11 Tango Lessons: What Research on Tango Dancing Can Teach Us

KATHY DAVIS

Introduction

Tango was first danced in the late nineteenth century in the port cities of the Río de la Plata, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, but it soon became – and continues to be – a global phenomenon.[1] From the outset, the music and the dance "traveled," as tango became popular in many parts of the world and went through many revivals.[2] In the 1930s, it was taken up in Europe and beyond, becoming a rage among the affluent and bohemian classes of the metropolises of Paris, London, Berlin, Warsaw, Istanbul, New York, and Tokyo. From there, tango returned to Buenos Aires where the dance was embraced by well-to-do Argentines who had previously spurned it as a vulgar, immoral dance. Since its Golden Age (1930s–1950s), tango has gone in and out of fashion, entering its most recent worldwide revival in the 1990s. Today it has become a global dance culture with a growing community of dancers willing to spend a considerable part of their daily lives on tango. Many are prepared to travel long distances to participate in tango marathons, tango festivals, and tango vacations. Some even make yearly pilgrimages to Buenos Aires, where tango has become a major tourist industry replete with commercial tango shows, dance venues (salons), tango clothing and shoe stores, and guest houses for tango tourists. Many local dancers there make their living teaching and performing tango for the tourists.[3]

From 2009 to 2012, I conducted a study on tango as a global dance culture which was later published under the title *Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters in a Globalizing World*.[4] Employing ethnographic fieldwork in Buenos Aires, the undisputed mecca of tango, and in Amsterdam, one of the European tango centers, I interviewed tango dancers for whom dancing tango is more than just a hobby and, at times, even a way of life. I wanted to know why people from very different social, cultural, and geographical backgrounds could become so passionate about

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108974936.012 Published online by Cambridge University Press

a dance from another era (turn of the twentieth century) and another place (Buenos Aires). What were they looking for in tango? What happened to their lives, relationships, and identities as they became involved in this strange and apparently addictive dance culture? In addition to wanting to understand more about what dancing tango meant to the dancers themselves, as a feminist sociologist, I was also curious about how contemporary men and women were able to negotiate the inevitable ambivalences and contradictions of tango that have always been and continue to be shaped by gendered, sexualized, and ethnicized hierarchies of power. Notably, the history of tango is told through representations of knife-wielding *compadritos* (immigrant men living in the slums of Buenos Aires) competing with other men for the attentions of duplicitous women, often prostitutes. While this representation hardly fits the cosmopolitan tango dancers of today, it continues to shape the music to which they dance, the salon culture in which they participate, and, most importantly, their cherished image of so-called authentic tango. But how, I asked the dancers I interviewed in my research, do they reconcile such retro and clearly heterosexist and exoticized notions of tango with their presumably enlightened late-modern personas?

In the course of giving talks about my book, I often found myself having to explain to academic audiences how a researcher like myself could take up such a frivolous topic as tango dancing. My fellow sociologists were accustomed to investigating serious social problems involving inequalities, crises and conflicts, as well as migration and displacement. If they took an interest in body practices at all, they tended to focus on weighty issues like illness or dying, disability, extreme forms of body modification, adventurous leisure-time activities, or dangerous sports. Dancing tango, with its reputation for pleasure and passion, hardly seemed like a suitable research topic for a serious sociologist. My study of tango seemed even more problematic for my feminist colleagues who wondered why I, a critical (postcolonial) scholar, would want to invest her energies in what is arguably one of the most exoticized, heteronormative dances around.[5]

In this chapter, I identify what I believe are the sound sociological reasons for doing research on dancing tango. I argue that there is a lot that we can learn from tango about topics that are, in fact, highly relevant for sociology; namely, the importance of passion in ordinary people's everyday lives, gender relations in late modernity, and the possibilities and pitfalls of transnational encounters in a globalizing world. Lastly, I discuss some of the methodological innovations that I employed, which were necessary for me to understand the broader sociological and cultural

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significance of tango dancing, and I argue why they deserve to be embraced more broadly and applied more widely to sociological research in general.

