

FROM THE PORT TO THE BALLROOM: COUNTERPOINTS IN CUBAN POPULAR DANCE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Ryan Gabriel Dreher

August 2016

© 2016 Ryan Gabriel Dreher

# FROM THE PORT TO THE BALLROOM: COUNTERPOINTS IN CUBAN POPULAR DANCE

Ryan Gabriel Dreher, Ph.D.

Cornell University 2016

From the 1920s through the 1940s, the choreographic legacy of Iberian transatlantic seaports moved center stage as dancers around the world became enthralled by the global ballroom Latin dance crazes. Shedding light on the port-city choreographic lineages that lay at the root of such dance crazes, I explore the operation and the rhetorical significance of the port-city margins in national and international conceptions of “Latin” dance.

Chapter One focuses on the formation of the Iberian maritime system and its role in generating a shared port-city milieu across cultural space and a transnational culture of social dance, from the Iberian Peninsula to the Philippines. Here, I begin with Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*, which launches us onto a discussion of the unification of the Iberian world by and through dance. The chapter then concludes by considering Victor Turner’s concept of liminality and its utility as a metaphor for understanding the positioning of the port within geographic and cultural space. In Chapter Two, the Cuban ports of Havana and Santiago de Cuba come to the fore of the discussion and the importance of port-city choreographic expression to local, regional, racial and national identity.

Pivoting to the topic of choreographic alteration and mediation, Chapter Three focuses on the triangulation of the *rumba* as an Afrocuban dance of Havana’s urban underclasses, *son* as Cuba’s national rhythm, and the “rhumba” as a dance craze for global dance enthusiasts. This chapter addresses the cleavage in social dance culture between *baile callejero*, *baile de salón* and new conceptions of global ‘Latin’ dance. Finally, Chapter Four examines the *La teoría y juego*

*del duende* (1933) by Spanish playwright and poet Federico García Lorca and the “Motivos de son” (1930) of Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, focusing on their respective definitions of authentic and inauthentic dances and the implications of the deployment of these categories for Cuban and Spanish national identity.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ryan Gabriel Dreher was born in Manhattan, New York, in 1983. He received his B.A. from New York University in 2006, his M.A. from Cornell University in 2012 and his Ph.D. from Cornell University in 2016. Dreher teaches and lectures on Cuban dance at Fuákata Cuban Salsa NYC and offers clinics on contemporary Cuban Salsa, Son and other topics. In 2014, Dreher founded the US Publishing Mission to Havana with Publishers Weekly Magazine, the American Collective Stand and the Cuban Book Institute and acts as the Mission's coordinator and director.

## Acknowledgements

In 2011, I was invited to participate in the American Comparative Literature Association's annual meeting at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The panel on "Primitivism in the Americas" provided me with an environment that was welcoming, and I want very much to thank its director and my committee, Luiza Moreira of Binghamton University, for providing me with a setting to introduce my ideas and to check them against those of greater academic experience and achievement. But it was a fair wind that brought me, in 2004, to Havana and into contact with professor George Yudice of New York University, whose academic exchange program in Cuban music and culture ignited a passion for Cuban dance that imparted the early motion of this study.

I would like to express my highest gratitude to my committee chairs, Gail-Holst-Warhaft and Natalie Melas, for their patience, guidance and steadfast support. I would also like to thank Steven Pond and Martin Hatch for bringing a musicological perspective to the topics discussed here and for the vitality and fun that their participation brought to this process. Your commentary was invaluable and your insights very refreshing. My thanks as well to the dancers whose interviews and performances are featured herein, especially Karelia Despaigne, Yanek Revilla, Ania Rojas Blanco, Daiana Houelly, Ernesto Ferreiro Escalona and the members of Sabor DKY and Tierra Kaliente in Havana and Santiago de Cuba, who generously gave of their time for dancing and discussion. I would also like to thank Christopher Rogicki and Evelyn Ramirez of the Fuákata Cuban Dance program in New York City for providing a forum for teaching and speaking on these topics to novice dancers.

To have decided to pass a certain time immersed in Latin American social dance or in intellectual works about social dance in the hemisphere is as impossible to regret as it is near unmanageable to undertake. No single person can now claim to have the entire store of existing knowledge and various analytical lenses now circumnavigate the topic. Caribbeanists, ethnomusicologists and dance ethnologists concerned with the period and geography undertaken here must, of course, have dropped anchor on the works of Peter Manuel, whose writings on popular music in Spain and the Americas offer comparative and transnational perspectives and grapple with the complexities of the ongoing sociohistorical processes that shape, and concomitantly are shaped by, the cultural politics of musical and choreographic expression. It is an honor even to engage with these works, which stand on their own or as exemplars of the ideal balance between musicological and choreographic analysis, historical contextualization, and sociocultural theory that is largely accessible to interested non-specialists. Indeed, his are some of the most important reflections on the Cuban themes and topics of this study, forming a keystone in the scholarly architecture of the period that is already his monument. Those who study the phenomenon of dances of port-city origin, tenure, national symbolism and global appeal must also read about the popular music and dance of the Mediterranean region, an obvious admission that puts me again in the debt of my committee chair Gail Holst-Warhaft for her contributions to the scholarly study of Greek rebetika, the bluesy repertoire of songs and dances of the same period spread throughout Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Volos and other harbor environs.

To continue with this litany of gratitude might be to run the risk of rambling rather than acknowledging. In the final analysis, anyone who writes about social dance in the Hispanic

maritime system, as I call it, is writing about port-cities in one way or another, and so I am tempted to seize upon and also to transform slightly an enduring statement of Salman Rushdie: I have always envisaged the world of social dance not so much as a hinterland, but as a harbor. At the edges, where every dance is connected, and every dance is a part of every other dance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The <i>Fandango</i> Legacy: Port Cities and the Transmission of Social Dance in the Hispanic Maritime System	15
Chapter 2: <i>Baile Popular Cubano</i> : A Historical and Contemporary Glance	92
Chapter 3: Tobacco and Sugar: Choreographic Counterpoints between <i>Son</i> and <i>Rumba</i>	126
Chapter 4: Encountering Commercial Dance in the “Motivos de son” and the “Havana Lectures”	166
Works Cited	213

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Chapter One:

Figures 1,2,3,4

Maps showing the principal sea routes during the first third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century 28-29

Figure 5. Brueghel the Elder, “Sixteenth-Century Spanish Galleon” 30

Figure 6. De la Cardona, Nicolás, “Representation of the port of Veracruz” 31

Figure 7. Title page of the Derrotero de los pilotos

Jaymes Martines y Diego Martín del Viaje. 32

Figure 8. Baroque-era Depiction of the Fandango. 45

Figure 9. Example of Fandango do Ribatejo. 47

Figure 10. Guaguancó: Vacunao. 50

Figure 11. Guaguancó en Regla, “Los Asprina.” 51

Figure 12. Rumba Yambú as performed by Conjunto de Claves y Guaguancó. 53

Figure 13. Rumba Columbia as performed by Folclórico Nacional 54

Figure 14. Zamacueca Dance. 57

Figure 15. The Chilean Cueca. 58

Figure 16. The Marinera Peruana/Peruvian Fandango 59

Figure 17. The Male Tango 63

Figure 18. The Caminata 64

Figure 19. Son Jarocho/Fandango Veracruzano 66

Figure 20. Philippine Fandango/Pandanggo Saw Ilaw.	67
Figure 21. Philippine Fandango Duel/Pandanggo Rinconada.	68
Figure 22, 23 & 24. Stratification of Iberian Social Dance	70-73
Figure 25. Rueda de Casino from Santiago de Cuba.	73
Figure 26. Rumba Yambú lyric	100
Figure 27. Rumba instruction from Folclórico Nacional Cutumba	103
Figure 28. <i>Vacunao</i> done from behind	104
Figure 29. Traditional Son Cubano	107
Figure 30. Yoannis Tamayo executes a full tornillo	108
Figure 31. Salsa dancers (casineros) from Havana, Vladimir and Lilian.	114
Figure 32. Rumba in Son Cubano. Onel and Yalenis, Santiago de Cuba.	116
Figure 33. Rumba Guaguancó in Son.	117
Figure 34. Rueda de Son with Rumba Intro.	118
Figure 35. Son in Rumba Guaguancó	120
Figure 36. Jonar González and Ksenia Bacan. Reggaeton in Son Cubano	123
Figure 37. The Negrito and the Mulata.	132
Figure 38. The Mulata, the Negrito and the Gallego	133
Figure 39. Exhibition Rumba of the Tropicana in Havana's Barrio Marianao	135
Figure 40. Sociedad/Social club Son performance. Rutina de Tornillos.	140
Figure 41. Son demo, Santiago de Cuba, from the Rueda All Stars	141

