective Questionnaires*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Petridou, E. (2009) 'Experiencing Tango as it goes global: Passion, Ritual and Play' in Klein, Gabriele (Hg.) (2009), *Tango in Translation: Tanz Zwischen Medien, Kulturen, Kunst and Politik*, pp.57-74. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.
- Pinet, C. 'Translating Tango: Sally Potter's Lessons', *Romance Notes*, Vol.XLVI, No.3. Spring 2006.
- Pink, S. (2007) *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London: Sage. (Third edition 2013).
- _____ (2009) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. London :Sage. (Second edition 2015).
- Podalsky, L (2002) "'Tango like Scotch is best taken straight': Cosmopolitan Tastes and Bodies out of Place', *Studies in Latin American Culture*, Vol.21, 2002, pp.131-154.
- Press, C.M. (2002) *The Dancing Self: Creativity, Modern Dance, Self Psychology and Transformative Education*. New Jersey: Hampton Press.
- Poosson, S.B. (2004) 'Entre Tango y Payada: the Expression of Blacks in 19th Century Argentina' in *Confluencia*, Vol.20, No.1 (Fall) pp.87-99.
- Rabinov, P. (ed.) (1986) *The Foucault Reader*. UK: Peregrine Books.
- Renta, P. (2004) 'Salsa Dance: Latino/a History in Motion', *CENTRO Journal*, Vol. XVI, No.2, pp.139-157.
- Reed, S. (1998) 'The Politics and Poetics of Dance', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 27, pp.503-32.
- _____ (2009) *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual and Politics in Sri Lanka*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Ronstróm, O. (1999) 'It take two - or more - To Tango: Researching Traditional Music/Dance Interrelations' in Buckland, T. J. (ed.) (1999) *Dance in the Field, Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Sachs, C. (1937 [1933]) *World History of the Dance*. New York: W.W. Norton (Reprinted 1963).

- Salas, H. (1986) *El Tango*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta Argentina.
- Salessi, J. (1997) 'Medics, Crooks, and Tango Queens: The National Appropriation of a Gay Tango,' in Delgado, C. F. and. Muñoz, J.E. (eds.) *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*, pp. 141-74.
- Savigliano, M. E. (1995) *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press.
- _____ (1998) 'From Wallflowers to Femmes Fatales: Tango and the Performance of Passionate Femininity' in Washabaugh, W. (ed.) *The Passion of Music and Dance*, pp.103-1220. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- _____ (2003) *Angora Matta: Fatal Acts of North-South Translation*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- _____ (2009a) 'Worlding Dance and Dancing out there in the World' in Foster, S.L., *Worlding Dance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- _____ (2009b) 'Irreverent Tangos: Dancing 'Love' and the Politics of Parody' in Klein, G. (Hg.) *Tango in Translation: Tanz Zwischen Medien, Kulturen, Kunst and Politik*. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.
- Schechner, R. (1985) *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Scolieri, P. (2008) 'Global/Mobile: Re-orienting Dance and Migration Studies', *Dance Research Journal* 40/2, Winter, v-xx.
- Sekula, A. (1982) 'On the Invention of Photographic Meaning' in V. Burgin (ed.) *Thinking Photography*. London: Macmillan.
- Seyler, E. (2008) 'Revealing the African Roots of Argentine Tango.' Review of *Tango: The Art History of Love*, by Robert Farris Thompson. *Dance Chronicle*, Vol.31, pp.104-112.
- Shay, A. (2001) in 'Dialogues: Dance Ethnography: where do we go from here?' *Dance Research Journal*, 33/1 Summer, p.90-94.
- Silvester, V. (2005) *Modern Ballroom Dancing: all the steps you need to get you Dancing*. London: Ebury Publishing.