Tango Passion

One of the clichés about tango is that it is all about passion. In fact, tango is a metaphor for passion. It can be found in popular discourse, literature, and the media. Just a few strains of tango in a film are enough to announce that a steamy sex scene is coming up (WL 11.1). Passion is what we "see" when tango is performed. We read it in the movements of the dance, in the exaggerated poses of women in slinky dresses swooning in the arms of their sexy Latino partners. We imagine it in the women's closed eyes and the dramatic expressions on the partners' faces (WP 11.1).

Critical feminist and postcolonial scholars have devoted considerable attention to the problematic ways in which passion is mobilized in the popular imagination about tango. The well-known tango scholar Marta Savigliano has argued that contemporary dancers cannot dance tango without drawing upon the exoticized/eroticized images that are a part of tango's imbrications in the gendered, racialized legacies of colonialism. As she puts it, by dancing tango, they "*cultivate* passion, passionately."[6] But passion is not just a metaphor for a performance with eroticized overtones. It is also and, more importantly, an intensely emotional, embodied experience. It is what many dancers say they *feel* when they dance tango in a close embrace. They offer passion as the main reason for their willingness to spend money, time, and effort learning what is generally considered a difficult dance. Their passion for tango is what incites them to practice their steps for hours on end, to attend countless classes, workshops, and *prácticas* (practice milonga), and to venture out – sometimes far away from home – just to dance tango. Their passion accounts for the way tango has taken over their lives, pushing out activities they used to enjoy (such as going to films and listening to other kinds of music) and causing them to neglect their families and (non–tango-dancing) friends. As one of my informants, a tango "exile," as he called himself, who had moved to Buenos Aires to dance, leaving his children and grandchildren in Europe behind, explained: "They [his family members] might have been a reason to stay, but, on the other hand, they have their own lives and don't want me hanging around anyhow. So, I started looking for a place in Buenos Aires and the rest is history."[7] In short, passion explains why tango dancing can become an important – even the most important – part of a person's life.

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The cultural and performance studies scholars Celeste Delgado and José Muñoz explain the passion for dancing as a form of resistance that allows people to avoid the drudgery and oppression of everyday life.[8] Passion is what makes life worth living.[9]

Obviously, dancing tango is not the only thing a person can become passionate about. People may develop passions about all kinds of activities, objects, ideas, and other people.[10] Despite the importance of passion in people's everyday lives, however, most sociologists do not know what to make of it. Passion feels unruly, capricious, and out of control. Sociologists are often more comfortable with treating the behavior of their research subjects as more or less intentional, based on choice and capable of being explained or justified. Even for those sociologists who have directed their attention to the role of emotions in social life, they seem to prefer what Sianne Ngai calls the "ugly" emotions – disgust, guilt, and shame, for example.[11] Passion as an emotional experience has largely been ignored.

Understanding the role of passion in social life is essential in order to understand what makes a person's life meaningful. It is, therefore, mandatory for anyone interested in social life to try to understand why people develop passions and what caring passionately about someone or something means to them. To what extent are people prepared to follow their passions? What obstacles do they have to overcome? Which passions does society tolerate and which are subject to sanctions? And, what are the consequences for a person's well-being if their life is devoid of passion? These are all questions begging for serious sociological research and, therefore, became central to my research on tango.