Figure 43., 44. & 45. Son techniques	144-146
Figure 46. Chuy Reyes, Early North American Rhumba.	149
Figure 47. Lavelle and Margolle, Son lessons in Havana	157
Figure 48. Doris Lavelle and Pierre Margolle, dancing the square rhumba	158
Figure 49. Juxtaposition of Décima with “Motivos de Son”	181-182
Figure 50. Langston Hughes “Weary Blues” & “Texas Worried Blues”	183
Figure 51. Son de la Ma Teodora	184
Figure 52. “Sigue”	185
Figure 53. “Negro Bembón” & “Búcate Plata”	186
Figure 54. “Mulata”	187
Figure 55. Clave de Son	188
Figure 56. “Sóngoro Cosongo”	189

## INTRODUCTION:

What do the *rumbero* of the docks of Regla in Havana, the *malandros* and *mulatas* of Rio's favelas as immortalized in the lyrics of Noel Rosa; or the *compadritos* and *milonguitas* of the Argentinian tango have in common? In so many ways, they are interchangeable. They dress in remarkably similar ways, behave similarly and hail from similar socioeconomic and racial environs. One finds frequent parallels between them in popular song lyrics from the 1930s and 1940s, the texts in which I had first encountered them. A classic *cumparista* (old-fashioned tango) recalls the days when tango was danced with the "white scarf of a compadrito and without a penny" and expresses a longing to be "the same compadrito of times past".<sup>1</sup> A popular samba lyric of Rosa's describes the quintessential *malandro carioca* (from Rio de Janeiro) in his threadbare suit as a guardian of *samba* and of Brazilian popular culture, ever on the lookout against the forces of elitism, commercialism and foreign intrusion on Brazilian popular culture. In his popular samba entitled "Não Tem Tradução," Rosa insists that "everything that the *malandro* pronounces in a soft voice is Brazilian/ has gone beyond Portuguese." The *malandro*, then, is the true voice of Brazil and must remain at all times close to his roots, or he will succumb to the absurdity of dancing fox trot, instead of *samba*.<sup>2</sup> And, of course, Cubans still intone and extoll in popular song the status of the *mulata* as the woman of the streets and the

---

<sup>1</sup> "Bailarin compadrito", Miguel Buccino (1929). English translation by Taylor, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> From Bryan McCann, "Noel Rosa's Nationalist Logic". *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Summer, 2001) University of Wisconsin Press, p. 7.

dancehall- a *mujer de rumbo* - and as the ‘the ideal who by means of her enchantment transcends extremes of white and black’ and as the ‘present and future’ of Cuba<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, however, I came to see these legendary figures as emblems of the port cities of Havana, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, a matter of particular interest since they and other archetypes have circulated widely within what used to be the Iberian maritime region and were the first ambassadors of their harbors and nations of origin. Indeed, it may be said that there is no separating these characters from the port cities from which they spring, the popular styles of which they have become emblematic, the nations they have come to embody and the behaviors and personas they have inspired on dancefloors around the world. The *rumbero* of Havana and the *sonero* have reshaped popular culture throughout Latin America and elsewhere. The *malandros* and *mulatas* have followed a similar trajectory, creating new departures for Brazilian and “Latin” culture abroad through the films of Carmen Miranda. And the *compadritos* and *milonguitas* of the *tango porteño* (an adjective designating *rioplatense* culture and whose literal translation is “of or relating to the port”), who began their journeys along the *arrabales* of Buenos Aires and Montevideo and whose mannerisms and attitudes inform the dancing figures of *tango*-smitten Swedes and Japanese – may all be said to form a part of an early transnational popular cultural imaginary of the Iberian transatlantic harbor.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Frederick, Laurie. “The Contestation of Cuba’s Public Sphere in National Theater and the Transformation from Teatro Bufo to Teatro Nuevo or What Happens When El Negrito, El Gallego and La Mulata meet El Hombre Nuevo”. Illinois: University of Chicago, Working Paper Series, 23.

<sup>4</sup> The terms mentioned here describe a cluster of marginal musical styles along with their attendant figures and social environments. The *rumbero* and *sonero* are performers of *son* and *rumba*, which are related popular genres of Havana and Santiago de Cuba from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The *malandro*, *compadrito*, *mulata* and *milonguita* are a part of a gendered lore of the urban demi-monde in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. The *arrabal* and *favela* are terms used to describe urban slum areas in Brazil and Argentina.

The vast oceanic expanse across which these figures echoed and circulated suggests that the port city operated within – or, at least, helped to generate – a transnational cultural frame of reference from which the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds still draw meaning and vitality. Thus, the port city fosters a kind of cosmopolitanism, one whose transcultural tropes have crystallized into popular musical and choreographic lore. When referencing this transnational mythology of the port, one might use the term “port-city musical-choreographic imaginary” – a system of spaces, characters, images, motifs and discursive themes that are remarkably coherent and that helped to construct and nurture a shared marginal milieu across oceanic and cultural space and that articulates a shared set of musical, choreographic and ethical priorities. My readings into this imaginary began, as one might expect, with Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993), because it is a particularly significant meeting point for discussions of diaspora and of the forces that radiate across oceans. The Iberian world extended as far as Goa, Mangalore and the Philippines, in which the amalgam of Aeta, Han Chinese, Hindus, Austronesians and Arabs with Iberian mariners made for *mestizaje[s]* that connected the Americas with Asia, albeit circuitously. This study is significant because it seeks precisely to accentuate the port-city dimension of dance diaspora without denying or invalidating the shared experience of trauma felt all across the Atlantic (as well as the Pacific), or the linkage of the philosophical modernity to the practice of the African transatlantic slave trade. Port cities, like ships, are a motif that opens onto several aspects of a transnational intellectual and artistic culture of oceans and is thus especially important for historical and theoretical reasons. They focus attention on the circulation and cross-pollination of peoples, goods, political and – for our purposes – of choreographic artifacts.

Another point of reference for this work is Antonio Benítez-Rojo's *The Repeating Island* (1997), which provides a blueprint for understanding the interplay between order and disorder in the creation of what I present in this study as a transnational and transoceanic culture of social dance. Within the apparent disorder presented by the Iberian maritime region—the area's discontinuous climactic zones, landmasses and bodies of water, its ethnic groups, languages and traditions—there emerges an idea of the harbor that echoes far and wide, generating unexpected sociocultural and choreographical phenomena. In other words, beyond their importance as physical spaces, ports also operate as a synonym for the exotic and for the authentic. The idea of the port as a space of carefree abandon, where social norms are flouted – of brothels, brawls, taverns, carnivals and venereal disease – is as ubiquitous as the dancing men and women of the ports we now encounter in tourist squares and in song lyrics. In large part, then, the trajectory of this project is designed to pull together the two facets of the port, that is, its importance as a transnational space bridging metropole and colony and as a cultural imaginary.

This idea of the port as a shared signifier of the unrefined and ungovernable ought not to surprise us and depends for its effect on a very real mix of sophistication and bedlam that the port presents across cultural boundaries. In many cases, these urban centers have developed a reputation for extreme hazard, at least in comparison to their hinterlands. The port of Veracruz – to give an example from the contemporary Iberian world – has transformed into one of the opaqueness states in Mexico, with hundreds of unsolved disappearances, rampant extortion, kidnappings, and no fewer than 14 journalists killed in the past five years.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the port is a

---

<sup>5</sup> Paul Imison, "How Veracruz Became the Most Dangerous State in Mexico for Journalists." Vice News, August 17, 2015

space where it becomes inherently difficult to tell where the demimonde ends and the state begins.

Indeed, the image of the transatlantic seaport as a romanticized counterpoise to the ordered carryings-on of polite society is readily mobilized in contemporary touristic economies of the Spanish-speaking world. One need only point to the ongoing restoration of the cobblestone walkway or “caminito” of La Boca, a harbor area on the Riachuelo River, recreating a time when *porteños* colored their homes with paint reserved for ship maintenance. Today, these harbors host vendors, artists and street performers who work shoulder to shoulder with *tangueros*.

For the modern inhabitants of Havana and Santiago de Cuba, which are central to this dissertation, the goal of revitalizing the ports both culturally and architecturally has become entangled with trends in music and dance revivalism. Traditional genres like *rumba* and *son* and their contemporary derivatives and counterpoints have come to play an important role in this project. Such enthusiasm and zeal among visitors who have become enamored by the ‘authenticity’ of local music and dance are nourished by the revivalist repertoire of the Buena Vista Social Club, which has engendered not only an untiring supply of traditional musicians and dancers, but also the construction of new taverns and theaters modeled on Cuba’s musical golden age, including the Guajirito and the Taberna just off of San Francisco Square.