- Skinner, J. (2007) 'The Salsa Class: A complexity of Globalization, Cosmopolitans and Emotions', in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, Vol.14, pp.485-506.
- _____ (2015) 'Tango Heart and Soul: Solace, Suspension, and the Imagination in the Dance Tourist' in Harris, M & Rapport, N. (eds) *The Imagination: A Universal Process of Knowledge*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Sklar, D. (1997) 'In Memoriam: Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull, a.k.a. Cynthia Novack (September 6, 1947 – September 27, 1996)' *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring) pp.111-119.
- _____ (2000) 'Reprise: On Dance Ethnography', *Dance Research Journal* Vol.32, 32, 1 Summer, 70-81.
- _____ (2001) *Dancing with the Virgin: Body and Faith in the Fiesta of Tortugas*. New Mexico, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- _____ (2001) 'Dialogues: Dance Ethnography: where do we go from here?' *Dance Research Journal*, Vol.33/1 Summer, pp.91-92.
- Slater, D. (1995) 'Domestic Photography and Digital Culture' in Lister, M. (ed.) *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Solomon, T. (2009) 'Berlin-Frankfurt-Istanbul: Turkish Hip-Hop in Motion' *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12(3) pp.305-327.
- Sosa, C, (2005) "Caras Extrañas", *Pagina 12*, RADAR, Sunday 19th July, 2005.
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-2321-2005-06-19.html>
- Spencer, P. (ed.) (1985) *Society and the Dance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- St John, G. (2010) *The Local Scenes and Global Culture of Psytrance*. New York: Routledge.
- Stavělová, D. (2005) 'The Dancing People: Status, Identity, Integrity'. *Dance And Society. Dance As A Cultural Performer. Re Appraising Our Past, Moving Into The Future*, 40th Anniversary of Study Group on Ethnochoreology of International Council on Traditional Music. Dance and Society. 22nd Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology, s. 41-52 Akadémiai Kiadó. Budapest.

- Steingress, G. (1998) 'The Comparative History of Flamenco, Tango, and Rebetika' in Washabaugh, W. (ed.) *The Passion of Music and Dance: Body, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Strecker, I. (1997) 'The Turbulence of Images: On imagery, media and ethnographic discourse' in *Visual Anthropology*, Vol.9 3-4, pp.207-227.
- Targhetta *et al.* (2013) Argentine tango: Another behavioral addiction?' *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 2(3), pp.179-186.
- Tateo, L. (2014) 'The Dialogical Dance: Self, Identity Construction, Positioning and Embodiment in Tango Dancers' in *Journal of Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, Vol.48,33, p.298-321.
- Taylor, J. (1998) *Paper Tangos*. Durham: Duke University.
- Thomas, H. (1993) *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- _____ (1995) *Dance, Modernity and Culture: Explorations in the Sociology of Dance*. London: Routledge.
- _____ (ed.) (1995) *Dance, Gender and Culture*,
- _____ (ed.) (1997) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Thomas, H. and Ahmed J. (eds.) (2004) *Cultural Bodies: Ethnography and Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Thomas, H. and Miller, N. (1997) 'Ballroom Blitz', in Thomas, H. (ed.) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Thompson, R. F. (2005) *Tango: The Art History of Love*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Tobin, J. (1998) 'Tango and the Scandal of Homosocial Desire' in Washabaugh, W. (ed.) (1998) *The Passion of Music and Dance: Body, Gender and Sexuality*, Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Tomlinson, J. (1999) *Globalization and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Turner, B. (1996) *The Body and Society*. (Second Edition) London: Sage.