Gender and Tango

The second tango-related topic of interest for a sociologist is gender. Dancing tango offers a site for exploring how gender relations are organized, negotiated, and transformed, historically as well as across national borders. Gender is integral to the lyrics of tango music, the performance of the dance, and the ways dancers encounter one another on and off the dance floor.[12] Many of the most iconic tangos have lyrics full of gender stereotypes and machismo.[13] Women are represented as prostitutes, traitorous femmes fatales, or "rebellious broads," while men are cast as "whiny ruffians" whose machismo causes them to suffer jealousy and engage in extreme acts of violence against their unfaithful lovers.[14] But gender is also embedded in the way the dance itself is performed. Conventionally, it is the

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man who leads and the woman who follows. He determines the choreography and the moves, while she pays attention (often with her eyes closed) and responds to his signals. Feminists have criticized the gendered-ness of the dance, noting how women are immobilized by impractical clothing and stiletto heels, stifled by being enclosed in a small space (an embrace), and forced to dance backwards without having any control over the dance.[15] In the more traditional tango salons, men are usually the ones who invite a partner to dance, while women have to wait to be invited. This may occur with a *cabeceo*, initiated by the man and accepted or rejected by the woman.[16] In Buenos Aires, the sexes are even seated separately in most traditional milongas (tango salons) with men on one side and women on the other side of the dance floor. Men share a table with their friends, drinking and commenting on the dancers,[17] while women wait anxiously for a dance, often doomed to be a "wallflower" for hours on end.[18]

Tango has been viewed as the embodiment of hyper-heterosexuality, macho masculinity, and subservient femininity. This raises the question of how contemporary dancers who tend, at least in principle, to be committed to egalitarian relations between the sexes reconcile their late-modern identities with the traditional gender hierarchies which are so prevalent in the world of tango. Some tango dancers have balked at what they see as old-fashioned gender roles and have begun looking for new forms of music, like *nuevo tango* (New Tango), to interpret.[19] Or, they have adopted dancing that eliminates fixed gender roles and emphasizes switching positions during the dance, as in queer tango.[20] Many tango salons, both in and outside Buenos Aires, have taken up more relaxed arrangements in terms of seating and invitation rituals. Nevertheless, a considerable group of *milongueros/as* continues to dance tango traditionally, and many of the salons today embrace traditional regimes of male leaders inviting female followers with the *cabeceo* and playing music strictly from tango's Golden Age. This traditional regime not only compels, but also allows these dancers to engage in behaviors that they would normally avoid in their everyday lives. Women can wear ultrafeminine clothing and abandon themselves to their partner, while men can unashamedly take control or explore their "macho side."[21]

Explaining this discrepancy between a late-modern commitment to gender equality and retrograde gender hierarchies in tango provides an interesting challenge for sociological research. Sociologists might wonder how dancers themselves account for and justify their desire for a dance that displays such archaic forms of heterosexual masculinity and femininity. Is it a way for otherwise emancipated and cosmopolitan men and women – the

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majority of contemporary tango dancers – to engage in an exotic practice, one that will allow them a momentary escape from their everyday routines, if only for a moment? Or does tango provide the possibility for late-modern men and women to experience connection without the complications of a relationship – something that would fit the relational context of liquid modernity?[22] Or does tango address a deeper need for playfulness and ambiguity, which is missing in contemporary gender relations where direct communication and consensuality are the unspoken rules?[23]

These questions suggest that tango dancing might be a fruitful starting point for investigating the contradictions that complicate gender relations in late modernity, providing an opportunity to explore some of the tensions in contemporary discourses and practices of gender equality. Dancing tango thus offers a window into the complexities of contemporary gender relations, something that should be of interest to any sociologist interested in the problems of intimacy and connection as well as the role of fantasy and playfulness in late modernity.

Transnational Encounters through Tango

The most recent global revival of tango in the 1990s made tango dancing available to individuals of different genders and ages, from different classes and ethnic backgrounds, and from urban or rural settings across the globe. By dancing tango, they are able to enter a transnational cultural space, even when they are dancing in their local tango salon. Every tango dancer participates in a global community of dancers, some of whom they may meet face-to-face, but most of whom they will never actually physically encounter.[24] For example, many tango dancers have watched so many videos of dance performances in other parts of the world that these foreign venues feel just as familiar to them as their own home salons. As soon as they enter the transnational cultural space of tango, literally or vicariously, hear the familiar music, and see the other dancers circling the floor locked in a close embrace, they will have the uncanny sense of being both home and elsewhere, neither here nor there, not in the past, but also not entirely in the present – in short, somewhere in between, in a liminal moment of transcendence, lost – as it were – in translation.[25]