Attention to port cities has been limited even among geographers and historians, and so the paucity of scholarly discussion concerning the cultural or political configuration of the port, both in the Iberian world or elsewhere, should come as no surprise. Nevertheless, Peter Manuel’s interest in the popular expressions of transnational border sites in *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World* (1983) have provided a kind of stimulus for discussions of “liminal”

forms of music, drawing on the lexicon of Victor Turner. Manuel counts the Argentinian *tango*, Portuguese Fado and North American jazz among the popular music styles created during the early twentieth century by “marginal misfits in their milieu of taverns and bars” and “destined later to be celebrated as national expressions.”<sup>6</sup>

A more deliberate attempt to connect transatlantic ports to popular culture and music appears in an article on the prehistory of the *samba* rhythm in Rio de Janeiro by historian John Charles Chasteen, who focuses on the circular exchanges between transatlantic seaports of Iberian metropolises and colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, its remit condenses to a discussion of ‘African’ dance in the Americas and of what he calls the ‘African American choreographic matrix’. Thus, he is not privileging Iberian transatlantic seaports with any special perspicacity. However, although Chasteen does not delineate a trajectory of thought on transatlantic ports or call attention to it as a coherent field of inquiry, his extensive bibliographies have served to amplify further studies such as my own.

Directing our attention to dances of Iberian port cities in this way raises a number of issues: the relationship between social and choreographic practices within ports; between incoming and outgoing choreographic information and language; the relationship between foreign and local and, by extension, the interweaving of cultures in and through movement. Finally, they also raise the issue of the cultural footprint left as a result of circular exchanges in choreographic languages – i.e. the condensation of a cultural imaginary shared by harbors at opposing ends of the exchange.

---

<sup>6</sup> Peter Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 18-19.

### Nationalism and Social Dance in the Iberian World

During the 1920s and 1930s came some of the first attempts to catalogue Latin American dance according to national pedigrees. Added to my own shelf in the recent past have been Eduardo Sanchez de Fuentes's *El folclor en la música cubana* (1923), Mario de Andrade's *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira* (1928) and Alejo Carpentier's *La música en Cuba* (1930) – a year heralding the arrival of both the Brazilian *samba* and the Cuban *son* to the then embryonic ballroom culture of North America, Britain and France. As this fact suggests, the assertion en masse of national choreographic traditions that took place within this span may have had as much to do with a post-independence desire to “imagine” (in Andersonian terms) a national identity that would fit within a global scheme of nations as it did with projecting a choreographic sense of Self by identifying a foreign choreographic Other embodied by the hispanophile dances of the North American, British and French ballroom, such as the mambo and the cha-cha-cha.

The theme of independence and nationalism in the Iberian world brings into view the work of Benedict Anderson, who has stressed the importance of a shared language for the creation of a national identity. However, it is worth highlighting that post-imperial Spain and the nations that materialized as a result of Latin America's Creole nationalist phenomenon of the nineteenth century already shared a spoken and print language with their former metropolises and were therefore forced to turn to other bases for expressing their national distinctiveness. The rhythmic culture of the Iberian ports - the seemingly sudden appearance of the trinity of song, dance, and percussion as integrated aspects of the same activity or performance – provided a potent national signifier under such circumstances. Given the fundamental importance of the relationship of social dance style to racial identity and national identity in Cuba, I have drawn

considerable inspiration from Robin Moore's writings on Afro-Cuban music, *afrocubanismo*, and Cuban national identity.

By attempting to pull together these facets of the port and in order to negotiate the literary, choreographic and visual material addressed in this study, I create a division in the structure of the dissertation that is inherently difficult to avoid. Accordingly, this text is partitioned into two main sections that, at first glance, may appear non-interacting. The first introduces the port-city nexuses of the Iberian world, social dances of Iberian ports, and ends with a brief discussion of the discourses that configure the idea of the port, in order to qualify my discussions of Cuban ports and its choreographic culture analyzed in the second chapter. The second half of the dissertation deals with the themes of stylistic mediation, revision and the national symbolism that surround and are attributed to port-city dances. In a sense, then, the work locates social dance and tethers it to the cultural imaginary of the Iberian transatlantic seaport. From there, it follows dance as it moves away from the port to the national center and to the ballroom hyper-center of dance in Europe and the United States. Of course, it must also be said that the intellectual territory and perspective presented in this study reflects my personal intellectual formation. Hence, Cuban ports and urban dances occupy a central position in this study. My intention is to outline a relationship between ports, social dance, text(s) and narratives, and the interdisciplinary mind that brings all of these into fruitful dialogue.

### Content, Issues and Objectives

As Spanish imperialism reached its nadir at the outset of the twentieth century, Cuban popular music and social dance became increasingly focal sites of national consciousness and regulation.

Insofar as social dances of urban margins attained international contours, domestic marginal versions of social dances were urgently imagined through the discourses of nationalism on the one hand, and of racial authenticity, on the other. With that in mind, this study seeks to contribute to the study of dance and nation-building in Cuba by posing the following questions: How does the conscription of the port city serve both to assert and to subvert the notion of national dance? How do various types of literary texts – in which port-cities and their musical and choreographic traditions are coded as marginal spaces and products– express and enact the transformation of the port-city/marginal other into the national self?

Chapter One looks at the way in which the creation of an Iberian imperial seascape fostered a context and commercial impetus for a variegated and evolving dance tradition based on the *fandango*. This choreographic family united vastly different cultural worlds, subverting present notions of national boundaries – and even continental and imperial ones – that still inform many musical and choreographic histories. The historicist approach I take in this chapter leaves the reader with an appreciation of Hispanic maritime dance as part of a transnational choreographic imaginary; that is, of interlinking choreographic themes, images, and kinetic motifs, which, in turn, articulate a number of psychic and social dimensions of the Hispanic ports and their inhabitants. To undertake such a reading, I turn first to *fandango*'s early harbingers, the inhabitants of harbors. The opening of this study is therefore a salutation, acknowledging the intervention of harbors in this choreographic history and of their vast transnational handiwork.

Locating Cuban urban dances within a transnational port-city context, and having identified the inhabitants of ports as the protagonists and progenitors of Cuban popular dance, in Chapter Two I illustrate the important role of the *rumba* and *son* dance complexes and related subgenres in expressing and, to a considerable extent, helping to shape modern urban mulatto

identity in Cuba. In this way I demonstrate how choreographic styles have contributed actively to processes of cultural change. Indeed, the relation between *habanero/santiaguero* identity and Cuban popular dance is particularly acute and evident. I later turn my gaze to the transit and resignification of these dances. As Yesenia Selier (2011) has noted, the enlistment of Cuba's urban underclasses in nation-building tends to have been overlooked.<sup>7</sup> Recalling the significance of these places and peoples of transit and passage, of constant egress and entry, represents a much-needed etching into history –an affidavit of the invisible.

In the two remaining chapters, which comprise the second half of this study, I examine the refinement of *rumba* and *son* in the “rhumba craze” of the 1930s. By focusing on various transmutation or ‘whitening’ of these genres, my analysis follows the movement of local dance patterns into new hyper-central choreographies that are seen to enfeeble or dilute local dance culture and to undermine its authenticity and its characteristic vitality. In Chapter Three, I examine the period extending from the Wars of Independence to the 1940's in Cuba and explain the reasons why port-city dance culture, embodied by *son*, took on a new importance during this period, as well as to highlight a number of refinements to which the dance was subjected as a result of its national and international promotion. Some of this importance is evinced by the mobilization of Cuba's intelligentsia around the idea of racial mixing as part of a quest to define Cuba's newfound national essence, and, importantly, by the enactment of Cuban identity and “Latin-ness” on the part of cosmopolitan elites in the international rhumba craze. I also highlighted the concomitant fixity and criminalization of *rumba* and other Afro-Cuban genres of dance alongside *son*'s promotion and international circulation.

---

<sup>7</sup> “Making the *Rumba* Body: René Rivero and the *Rumba* craze.” (Global Cuba, July 13, 2013), p. 88.

Versions of *son* and *rumba* covered herein include the *rumbas* of Cuban comic theater (*teatro bufo*), cabarets and social clubs. In mentioning the different domestic varieties of the dance, I also address the enigmatic usage of the term “rhumba” abroad. I conclude with a discussion of Cuban dance as it was taught by dancers Doris Lavelle and Pierre Margolle in London ballrooms during the 1940s, where rhumbas were taught to the British public that were much more akin to *son* and to the foxtrot than to traditional *rumba* from a standpoint of choreography. The creation of altered versions of traditional dances led to a set of practices and identities that cleaved apart and created new categorical divisions between the local and the foreign, “pure” and “adulterated” versions of social dance. These contrastive and mutually-opposed notions continue to occupy discussions of Cuban popular dance in the present day. Finally, in Chapter Four I turn the poetic works of the Nicolás Guillén’s “Motivos de son” (1930) and García Lorca’s “Havana Lectures” (1930), locating a shared opposition between the two poets toward global commercial ‘Latin’ dance.