- Turner, D. (2006) *A Passion for Tango*. Dingley, Leicestershire: Dingley Press.
- Turner, V. (1969) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- _____ (1982) *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications.
- _____ (2002) 'Passages, Margins and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas' in Vincent, J., *The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography, Theory and Critique*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Tyler, S. (1978) *The Said and the Unsaid: Mind, Meaning, and Culture*. New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press.
- Urry, J. (1990) *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.
- _____ (1995) *Consuming Places*. London: Routledge.
- Van Zile, J. (2001) 'Dance and Korea's National Treasure System' in *Perspectives on Korean Dance*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- Verdicchia, G. (2009) 'Tango's Cross-Cultural Dance', *Canadian Theatre Review* 139, Summer, pp.17-24.
- Viladrich, A. (2006) 'Neither Virgins nor Whores: Tango Lyrics and Gender Representations in the Tango World', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol.39, No.2, pp.272-293.
- Vincent, J. (2002) *The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography, Theory and Critique*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ward, A. (1993) 'Dancing in the Dark: Rationalism and the Neglect of Social Dance', in Thomas, H. (ed.) *Dance, Gender and Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- _____ (1997) 'Dancing around Meaning (and the Meaning around Dance)' in Thomas, H. (ed.) *Dance in the City*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Washabaugh, W. (ed.) (1998) *The Passion of Music and Dance: Body, Gender and*

Sexuality. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Waxer, Lise (ed.) (2002) *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Global Meaning in Latin Popular Music*. London: Routledge.

Wieschhiolek, H. (2003) "'Ladies, Just Follow His Lead!': Salsa, Gender and Identity', in Archetti, E. and Dyck, N. (eds.) *Sport, Dance and Embodied Identities*. Oxford: Berg.

Williams, D. (1997) *Ten Lectures on Theories of the Dance*, Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

_____ (1999) 'Fieldwork,' in Buckland, T.J. (1999) *Dancing in the Field*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Wolcott, H. F. (1999) *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*. Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press; London: Sage.

Zukin, S. (ed.) (1995) *The Cultures of Cities*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.

INTERNET REFERENCES

Politischer Tango. Intellektuelle Kämpfe um Tanzkultur im Zeichen des Peronismus.

<https://uni-hamburg.academia.edu/FrancoBarrionuevoAnzaldi/Books>

(accessed 28.03.2015).

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (2003) *The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Available at

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/intangible-cultural-heritage> (accessed 27/08/2014).

UNESCO, *Protecting our Heritage and Fostering Creativity*. Available at

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity> (accessed 27/08/2014).

Leicestershire Statistics and Research: Leicester. <http://www.lsr-online.org/leicester.html>

(accessed 1.10.2014).

Leicestershire Statistics and Research: Harborough. [http://www.lsr-](http://www.lsr-online.org/harborough.html)

[online.org/harborough.html](http://www.lsr-online.org/harborough.html) (accessed 1.10.2014).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFQiQnRmDv8> (accessed 17.09.2014) series of several documentaries posted by Tango Grupo Gotan exploring the meaning, origin of tango, the embrace. Available at <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-2321-2005-06-19.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE3Hs4bsPhg>

www.youtube.com/profile?user=mariamilonga (uploaded November 2006)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pgbt0oD-MnA&NR=1> (uploaded November 2006)

Sosa, C., (2005) "Caras Extrañas", *Pagina 12*, RADAR, Sunday 19th July, 2005.

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-2321-2005-06-19.html>

FILMS

Evita (1996) Dir. Alan Parker, screenplay by Alan Parker and Oliver Stone, lyrics by Tim Rice, music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, starring Madonna as Evita, Antonio Banderas as Che, and Jonathon Pryce as Peron. Hollywood Productions (United States).

Happy Together (1997) Dir. Wong Ka-Wai, starring Leslie Cheung, Tony Chiu Wai Leung, Chen Chang. Hong Kong.

¡Tango! (1933) Dir. Luis Moglia Barth, starring Libertad Lamarque, Pepe Arias, Tita Merello, and Azucena Maizani. Argentina Sono Film, Argentina.

Tango (1998) Dir. Carlos Saura, starring Miguel Ángel Solá, Cecilia Narova, Mía Maestro, Juan Carlos Copes. Sony Pictures Classic.

Tango Argentino (1992) Dir. Goran Paskaljevic, starring Mija Aleksic, Predrag Monoflovic, Nikola Zarkovic.