Such a transnational culture space is not simply an innocent place to socialize, however. Historical and economic disparities between the Global North and Global South make tango anything but a level playing field.[26] Tango tourists from affluent nations flock to Buenos Aires every year to

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dance the so-called authentic tango in search of a particular kind of emotional experience and a taste of "authenticity."[27] As Savigliano has convincingly shown, these visitors often draw upon exoticized/eroticized images that are part of tango's imbrication in the gendered, racialized legacies of colonialism.[28] This makes tango literally a love-hate embrace with colonial overtones.

For Argentine dancers, tango has a different meaning. It is not only a symbol of their national identity, something that they feel "belongs" to them,[29] but it is also for some of them a source of income and a way to earn a living in an increasingly precarious economy. They organize milongas, offer dance lessons, provide the escort services of a "taxi dancer" for tourists,[30] sell tango clothing and shoes, and operate tango guest houses. For them, tango is both something ordinary Argentines have listened to and seen their parents dance for most of their lives as well as a profitable export product. In the former, tango is danced according to the traditional codes of "home tango," while the "export tango" financially exploits the hyper-erotic staged performance of professionals.[31]

Clearly the contemporary transnational tango culture has plenty to offer the enterprising sociologist. The effects of globalization on global power relations, worldwide encounters between differently located individuals, and how individuals view themselves and their everyday lives have been well-trodden subjects in contemporary sociology. Across the globe, individuals are increasingly finding ways to connect – literally or through the internet – and many of the communities to be found in the world today are virtual. For sociologists, this raises the question of how to think about the way people participate locally in a global culture and what this means for their lives, their relationships, and their sense of self in the world around them.

Taken together, the significance of passion, the complications of contemporary gender relations, and the emergence of transnational cultural spaces are all phenomena of sociological interest. Tango is the site *par excellence* for exploring how individuals actually negotiate, reconcile, and sometimes transform the differences (of class, ethnicity, and national belonging) that divide them in the interests of sharing a moment of pleasure and connection.

In the final part of this chapter, I take up some of these methodological innovations. I show why they are essential not only for understanding passion and tango dancing but also, more generally, for understanding embodied cultural phenomena in the context of globally structured gender and power relations.

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Researching Tango Dancing

Researching tango dancing confronted me with two difficulties that had ramifications for the methodologies I needed to employ to answer my questions. The first involved the problem of how to investigate a *bodily practice* (dancing) that is intensely experienced but difficult to articulate. The second was how to analyze a *dance culture that is local, yet at the same time, global* with dancers who not only travel across borders just to dance but also imaginatively partake in what they see as a global dance culture. To address these issues, I drew on two seemingly disparate and innovative branches of sociological research – carnal sociology and global ethnography.

Carnal sociology emerged in the late 1990s in an attempt to bring the body back into sociological research.[32] While many sociologists were researching *about* the body as an object of specific discourses and practices, carnal sociologists specifically wanted to do research *from* the body. As Wacquant states, researchers need to submerge themselves in the bodily practices they are investigating and find a way to express the "taste and the ache" of the embodied experience.[33] This entails providing visceral accounts of what it actually feels like to engage in a practice, namely to enter the body of people who do it. In my research on dancing tango, I employed this methodology in several ways. First, I drew upon my own experiences as a tango dancer. For example, I used my own experience of entering into a close embrace with a stranger by drawing upon my sense of touch, smell, and sound. This allowed me to convey the sensations of, for example, smelling a partner's freshly laundered shirt, feeling each other's heartbeat, being surprised by the tickle of a strand of hair, or the prickle of an unshaven cheek.[34] Second, I worked interactively with my informants, who often struggled to describe a bodily encounter that was unique and intense – "an intimacy like no other," as one dancer put it – but for which they had no ready-made language. The interviews became themselves embodied occasions, involving listening to tango music together "to get in the mood," my interview partner jumping up to demonstrate a particular step, or showing me with a hug what a good or bad embrace would entail. Given the often joyful nature of their tango experiences, I was frequently surprised when they suddenly began to cry when they recounted a particularly intense dance that reminded them of a lost love, a divorce, a family member who had died, or nostalgia for their homeland. By mobilizing our bodies, a different kind of interview emerged – one which

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allowed a more profound understanding of what can make dancing tango such a meaningful and moving experience.