### Social Dance and the Cuban Revolution

Although not explored exhaustively in this study, circumscribing this discussion is the intellectual and cultural legacy of the Cuban Revolution. The perception that revolutionary intervention into cultural and artistic life vis-à-vis the Ministry of Culture, the Offices of the City Historian and other such organs on the island acts as a panacea for the grievances of black Cubans has been prevailing, as has the notion that the Revolutionary folkloric system and its promotion of local dances reflects the oppositional, proletarian values of the ‘masses’.<sup>8</sup> Another perception is that Afrocubans and their arts fare better under the revolutionary State than under

---

<sup>8</sup> Daniel, Yvonne Payne. “Race, Gender, and Class Embodied in Cuban Dance.” *Contributions in Black Studies*, Vol.12 [1994], Art. 8, p 1.

Spanish colonialism and the commercial dominance of Western Europe and the United States that followed the interlude of Spanish rule. However, these claims have to be seen in a rhetorical context. Indeed, the revolution has enshrined the anti-colonial struggles of the late nineteenth century as an imagined golden age in Cuba that is and must be, at all times, hankered for and rediscovered, and it has annexed and redirected all artistic expression on the island in the service of that objective.

It must of course be admitted that the criticisms of the North American and Spanish legacies in Cuba are, broadly speaking, valid. As this study has made clear, there can be no disputing the fact that Cuba's musical and dance culture are replete with borrowings and influences from Spain and the United States and that the influences were transmitted as the result of political and economic inequities as well as asymmetries of race and gender. However, this is not to say that folklorization of urban underclass dances was entirely virtuous. Indeed, the primary aim of revolutionary rhetoric has been to proclaim vociferously and ad nauseam the revolution's guardianship over the Afrocuban proletariat and to demonstrate how domineering the Iberian, Western European and North American intervention has been, in contrast to the revolution itself, which has not only not undermined this local urban heritage, but has advanced and encouraged it. Interestingly enough, interest of the Castros in Afrocuban expression has had little if anything to do with an appreciation of those choreographic elements themselves. Overhauling the Hispanic and North American commercial legacy of Cuba represents the fulfillment and enforcement of the revolutionary mission. The regime anathematized and even demonized commercial expression for the greater part of the 1960s through the 1990s as vestiges of the colonial, neo-colonial and pre-revolutionary past, establishing the primacy of the

AfroCuban and the mulatto factor in state artistic policy. However, such a prescriptive adherence to tradition has made little if any room for contemporary underclass urban expression.

### Borderless Technologies & Ports

Lastly, it bears reflecting on contemporary processes of globalization, identity and how the plurality of regional and local dance cultures is currently transmitted and preserved. New borderless technologies have, in large part, rendered the physical harbor obsolete. The emergence of new media allows for unobstructed access to the system of cultural exchange. Within such a setting, the advent of YouTube can be seen to provide new platforms and conduits for the global dissemination of choreographic products and to act as harbingers of choreographic diversity, facts which account for the prominent place of YouTube videos in this study.

YouTube has become the world's most popular online video site, bringing together users from all over the world. Since its inception in 2005, YouTube has grown from a site devoted to amateur videos to one that distributes original content. It played an instrumental role in political movements such as the Arab Spring, and also in creating a number of pop icons. YouTube therefore functions both as a means of mass-commodification and distribution, but also as a means of uniting isolated and far-flung niche communities and users. On one level, it has advanced the larger process of mass-commodification and the industrialization of dance. For instance, the Imperial Society of Dancers and Dancesport, the main exponents of ballroom dance, have relied heavily on YouTube to broadcast instructional material on a massive scale. Given the status of ballroom as a global hyper-center of dance production and consumption, it is therefore not at all surprising that these schools have availed themselves of borderless communication to amplify their reach and to increase market concentration.

However, the degree that borderless communication has supported the interests and objectives of mass-market dance culture, it has also been an ally to purists and supporters of non-commercial expression. Among a myriad of examples of this countervailing phenomenon include, most notably, the Método del Cuadro del Casino referenced in the second chapter, an online channel created by Yoel Marrero, the coordinator and director of Casino Para Todos, which markets and sells “authentic” Cuban Salsa products and offers global virtual certification specifically in the online marketplace. As a consequence, local “authentic” choreographic traditions and lineages are becoming increasingly available to dancers, teachers and theoreticians, and what were formerly choreographic parochialisms have in the last several years become interconnected, forming global phenomena, identities and politics of dance.

Moreover, the era of digital connectivity highlights another aspect of choreographic evolution: borderless technologies can serve to re-territorialize a de-territorialized social dance, creating unanticipated hybrids around the world. The question becomes even more complex when one considers the fact that Cubans on the island have by and large been isolated from the tools of borderless technology and communication. Hence, the virtual culture of authentic dance or local dance in the virtual sphere now exists apart from local dance on the physical map – their input and participation delayed by a combination of political and economic factors. Cubans now eagerly await the widening of the bandwidth and the aperture of the island’s virtual harbors.

CHAPTER ONE:  
THE *FANDANGO* LEGACY: PORT CITIES AND THE TRANSMISSION OF SOCIAL  
DANCE IN THE IBERIAN MARITIME SYSTEM

Since Pierre and Huguette Chaunu published *Seville et l'Atlantique* (1983), historians have paid more attention to the dynamic forces radiating across the Atlantic and Pacific between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, scholars are frustrated by the extremely fluid nature of the region's ethnic, artistic, and political composition, which makes research on the historical processes affecting the region seem like an overwhelming task. Scholars of Hispanic maritime history feel reluctant to deal with the breadth of the region, which spanned the Antilles, Latin America, and the eastern reaches of the Pacific, while those who study dance traditions have remained enclaved in particular national traditions, perplexed by the presence of so many choreographic languages and traits in the region. Likewise, scholars who are familiar with the historical literature on the Iberian Atlantic and Pacific often hesitate in venturing into the deep ocean of literature – written in a myriad languages and describing an untold number of musical and choreographic forms. Moreover, in the last two decades, the discovery and re-creation of dances by folkloric dance troupes throughout the region makes the task of wading through sources even more unnerving. Nevertheless, this introductory chapter takes up the challenge of exploring the choreographic and commercial life of transoceanic Hispanic culture prior to the decline of Spain's global empire, mainly by using sources written in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, as well as modern scholarship in dance history and ethnomusicology. Also, many works have been produced in recent decades by experts whose erudition make possible a world historical approach of studying the Spanish and Portuguese trade routes and their relevance to

understanding the transmission of social dance throughout the Iberian world. This is chiefly an attempt to contextualize the port in choreographic systems of exchange and to address the complex ramifications of this cultural imaginary within the Iberian world.

### Chapter Contents

This chapter explains how a family of choreographic traditions, which materialized especially in the form of couple-dancing and in all-male competitive dances, accompanied the annual passage of Spanish naval convoys and their goods along the transoceanic trade routes known as the Indies Run (“Carrera de Índias”) and the Manila Acapulco Galleons. However, long-distance trade along these axes is only a part of a much broader historical dynamic of choreographic crossings, interaction, exchange, and evolution. The various dances surveyed in this chapter all were part of the topography that can be thought of as the larger *fandango* complex of the Hispanic maritime system. My intention is to weave over two centuries of history around a particular thread - that of the movement and transformation of choreographic language - into a clearly-understandable narrative. This chapter is therefore primarily for general readership, though the breadth of information I have amassed and the visual references I have collected and organized make this of use to specialists as well.

### The Iberian Maritime System and the Black Atlantic: Dance and Mestizo/Mulatto Identity

Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993) is already an extraordinarily influential work as well as a prototype for contemporary Atlantic studies, which has by now broadened considerably beyond the Anglophone and even the Atlantic scope of Gilroy’s foundational text. In his exploration of

the black Atlantic, Gilroy draws from the motif of the sailing ship, which he uses in order to evoke the transatlantic slave trade and the middle passage, and to touch on various projects for a liberating return to an African homeland. In his sixth and final chapter, “‘Jewels Brought from Bondage’: Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity”, Gilroy hones in on the theme of music, collective memory and performance, and of attendant debates about modernity. Gilroy provides a framework for understanding the transit and transformation of black music, and of the complex transnational debates about musical authenticity that have emerged in recent decades, preoccupations which are shared and explored in this chapter.