Tangos: the exile of Gardel. (1985) Dir. Fernando Solanas, starring Marie Laforêt, Philippe Léotard, Miguel Ángel Solá, Marina Vlady.

The Tango Lesson (1997). Directed and written by Sally Potter, starring Sally Potter and Pablo Verón. Sony Pictures Classic.

SHOWS

Luis Bravo, Director-Creator (1994) *Forever Tango*.

German Cornejo, Choreographer (2005, Singapore) *Tango Fire*.

Miguel Angel Zotto, and Milena Plebs (Directors and Choreographers) (1989) *Tango por Dos*.

GLOSSARY

abrazo – the embrace or hold used in dancing Tango. This can be further described as ‘open’ or ‘close’; ‘milonguera’-style; or *apilado* depending on how closely the couple dance, and the extent to which they lean towards each other in the upper body.

adornos – unled decorations or embellishments which a follower may incorporate into their dance at certain points where the lead dancer offers opportunities to do so.

alevare – the first, symbolic gesture in the performance of a Tango; also known somewhat confusingly, as the *salida*

apilado – ‘piled up’: a style of dancing in which two partners lean in towards each other in the upper body, rather than retaining their own body axis vertically .

arrabal/es – poor suburb/ suburbs on the outskirts of Buenos Aires in which Tango developed.

bandoneón – iconic musical instrument of tango music, similar to an accordion with buttons and keyboard.

barrio – neighbourhood or district of a city such as Buenos Aires.

barrida – a step in which one foot ‘sweeps’ or ‘brushes’ the floor, often sliding a partner’s foot along with it.

cabaceo / cabezo- a gesture of the head with eye contact used to invite a partner to dance.

Candombe – Afro-Argentine dance preceding the development of the Tango

Canyengue – an early version of tango in which the embrace is close and dancers’ knees are kept bent.

código – the social code of behaviour or etiquette followed in tango venues.

compadres- displaced *gauchos* of the *arrabales*, often involved with herding cattle to the slaughterhouses in Buenos Aires. These men were haughty, proud, generally respected or feared for their use of knives to settle arguments.

compadrito – diminutive and derogative use of the term *compadre* to identify disreputable individuals attempting to adopt the style of the *compadres*.

conventillos- poor working-class tenements of Buenos Aires, often housing several families in crowded conditions.

corte- a step, often leading into a forward *ocho*, which is arrested or abruptly interrupted by the leader and hence shortened. It is often linked with the term *quebrada* (see below).

cortina - a brief snatch of music used to separate one *tanda* from another during a *milonga*

criolla/o- creole, native-born Argentinian with black, or mixed racial origins

empanada- a small Argentinian meat pie or pasty, often eaten as a street snack or at social occasions.

entrada- a step by one dancer between the legs of their partner.

gancho- literally 'hook'; a movement in which one dancer hooks their leg between those of their partner.

gaucho- horseman/ cowboy/worker of the *Pampas*

giro- a turn by one dancer around the other, who simultaneously turns on the spot

Habanero- an early dance from Cuba with earlier Hispanic origins which preceded and was influential in the development of Tango.

lunfardo - Italian-derived slang/dialect used by *porteños* and often included in the lyrics of tango songs.

milonga – there are three associated meanings of the term *milonga*: a place where tango is danced as a social occasion; a type of dance which preceded tango, with a cheeky 2/4 rhythm, quicker pace and shorter, more staccato steps and movements; popular music style which preceded tango.

milongueras/os- keen female/male dancers who regularly frequent *milongas*

mordida – (translates as a bite): a movement in which one dancer's feet 'sandwich' or close around their partner's foot.

niños biens- a term denoting wealthy 'playboys' of Buenos Aires in the early twentieth century, who enjoyed venturing into the lower-class milongas and who subsequently introduced tango into higher social circles.

ocho – a dancing figure in which the steps lead the body to turn in a figure of eight shape. This can be performed starting either with a forward or a backward pivot.