But carnal sociology, with its embodied approach to interviewing, was not the only methodological innovation I needed for my research on tango dancing. I also required a more unconventional approach to ethnographical fieldwork, which I found in global ethnography.[35] Traditionally, ethnographies are anything but global. They are microstudies of everyday life in circumscribed localities and bounded communities, full of thick descriptions with intimate details and lots of local flavor. This fieldwork methodology has frequently been used to describe local dance cultures – anything from the Lindy Hop in New York City to a women's *Palo de Mayo* (Maypole) dance in Nicaragua.[36] While dance ethnographies have been particularly suited to understanding the kinesthetic aspects of dancing as well as the gendered and ethnicized dimensions of local dance cultures, they are less suited to understanding how contemporary dance cultures have traveled across the globe, moreover, how these travels have shaped how dance cultures are experienced, organized, and transformed. In contrast, Burawoy and his colleagues take as their starting point that in a globalizing world, like the one we live in, it is impossible to separate the local from the global; rather, the local is permeated by and mutually constituted by global forces, transnational connections between people, and global imaginaries. Therefore, ethnographies need to be "extended out" from the local to the global and vice versa.

This approach to ethnographical fieldwork shaped my understanding of tango dance culture in ways that were both surprising and, at times, disconcerting. For example, I realized that tango tourists in Buenos Aires were not the only ones looking for a special experience with an exotic "other," as Savigliano has argued, but that the Argentine locals, themselves, are also engaged in processes of exoticization.[37] For example, one might hear: "I only dance a tango waltz with a European. They just know how to do it."[38] Similarly, the all-present Global North/Global South divide favored by most globalization scholars for describing power asymmetries in different parts of the world proved unhelpful for explaining the complicated processes I observed in the salons of Buenos Aires, where local dancers skillfully used their contacts with tourists to negotiate the – often fraught – gender and class relations among themselves. Men who were precariously employed outside the milongas could overcome the injuries of class by scoring young tourists anxious to dance with "real" *milongueros*, while local women could alleviate the insults of "wallflowering" by turning up their noses at the local men. I would hear them rave about how

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"cultured" and educated European men are and how they are much more likely to be able to have a conversation with them.[39] The idea that tango is a global community of dancers is not limited to the affluent North American or European dancers who are able to travel, but includes, in fact, anybody wherever and whenever they dance. Dancing tango means entering a shared transnational space in which every dancer, whether man or woman, unemployed or affluent, white or black, gay or straight, is confronted with structured hierarchies of power and privilege, but also with a passionate desire for connection and pleasure. This does not mean that historical, economic, or geopolitical divisions do not matter. It suggests, however, that a "cosmopolitan disposition rather than the colonizing gaze may more accurately describe what links wildly disparate and differently situated dancers in the world of tango."[40]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that tango dancing is a serious subject for critical sociological research. I have argued that there are, at least, three reasons why tango is anything but a frivolous topic for sociologists. First, we need to understand the importance of passion in people's everyday lives. Second, we need to understand how men and women negotiate the contradictions of gender relations in late modernity. And finally, we need to understand the transnational cultural space in which differently situated individuals encounter one another, negotiating both the differences that divide them as well as their desires for connection.