While the motif of the ship helps to establish the Atlantic world for Gilroy, the concept of the port is a complementary space and motif that invites us to entertain new parameters – especially of the relationship of oceanic trade and of slavery to the arrival, unloading and conveyance of goods and of human cargo inland and overland in the direction of other ports. In Peru and other areas along South America’s Andean Pacific coast (e.g. Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Colombia), for example, enslaved Africans were forced to continue their journey by land – most likely by mule – leaving the Atlantic Ocean behind. As Whitten and Torres point out, general studies and maps of slavery in the Americas have tended to omit these areas.<sup>9</sup> This may explain partly why what is now called “Afro-Peruvian” culture was not only buried and forgotten, but virtually eradicated under the weight of Andean culture. Thus, in order to re-

---

<sup>9</sup> *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean: Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations* Vol 1. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), x.

construct Afro-Peruvian music and dance, artists have been forced to transplant versions of Afrocuban and Afro-Brazilian music.<sup>10</sup>

The cultural complexity of the Iberian maritime system is even more discernible when we turn our attention to the choreographic cultures of Hispanic Asia, where the same standard markers of *mulatto* or *mestizo* identity of the Americas are absent, at least in terms of the racial composition of the individual, and where, nevertheless, certain features of Afrohispanic and of ‘mulatto’ dance are nevertheless re-constituted (see p. 67). Perhaps no single dance embodies the complex dynamics of ethnicity involved in the dances of the Hispanic maritime system better than the *Pandanggo*, whose choreographic fluidity is made apparent by referencing patterns that are Peninsular and American, but that are no longer recognizable as such. Its mention in this chapter is significant precisely because it places Asian Pacific dance in the Atlantic and American postcolonial field.

#### The Hispanic Maritime System: The Setting

The connection between the Spanish convoy routes and social dance cannot be understood unless we properly contextualize the Iberian maritime system. This highlights the fact that this system does not refer to a single, clearly- defined oceanic route or thoroughfare. Rather it is best viewed as a series of interconnected sea lanes and commercial routes, a network of ports and trading posts dispersed all across the Atlantic and the Pacific, with the eastern terminus at the port of Manila and the southern termini at Buenos Aires. This vast expanse was lined by harbors by strategic importance to the Spanish, and, with time, ramifications at different points led to

---

<sup>10</sup> Heidi Carolyn Feldman, “The Black Pacific: Cuban and Brazilian Echoes in the Afro-Peruvian Revival,” in “Vol. 49, No.2,” special issue, *Ethnomusicology* (Spring/Summer 2005): 206-7, JSTOR. Ulf Hannerz from *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), quoted in Feldman, 207.

transactions with harbors that were peripheral to Spanish sea lanes with the interruption of the French, British and Dutch of the Spanish monopoly of the Caribbean. As we will see, the status of Cuba as a hinge in the commercial portal to the Atlantic and Pacific trades played an important role in the cultural exchange between the Peninsula and the rest of the harbors within the Hispanic maritime system.

Foregrounding such discussions of the Iberian monopoly (or duopoly) of the oceans and the genesis of the maritime regional dance culture that thrived within it is the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate in what is now the southern Spanish province of Andalusia in 1492. The Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabel united the independent kingdoms of Aragon, Castile and Portugal within the politico-religious fold of the Catholic church, with the river port of Seville, formerly an Islamic commercial stronghold, as a prominent economic and cultural center. The final collapse of the seat of Islamic power in Europe came with the fall of Granada, at which point an array of new Catholic provinces emerged and were cleansed of their former Jewish and Islamic occupants through a combination of expulsion and forced conversion. The scope of Iberian Catholic geography was then amplified by the navigational expeditions of Columbus, which served to incorporate the nascent political apparatus of the Americas into the Crown of Castile. Other parts of the Pacific, including areas around the Indian Ocean, Macau, and the Philippines would soon be annexed into the Iberian seascape, rendering it truly global in scope. Eduardo Subirats views biological, ecological, and social destruction as one of its primary tasks of Hispanic oceanic power: of Cortez and Pizarro and all of the missionaries that followed. The conquest and colonization of America was an “extension of the so-called ‘Reconquista,’ the Re-conquest of Spanish territory, that is, the Spanish-Christian Holy War

against Spain's Muslims and Jews. The strategy of forced mass conversion and genocide, at the core of the Reconquista was carried over to America immediately after 1492.”<sup>11</sup>

Of course, any attempt to distill the complex blend of theological, cultural, and economic urges that drove Iberian expansion into a single all-encompassing imperative is bound to lack nuance. Other factors include the encroachment of the medieval jihads into the west – bringing to Iberian and, soon after, to British and North American mariners the experience of centuries of slaving and piracy – that impelled Spain’s neighbor and competitor, the Portuguese, to seek out and identify an eastward commercial sea route. The quest for precious ore in the Americas and access to the spice trade were also undoubtedly of paramount importance, both for Spanish and Portuguese overseas expansion. This threefold motivation - the aggressive desire to extend Christian sacred geography, to circumvent in turn the countervailing force of political Islam, and the striving after a commercial monopoly (or duopoly) of the Atlantic and Pacific have received extensive commentary and do not require more detailed exposition. That said, the commercial nexuses between transatlantic and trans-pacific seaports (and also river ports) that were created

---

<sup>11</sup> On the motivations for Portuguese maritime expansion, see John R. Fisher, “The Economic Aspects of Spanish Imperialism in the America, 1492-1810 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), 13-14. Subirat’s quotation appears in a self-penned review of the author’s original text, *El Continente Vacío*, (Anaya & Mario Muchnik, 1996). The review is entitled “Latin America: The Empty Continent” and appears in *Mrzine Monthly Reviews (Online)* <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/subirats081006.html> (accessed May 27, 2012).

by these pursuits are pertinent to interpreting the evolution of social dance across the Iberian world.<sup>12</sup>

The projection of Iberian forces into the Atlantic and the Pacific was accompanied by the formulation of new political and administrative units, called viceroyalties (“virreintatos”), each of which was structured around the activities of a major entrepôt port. Within the vice-regal and maritime departmental patchwork of the colonies, the institution of viceroys – a term which initially alluded to the Aragonese governors of Corsica and Sardinia – was implemented to administrate the densely-populated and wealthy satellites: New Spain (Mexico and Philippines), Peru and South America. It is also worth noting that in the Portuguese-speaking world, the dominance of center over periphery became reversed with the transferal of the Portuguese monarchy from Lisbon to Rio, whereupon the vice-regal system in South America dissolved. Volatile and ever-shifting, the vice-regal system lent a skeletal framework that enabled and expedited the intraregional dissemination of dance.

#### The Galleon Fleet System: The *Flotas*

The development by the Spanish in of a global system of convoys, fleets or armadas that rounded the Atlantic and Pacific on an annual basis also played a major role in creating a foundation for cultural and choreographic relations within the Iberian world. The convoys acted as the primary

---

<sup>12</sup> Colley, Linda. *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* (Anchor, 2004) creates a compendium of captivity narratives by everyday Britons captured as a result of Barbary piracy. She considers four zones of the British Empire—the Mediterranean, North America, India and Afghanistan—between the years 1600 and 1850, citing the capture of Britons and North Americans by jihadists conducting slave raids as far west as the town of Baltimore in Ireland. It is also especially worth noting that Miguel de Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote* (1605-1615), had spent years as a captive in the Barbary States in the late sixteenth century while serving as a soldier in a regiment in the Spanish Navy Marines.

method of circulating goods and wares through the Hispanic maritime system, including agricultural imports like lumber, silver and gold, gems, pearls, spices, sugar, tobacco, silk, and other goods from the colonies and elsewhere to the Iberian Peninsula. Because Iberian entrepôts and their inhabitants are central to both this chapter and this study, and because their formation and existence is likely to be obscure to contemporary readers and non-specialists, I will provide a general outline of Iberian naval convoy routes and attempt to explain why the port cities that peppered these routes form nodes in a commercial and cultural circuitry that facilitated the development of social dance in the Iberian world.

In its earliest incarnation, the Spanish “Fleet” followed a single trading corridor to the Antilles. Later, however, it was divided into two convoys, each with a different destination: The Antilles and the coasts of the Caribbean and Vera Cruz in the Province of New Spain. The first of these, the Caribbean Spanish West Indies or *Carrera de índias* departed in two convoys annually from the river port of Seville for Vera Cruz, in what is now Mexico, detaching ships in the West Indies and returning to Spanish ports via Havana escorted by a company of warships.<sup>13</sup> Around 1576, a Pacific route linking Acapulco with Manila was established. Named the Manila-Acapulco Galleons or *Galeón de Manila*, the new transpacific highway connected the Spanish Metropole to the port of Manila and the material wealth of the East - a commercial and military

---

<sup>13</sup> On the supervisory role of the Casa de Contratación, see Maria del Carmen Mena García, *Sevilla y las flotas de Índias*, 11. Our current understanding of the fleet system and how it functioned comes to us from Pierre Chaunu and Huguette Chaunu’s classic work of early Atlantic Studies *Seville et l’Atlantique* (1955) and Alejandro de la Fuente’s work *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011) details the organization of the Atlantic arm of the Spanish fleet system - the so-called *Carrera* or *Flota de Indias* - two centuries prior to the sugar plantation economy of the 18th and 19th century (what Pieter Emmer has called the ‘second Atlantic,’ oriented around the port of Cádiz). The book also discusses the development of Havana as a key military outpost and stopover port for the fleets on their return journey to their port of origin in Seville. William Lytl Schurz’s 1917 study of the Manila-Acapulco Galleons remains the most noteworthy book on Spain’s other major convoy and trade route and provides the much-needed Pacific half of the Hispanic maritime narrative.

ramification of Spanish imperial expansion providing a primary source of income both for Seville's traders and the colonists of Hispanic Asia. From Acapulco, Asian goods were transferred to Veracruz and to Havana where they joined the cargo of the West Indies fleets on return to their port of origin in Seville.<sup>14</sup> The axes along which the Spanish flotillas traveled comprised a number of distinct geographic areas and climatic zones, but neither maritime nor terrestrial challenges<sup>15</sup> – or even such regularly occurring cataclysms such as flooding in Hispaniola and Cuba, or the mudslides (*huaycos*) and earthquakes of Alto Peru – impeded the movements of mariners, slaves, merchants and other travelers over great distances, carving paths through mountain passes and deserts all the way to the terminus of Spanish commerce in the *boca* or mouth of the Rio de la Plata.