orilla/orillero- a suburb or district of a city

orquesta típica – a traditional band or orchestra which plays tango music, which, after 1911 often comprised two *bandoneóns*, two violins, a piano and a double bass.

pampas- the flat plains of the Argentine countryside stretching inland from the Atlantic coast and the estuary of the River Plate from Buenos Aires. The pampas were populated by Araucanian Indians and, later, by *gauchos* in the nineteenth century.

parada – a step which closes or brings the flow of the dance to a stop.

pista – the dance floor; in particular the anti-clockwise route or track which one follows around the floor

*porteño-*inhabitants of the port area of Buenos Aires, although also used to designate 'authentic' residents of Buenos Aires in general as opposed to tourists, outsiders or visitors.

práctica- a venue and time when people meet to practise tango as opposed to following a class or attending a social event

*quebrada-*a term describing 'a jerky semi-athletic contortion'¹ or disjointed movement of the hips associated with the early development of Tango from *Milonga*. '*Cortes and quebradas*' were frowned upon characteristics of early Tango as they drew on elements of Afro-Argentine dances and were, furthermore, danced in what was deemed inappropriate proximity to one's partner.

sacada- to prevent or displace a partner's step by invading their space with a foot or leg.

¹ Collier & al. (1995, p.47).

salida – translates as ‘exit’: the first steps onto the dance floor at the beginning of a dance; literally to ‘exit/leave’ in the sense of to ‘set off’ or ‘get started’.

tanda – a group of 3 -4 Tango songs or tracks by a particular *orquesta*, or sharing a melodic theme, selected to be played consecutively between *cortinas*.

tangueras/os- female/male tango dancers

tango nuevo – a more open and experimental style of Tango in which partners dance further apart from each and frequently make use of each other’s body weight to shift the axis of the dance moves.

voleo - a flick or kick of the leg which the leader dancer brings about by a sharp disassociation of the upper body.

APPENDIX 1.

ARGENTINE TANGO RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you Male? Female?

2. To which age group do you belong?

18 or under 19-35 36-50

51-65 66 or more

3 What is your current occupation?

4. How far in total do you travel to Leicester/Market Harborough (MH) tango group and home again?

less than 5 miles 5-10miles 11-20miles more than 20 miles

5. What is your nationality?

6. Do you understand Spanish?

7. Do you have other any experience of social dancing? Yes/No

If so please say what kind.

8. What other leisure interests do you have?

9. How often do you attend Leicester/MH tango group?

Every week Once a fortnight About once a month
Once or twice every 3 months This is my first time

10. How long have you been attending Leicester/ MH tango group?

This is my first time less than 6 times less than 3 months
less than 6 months less than a year a year to 18 months
more than 18 months

11. How did you find out about Leicester/MH tango group?

website word of mouth I was looking for a tango group
flier email from another tango fan other (please specify) _____

12. What prompted you to come along?

I came along just because a friend was coming

A friend encouraged me to come

I watched tango in a show and wanted to learn

I've done other kinds of dance before and wanted to try a new dance

I wanted a different kind of leisure activity

I wanted to meet new people

To meet someone of the opposite sex

It's easy for older people to do

I live quite near so it's convenient

I wanted to learn Argentine tango

Because I had visited/am going to visit Buenos Aires

Other _____

13. Why were you attracted to Argentine tango?

14. If you would be willing to be interviewed about your experience of dancing Argentine tango please give your name.

Thank You.

APPENDIX 2.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, what characteristics make tango different to other dances?
2. How did you know about Argentine tango before you joined this tango group?
3. What do you notice when you watch other people dancing tango socially?
4. Please explain what you enjoy most about dancing Argentine Tango?
5. Are there things you don't enjoy about dancing tango?
6. How do you feel about inviting people to dance or about waiting to be asked?
7. Mostly whom do you dance with?
8. How do you feel about other people watching you dance?
9. What do you think of professional tango shows / demonstrations?
10. How important is it for you to know about the origins of Argentine Tango?
Could you explain why you think this?
11. Why do you think people in England are learning tango from Argentina?