These topics are not only what makes tango dancing a worthwhile subject for sociological research. I have also shown why the methodologies from carnal sociology and global ethnography were necessary to understand these phenomena. Such methodological interventions are, of course, not just applicable to investigating the phenomenon of tango dancing. Tango is not the only embodied practice that allows its practitioners a betwixt and between where they can shed their mundane concerns and have a sense of being outside themselves.[41]

Tango dancing belongs to a much broader range of activities that are fervently desired, even when they run counter to the individual's normative or social commitments. In a globalizing world, all of us are connected through travel, the internet, and popular culture, no matter where we live or what our lives look like. These "contact zones"[42] are perfect for exploring the ways differently situated individuals search for connection, while at the

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same time, negotiating the power differences that divide them. Listening to their stories can help us understand how interwoven our lives are – both in the past and the present.

Notes

1. Ramón Aldolfo Pelinski, *El tango nómade: ensayos sobre la diaspora del tango* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2000), 21.
2. While I focus primarily on tango dancing in this chapter, tango music also has an international trajectory. This has been a fruitful object for many investigations in the field of musicology. See, for example, Robert Farris Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005); Janine Krüger, *Cuál es tu Tango? Musikalische Lesarten der argentinischen Tangotradition* (Münster: Waxmann, 2012); Kacey Link and Kristin Wendland, *Tracing* Tangueros: *Argentine Tango Instrumental Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016*);* Morgan James Luker, *The Tango Machine: Musical Culture in the Age of Expediency* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016)*;* and Bárbara Varassi Pega, *The Art of Tango* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).
3. Franco Barrionuevo Anzaldi, "The New Tango Era in Buenos Aires: The Transformation of a Popular Culture into a Touristic 'Experience Economy.'" Paper presented at the II ISA Forum of Sociology (Buenos Aires, August 1–4, 2012).
4. Kathy Davis, *Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters in a Globalizing World* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).
5. See Kathy Davis, "Should a Feminist Dance Tango? The Experience and Politics of Passion," *Feminist Theory* 16, no. 1 (March 2015): 3–21, in which I address these feminist concerns by taking up the (rhetorical) question of whether a feminist should or should not dance tango.
6. Marta E. Savigliano, *Angora Matta: Fatal Acts of North-South Translation* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 161; see also Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).
7. Davis, *Dancing Tango*, 94.
8. Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Muñoz, "Rebellions of Everynight Life," in *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*, eds. Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Muñoz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 9–32.
9. Robert J. Vallerand, "On the Psychology of Passion: In Search of What Makes People's Lives Most Worth Living," *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne* 49, no. 1 (February 2008): 1–13.
10. Cheryl Hall, *The Trouble with Passion. Political Theory beyond the Reign of Reason* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 11.

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11. Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 2–8.
12. The best source on gender relations during the early days of tango in Buenos Aires remains Savigliano's *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, but see also Jorge Salessi, "Medics, Crooks, and Tango Queens: The National Appropriation of a Gay Tango," in *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*, eds. Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Esteban Muñoz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 141–174 and Magali Saikin, *Tango y Género* (Stuttgart: Abrazos Books, 2004) for a historical look at machismo in tango. For the workings of gender in the contemporary tango scene, refer to Julie Taylor, *Paper Tangos* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Eduardo P. Archetti, *Masculinities*: *Football, Polo, and the Tango in Argentina* (Oxford: Berg, 1999); Sirena Pellarolo, "Queering Tango: Glitches in the Hetero-National Matrix of a Liminal Cultural Production," *Theater Journal* 60, no. 3 (October 2008): 409–431; Jeffrey Tobin, "Models of Machismo: The Troublesome Masculinity of Argentine Male Tango Dancers," in *Tango in Translation. Tanz zwischen Medien, Kulturen, Kunst und Politik*, ed. Gabriele Klein (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009), 139–169; Paula-Irene Villa, "Bewegte Diskurse, die bewegen. Warum der Tango die (Geschlechter-) Verhältnisse zum Tanzen bringen kann," in *Körper Wissen Geschlecht*, ed. Angelika Wetter (Sulzbach/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2010), 141–164; María Julia Carozzi, "Light Women Dancing Tango: Gender Images as Allegories of Heterosexual Relationships," *Current Sociology* 61, no. 1 (January 2013): 22–39; Maria Törnqvist, *Tourism and the Globalization of Emotions: The Intimate Economy of Tango* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); and Davis, *Dancing Tango*.
13. Anahí Viladrich, "Neither Virgins nor Whores: Tango Lyrics and Gender Representations in the Tango World," *Journal of Popular Culture* 39, no. 2 (April 2006): 272–293.
14. Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, 30–72.
15. Paula-Irene Villa, *Sexy Bodies. Eine soziologische Reise durch den Geschlechtskörper* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2001), 239–263.
16. *Cabeceo* literally means a "nod of the head" used as a nonverbal invitation to dance.
17. Tobin, "Models of Machismo," 145–148.
18. Savigliano uses "wallflowering" as a translation of *planchar* to indicate a lack of activity into which dancers have fallen into under certain circumstances rather than an identity with which someone who does not dance is stuck. Savigliano, *Angora Matta*, 166–167.
19. See María Mercedes Liska, "El cuerpo en la música: La propuesta del tango *queer* y su vinculación con el tango electrónico," *Boletin Onteaiken* 8 (2009): 45–52.
20. For more on queer tango, see Salessi, "Medics, Crooks, and Tango Queens"; Saikin, *Tango y Género*; Savigliano, "Notes on Tango (as) Queer