For their part, the Portuguese had their own convoy called the India armadas (*armadas da Índia*), organized by the crown and dispatched on an annual basis from Portugal to India, principally Goa. These armadas undertook what was called the *Carreira da Índia* ("India Run"), following the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope opened up by Vasco da Gama in 1497–1499. By now, one may choose from a muster of primary and secondary sources on this military and commercial route. Of the available primary sources, some of the more noteworthy are several centuries old and include the written commentaries of Alfonso de Albuquerque -

---

<sup>14</sup> For information on the Pacific fleets, see Schurz. Another detailed account of this trade route and of the reverse flow of Asian goods and wares from the East Indies into Spain can be found in Borrell, Miranda: *The grandeur of Viceregal Mexico: treasures from the Museo Franz Mayer*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), p 23. Another helpful source on this topic is Walton, Timothy R.: *The Spanish Treasure Fleets*. (Sarasota: Pineapple Press Inc, 2002), pp. 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> Maritime challenges include the frequent assault on fleets by Spain's maritime competitors – the French, British and Dutch. And yet, despite their rarity, losses of this kind and those caused by extreme weather on the high seas inflicted heavy economic blows to Hispanic commerce when they did transpire.

the *fidalgo* (“nobleman”) and admiral whose military activities as second governor of Portuguese India established the Portuguese colonial empire in the Indian Ocean - translated into English by Walter de Gray Birch between 1875 and 1884.

### Iberian Port Cities: An Interactive Network

Within this area of interaction, Seville (and later Cádiz) had become the commercial and cultural capital of Spanish cultural and maritime endeavor when the mariner Christopher Columbus sailed to the Caribbean from Palos de la Frontera harbor. However, its zenith arrived at the dawn of the era of Iberian navigation, “discovery,” and expansion when the city became one of the economic centers of the Spanish Empire. During this time Seville’s harbor cornered and maintained a monopoly on the trans-oceanic trade through the power of the Casa de Contratación – a period coinciding with what is still generally regarded as the Peninsula’s Golden Age of arts and literature.<sup>16</sup>

Like its Lusitanian sister, Lisbon, Seville is a multiethnic city, as well as a city of great aesthetic confluence and eclecticism. Its strategic location on the plain of the Guadalquivir River, 80 miles from the Atlantic, made it crucial to Hispanic commercial and cultural hegemony and a major center of popular musical and choreographic innovation. It owed its distinctive urban identity to new and frequent contacts between black Africans and the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, which had intensified after the fifteenth century as a result of trade and other exchanges between Spain, Portugal and North Africa. One such activity was slave trading and human trafficking. The Sevillian chronicler Jose Bermejo noted the astonishing frequency of

---

<sup>16</sup> Lepore, *Ibid.*

Iberian slaving after the second half of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, citing the transportation of “so many men” to the ports of Andalusia from the North African coast that “their number “grew to be enormous.”<sup>17</sup> Up until the transfer of Hispanic commerce to Cádiz, Seville would reinforce its position as both a military center and commercial entrepôt, leading to the diversification of services and a great surge in its urban underclass population. Accommodating these changes proved a difficult task for Iberian authorities, and unchecked population growth around ports inevitably led to creation of (my translation) a “mass of vagabonds, braggarts, criminal or simply picaroon, destined to form alongside black slaves – and later creoles and mulattos – the audience of the new forms of song and dance.”<sup>18</sup>

Latin American ports also played a key role within this commercial and choreographic network, paving the way for new dances and shuttling choreographies inter-colonially and back to the harbors of the Continent. As the “llave al Nuevo Mundo” (“key to the New World”), Havana served as the anchor of Hispanic maritime traffic in the Americas, channeling the flow of peoples and goods to and from Iberian and Spanish American ports. In a similar manner, the port of Veracruz on Mexico’s Caribbean coast acted as Europe’s door to the East and to Manila. For its part, Lima acted as the portal for Spanish convoys to access the mineral wealth of the viceroyalties of New Spain and Alto Peru, and by the first decades of the eighteenth century, the Rio de la Plata basin had been transformed into a focal point of commerce, with the port of Buenos Aires feeding the metropole the (via Lima) a steady supply of salted meats and cowhides.

---

<sup>17</sup> Tinhorão (2000), p.15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 13. The usage of the word mulatto in this instance refers to peoples of mixed-racial heritage, principally Iberian and several African ethnic origins. The usage of the term “mulatto culture,” refers to a much more encompassing mixture of Iberian identities, aesthetic and cultural norms, and those found within the vast area targeted by Iberian slavers and that already possessed an inherently pluralistic and transcultural history of its own in cultural, aesthetic and religious terms.

### The 18<sup>th</sup> Century: The *Traslado* and the Demise of the Fleet System

In 1717, Cádiz replaced Seville as the principal port city and nodal point of the convoy system, though its hispalense counterpart continued to enjoy a monopoly of port installations and trading facilities. In 1778, a series of legislative reforms opened and sanctioned trade between various Hispanic and American ports and authorized the use of vessels of non-competing powers by Spanish merchants for the purpose of colonial trade, marking the first legal departure from what had up to that time been a closed monopolistic system and the irrevocable turning point at which Cádiz began to assume the role of new capital of the commercial monopoly. In the same year the Real Cédula of September the 23<sup>rd</sup> upheld that ‘*los galeones flotas y navios que hagan viaje a las indias se carguen y despachen en Cádiz, por su puerto de Puntales*’ (‘may any galleon fleets and ships that make the voyage to the indies load and unload in Cádiz, by the port of Puntales’).<sup>19</sup>

Taken together, these measures boosted the growing partiality for Cádiz as the center of brokerage and exchange with Spain’s transoceanic satellites and reduced Seville to a bureaucratic center and to shade of its former glory. The dissolution of the fleet system created a new structure for the merchant navy which functioned on the basis of consulates and maritime companies, including the Philippines Trading Company. In 1815, the Manila galleon ceased to operate, and in 1869 the Suez Canal was opened, bringing about establishment of new sea routes