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION DATES AND PSEUDONYMS OF PARTICIPANTS

Semi-structured Interviews

Malcolm, Leicester, 24.05.08

Fiona, Market Harborough, 22.06.08

Jenny, Market Harborough, 22.06.08

Samuel, Market Harborough, 24.08.08

Mary, Market Harborough, 7.09.08

Gary, Market Harborough, 7.09.08

Roland, Market Harborough, 14.09.08

Kirsten, Market Harborough, 14.09.08

Peter, Leicester, 9.10.08

Sonia, Market Harborough, 12.10.08

Ted and Nancy, Market Harborough, 12.10.08

Annie, Leicester, 22.10.08 and 14.02.09

Video-Feedback Discussions

Christina, Leicester, 7.11.09

Carl, Market Harborough, 7.11.09

Matthew, Market Harborough 3.12.09

Malcolm, Blaby, 26.02.2010

François, Leicester, 3.03.2010

Ceci , Leicester, 6.03.2010

Mati, Leicester, 6.03.2010

Sally, Leicester, 6.05.2010

Samantha, Leicester, 24.06.2010

David Turner, Dingley, 4.07.2010

Sarah, Leicestershire, 4.07.2010

Gary, Kibworth, 11.07.2010

Helen, Kibworth, 11.07.2010

Oliver, Uppingham, 12.07.2010

Daphne, Uppingham, 12.07.2010

Glenn, Hinckley, 13.07.2010

Mary, Hinckley, 13.07.2010

APPENDIX 4 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

STATISTICAL INFORMATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRE, QUESTIONS 1-6

Question/category	Number /33	Percentage
1.Male	15	45.5%
1.Female	18	54.5%
2. Age: less than 18 years	0	0%
2. Age: 19-35 years	5	15%
2. Age 36-50 years	12	36.5%
2. Age: 51-65 years	15	45.5%
2. Age: over 66 years	1	3%
3. Occupation: professional (Including: Doctor, Teacher, Physiotherapist, Lecturer, Engineer, Accountant, Surveyor)	11	33.5%
3. Occupation: alternative professional/ self-employed/artistic (Including: Acupuncturist, Psychotherapist, Beauty/ holistic therapist, Musician, Artist, Publisher, Interpreter)	11	33.5%
3. Occupation: retail/administrative (Including: Shop assistant, Bank clerk, HR, Purchase manager)	4	12%
3. Occupation: student	3	9%
3. Occupation: retired	4	12%
4. Distance travelled: < 5 miles	3	9%
4. Distance: 5-10 miles	2	6%
4. Distance: 11-20 miles	10	30%
4. Distance: > 20 miles	18	55%
5. Nationality: British	24	73%
5. Nationality: European Union	7	21%
5. Nationality: Argentinean or other South American	2	6%
5. Nationality: Other	0	0%
6. Speak Spanish	2	6%
6. Understand some Spanish	8	24%
6. Do not understand/speak Spanish	23	70%

APPENDIX 5

VIDEO CLIPS USED FOR PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Tango Video Clips

The DVD includes five short video clips: *'Filming feet,'* <https://vimeo.com/166125847>

'Leicester Practica February 2010,' <https://vimeo.com/166126126>

'Participant Filming,' <https://vimeo.com/166126410>

'Participant involvement,' <https://vimeo.com/166122111>

'Workshop Market Harborough' <https://vimeo.com/166126654>

[The video clips above are all accessible on Vimeo with the password '*East Midlands Tango*'.]

These were prepared for a De Montfort University presentation about the visual methodology aspect of the thesis. Aside from the methodological considerations which came into play in the process of filming the East Midlands Argentine Tango participants, the clips also provide a flavour of the dancing context. In particular the '*Leicester practica*' clip is a glimpse of the much longer clip which was finally selected as the chief backdrop to all the video-feedback sessions conducted with participants.