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(Commodity)," *Anthropological Notebooks* 16, no. 3 (2010): 135–143; and Mercedes Liska, *Argentine Queer Tango: Dance and Sexuality Politics in Buenos Aires* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016).

21. This is how one of my male informants put it: "I guess I do have something macho in myself. . . . At the same time, I'm not macho at all. I could use a little more of it, in fact . . . but the moment I start dancing it comes to the surface. . . . That's fantastic, don't you think?" in Davis, *Dancing Tango*, 114.
22. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Love* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), vii–xiii.
23. Eva Illouz, *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 156–197.
24. In this sense, tango has all the ingredients of what Benedict Anderson called an "imagined community." It is possible to feel part of the community without actually knowing all of its members. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 6–7.
25. Kathy Davis, "From Transnational Biographies to Transnational Cultural Spaces," in *Handbuch Biografieforschung*, eds. Helma Lutz, Martina Schiebel, and Elisabeth Tuider (Wiesbaden: Springer Verlag, 2018), 659–668.
26. "Global North" and "Global South" are shorthand for the social, economic, and political divisions between wealthy, developed countries (often, but not always, in the Northern Hemisphere) and poorer, developing countries (often, but not always, in the Southern Hemisphere). Contemporary scholars have rightly criticized this terminology, noting that affluence is not limited to the North, nor poverty to the South. However, it remains helpful for understanding the political and economic problems facing Argentina today as well as how it is positioned ideologically by the relatively affluent consumers of tango in Europe, North America, Australia, and parts of Asia. See also Davis, *Dancing Tango*, 193.
27. Franco Barrionuevo Anzaldi, "The new tango era in Buenos Aires: the transformation of a popular culture into a touristic 'experience economy'" (paper presented at the II ISA Forum of Sociology, Buenos Aires, August 1–4, 2012).
28. Savigliano, *Angora Matta*, 209–224.
29. Archetti, *Masculinities*, 17.
30. Maria Törnqvist and Kate Hardy, "Taxi Dancers: Tango Labour and Commercialized Intimacy in Buenos Aires," in *New Sociologies of Sex Work*, eds. Kate Hardy, Sarah Kingston, and Teela Sanders (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 137–148.
31. Ana C. Cara, "Entangled Tangos: Passionate Displays, Intimate Dialogues," *Journal of American Folklore* 122, no. 486 (Fall 2009): 438–465.
32. Nick Crossley, "Merleau-Ponty, the Elusive Body and Carnal Sociology," *Body & Sociology* 1, no. 1 (March 1995): 43–63; Loïc Wacquant, "Carnal

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