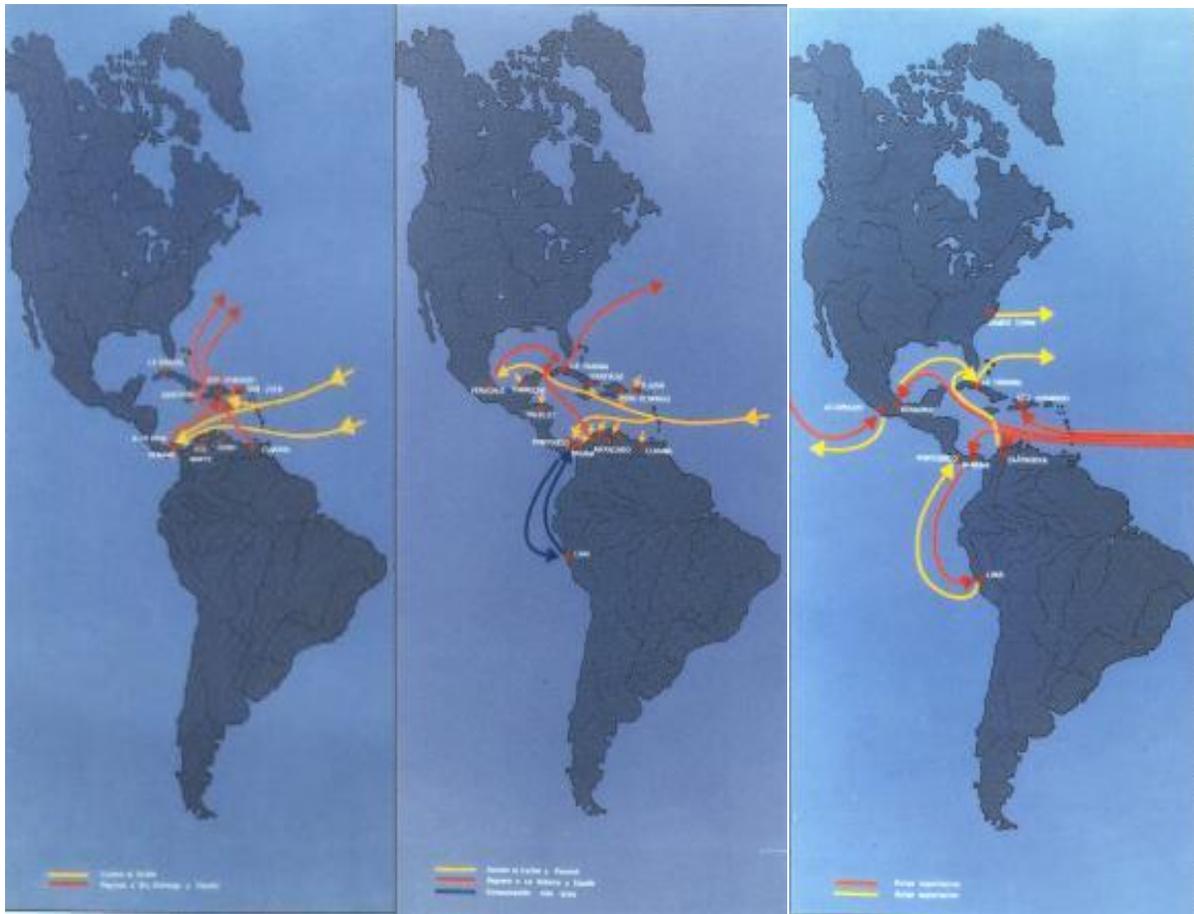
---

<sup>19</sup> Quotation and all information about the *traslado* from Seville to Cádiz available in Lepore, Amadeo. “The Port of Cádiz between the Modern and Contemporary Ages (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries),” *Seconda Università di Napoli*, January 4, 2012pp. 1-2.

and reconfiguring the region into a system of heightened interaction that can be thought of as a regional system, or, more specifically, as a maritime regional system, as I call it.

FIGURES: Many of the following maps, charts and other diagrams that I employ in this section can be found at a webpage entitled the “The Longest Transoceanic Trade Route” and is referenced where indicated. This page constitutes an indispensable visual archive of materials related to the Spanish naval convoy system (see List of Figures).

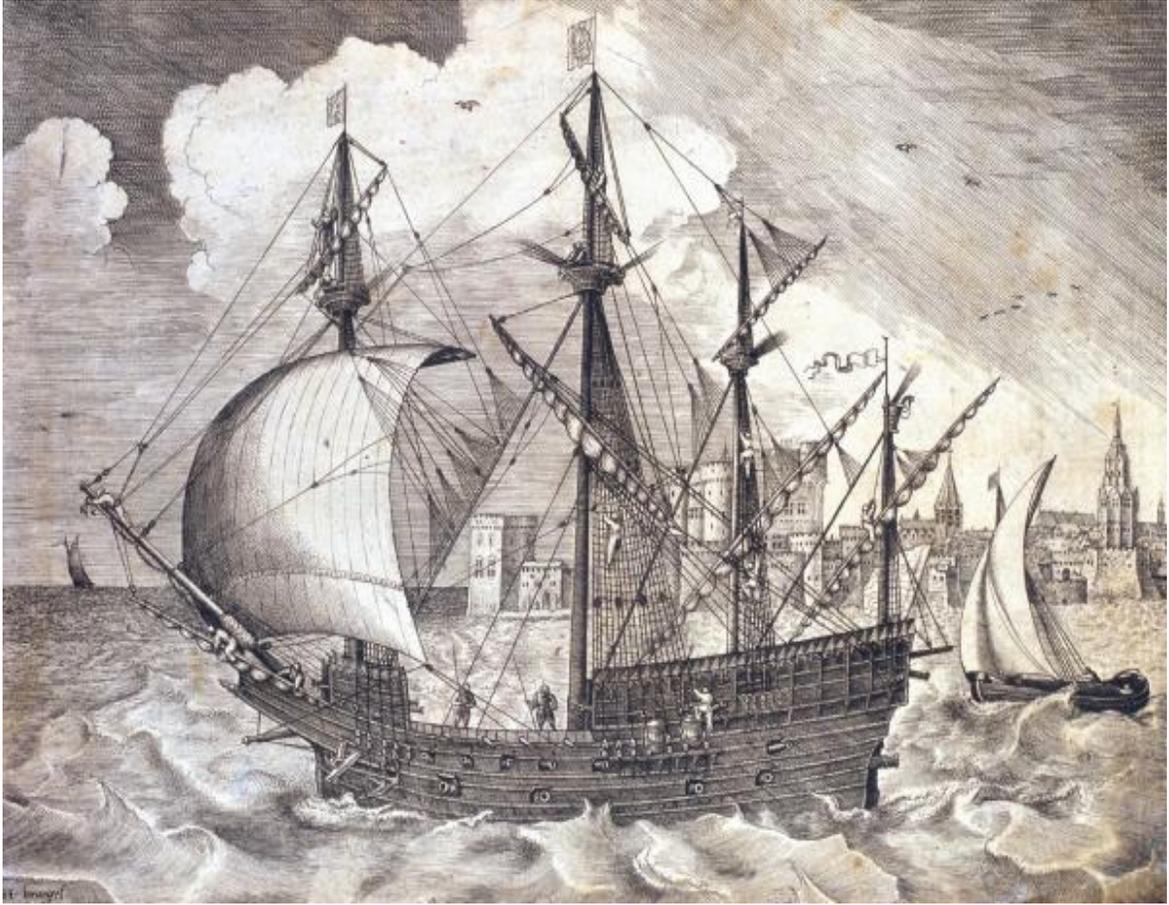
- 1) Map showing the principal sea routes during the first third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, according to Céspedes del Castillo.
- 2) Map of the sea routes used after the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Céspedes del Castillo
- 3) Map of the sea routes used during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, from Pierre Chaunu’s *Seville et l’Atlantique*.





Temporary British seizures of Havana and Manila (1762-4), during the Seven Years' War, were addressed by relying on more numerous and smaller fleets that stopped at a greater variety of ports. The above is a map of these additional ports and routes during the eighteenth century, as explained by historian Guillermo Céspedes del Castillo in *América Hispanica: 1492-1898*, Fundación Jorge Juan Marcial Pons Historia, p 387-88. These new ports include Pensacola, San Blas, Santiesteban del Puerto, Remedios, Santiago de Cuba, Batabano, Montecristi, Santo Domingo, Coatzacoalcos, Tehuantepec, Campeche, Santo Tomás, Puerto Caballos, Acajutla, Realejo, Santa Marta, Rio Hacha, Maracaibo, Puerto Cabello, La Guiara, Isla Margarita, Puerto España (Trinidad), Guayaquil, Piura, Pacasmayo, Pisco, Arica, Chilo and Maldonado.<sup>20</sup>

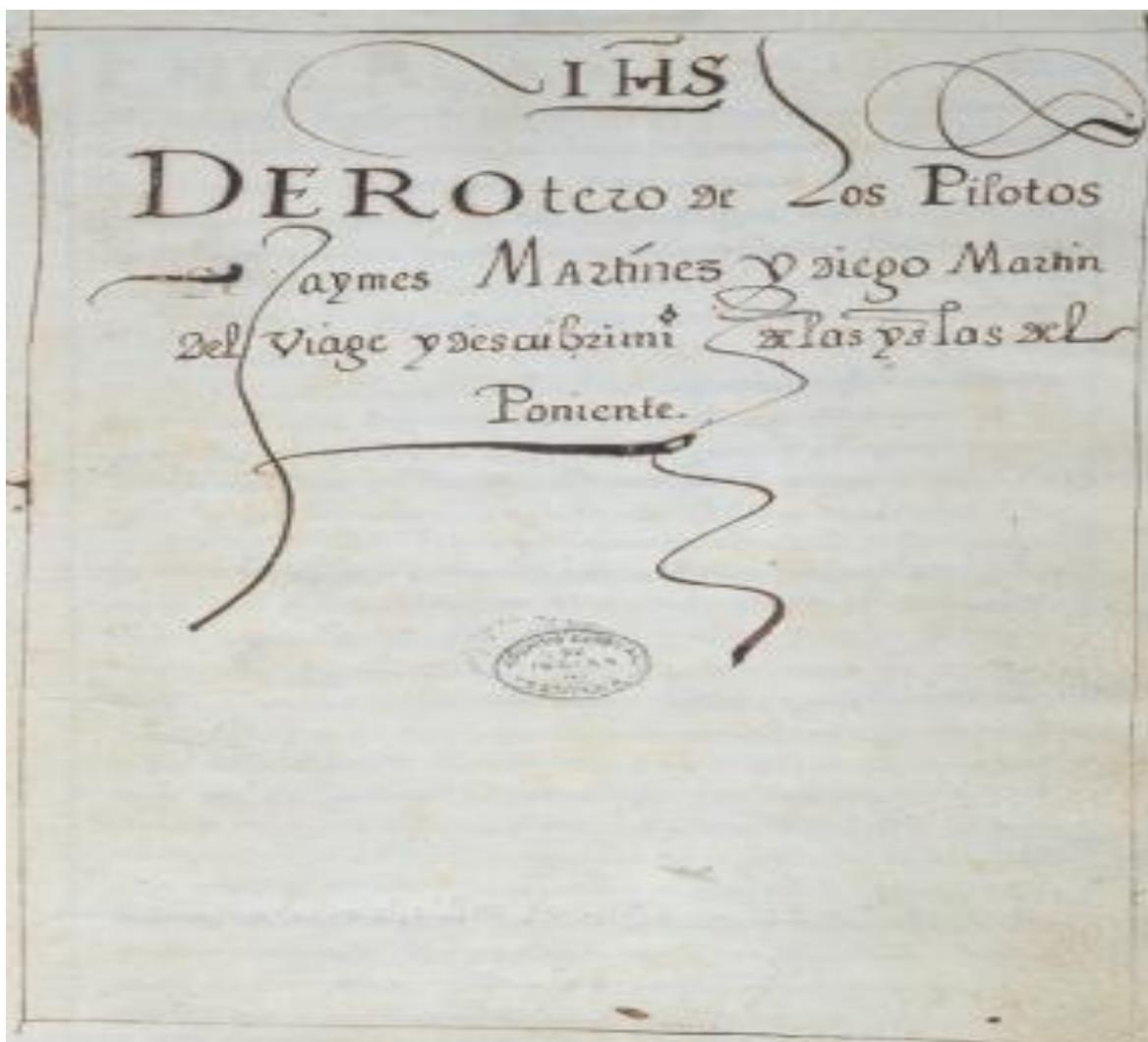
<sup>20</sup> Four maps above retrieved from "The Longest Transatlantic Trade Route"  
<http://www.armada15001900.net/THE%20LONGEST%20TRANSOCEANIC%20ROUTE.htm>



**16<sup>th</sup> century galleon. Brueghel the Elder Collection. MN (1550-60).** This figure is a rendering of the light caravel or *navio suelto* used on exploratory voyages during the first phase of the Hispanic expansion. These represent the first sea-faring vessels, giving way to larger ships, such as the more robust galleons that rounded the Iberian world following the Atlantic and Pacific convoy routes.



**Representation of the port of Veracruz. Descripciones geograficas e hydrograficas de muchas tierras y mares del Norte y del Sur, en las indias, en especial del descubrimiento del reino de California. By Nicolas de Cardona. 1632. BN.** Seen above is a view of Veracruz, the “gateway to the New World,” one of the primary arrival and departure enclaves for peoples, wares, and music and dance forms.



**Title page of the Derrotero de los pilotos Jaymes Martines y Diego Martín del Viaje...1565. AGI.** The above document itself was a nautical mapping of sea lanes and highways used in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It contains, among other things, renderings of the islands of Barbados and Ladrones as well as of the voyage to the Philippines undertaken by the mariner and conquistador Miguel López de Legazpi.

*Chacona and Zarabanda: Early Iberian Dance Crazes*

Even the most cursory glance at the dances that circulated within this combined field of navigation is sufficient to illumine the extent to which port cities interacted, even despite the Treaty of Tordesillas, a papal dispensation issued in 1484 that mandated their official disassociation and the compliance of both powers in a shared policy of non-interference. Consequently, Hispanic and Lusitanian ports became culturally interwoven, coming to constitute, as it were, a single musical and choreographic domain. Establishing a flow of goods was instrumental for commodifying social dance, allowing for its development and conveyance. At another level, this flow across territorial and linguistic boundaries served a dual and, at times, conflicting role, setting in contrast friendly choreographic negotiations on the one hand and those linked to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the human and material exploitations of Iberian colonial enterprise on the other.

New formulas of dance conveyed from the colonial distance appeared in certain historical accounts of the riches of the Antilles and detailed depictions of conquest, booty and tribute. Portrayals of the wealth of foreign lands brought to the Iberian Peninsula from the Americas proliferated also indicate the ignition of the Iberian imagination by these new conquests, and a new Peninsular veneration of the exotic. By the sixteenth century, new forms of social dance became popular in the Iberian Peninsula, thriving mainly in the Corpus Christi celebrations, a feast in the Catholic calendar commemorating the institution of the Eucharist. These celebrations typically consisted of a celebration of the mass followed by a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, which was generally displayed in a monstrance that came to include sensual interactions between couples. These new expressions, which went by the names of *chacona* and

*zarabanda*, sprang partly from an Andalusian fascination with the Antilles as a site of leisure and a carefree existence. This new Iberian tendency to exoticize the colonial distance is apparent in a collection of verses – partly composed, partly compiled, by Pedro Arias Perez in 1621 – which includes a ballad entitled "Chacona." It presents an appetizing description of an island located somewhere nebulously in the New World, whose name is also "Cucafia"-Cocaigne. The description of the ease and abundance illustrates this fascination:

The airs of this land [runs the text] are gentle breezes which caress the sense of smell with the fragrance of roses. The waters are like pure crystal, and run with mead. At every step are a thousand wine vessels set in snow. On the other shore of a river are trees, whose leaves are manchets of the finest flour, whose fruit is rusks. The pits of this fruit are slices of fat ham and bacon, ready to be roasted and eaten. A tree grows there so large that beneath its shade is space for forty thousand tables, each accommodating twenty persons. The fruit of this tree is composed of turkeys, partridges, hares, doves, sheep, heath-cocks, hens, capons and pullets. All are born roasted and exquisitely prepared, so that it seems as if this tree also bears stew-pans and cooking-pots, well-filled.<sup>21</sup>

Fascination with the Antilles among Seville's urban inhabitants included not only foreign goods, but also, apparently, an interest in the bodies of the Antillean females. Each fortunate sojourner in the isle of Chacona, we are told, is furnished with six beautiful [mulatto] serving

---

<sup>21</sup> Very, Francis G. "A Note on the Isle of Chacona and a Corpus Christi Dance." *Western Folklore*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Jul., 1959), 239. The above is Very's translation of the original Golden-Age text as it first appeared in *Primavera y flor de los mejores romances que han salido ...* (Madrid, 1621), ed. Jose Montesinos (Valencia, 1954), 94-96.

girls, a fresh one supplied every week. Small wonder that the poem concludes with a refrain, "Truly this was the good life-let's all set out for Chacona." The particular importance given to the Antilles was occasioned by the extensive trade that flowed between the river port of Seville and the port city of San Cristobal de la Habana during the first phase of Iberian navigation of the Atlantic. These two harbors, the one in Europe and the other at the gateway to the Americas, constituted the most important way-stations on the sea lanes between the Old and New Worlds.

Oddly, no single area contributed more to the eruption of Iberian dance crazes than France as a result of its monopoly on highbrow choreographic culture. As Very notes, the French penchant for stylistic fusions, especially of exotic peninsular dances with mainstays of the baroque ballroom, added to their popularity and tended to result in decidedly elitist and Franco-centric representations of what might be thought of as "Spanish dance music."<sup>22</sup> In this way, early dances like the *chacona* and its transcultural cousins, such as the *zarabanda*, functioned simply as choreographic genres that were somehow redolent of peninsular culture, of Andalusian ports, or, more commonly, as styles that evoked an idyllic life in the colonies. The ballroom and the parlor as a French hyper-center of social dance production is a recurring theme in this study, extending in geographic reach to the parlors in England, Italy, Germany and beyond and exerting a powerful influence over regional and national traditions. As Peter Manuel notes, through a complex layering of exoticizations, Spain tended to serve as the "Orient" of Europe, Andalusia as the Orient of greater Spain, and Cuba as the Orient of Andalusia. Even in Cuba and in the colonies, variations of *fandango* functioned in a similar way, romanticizing life on the fringes for the inhabitants of Iberian ports and for European elites.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Very, 243-44.

<sup>23</sup> Manuel, "The Guajira Between Cuba and Spain: A Study in Continuity and Change." *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (University of Texas Press), 156.

Accounts of these dances of departure and return reveal the circular exchanges between Iberian and American ports and suggest an imagined community made up of their inhabitants. For instance, the arrival in Seville at the beginning of the seventeenth century of the *chacona* – or “*chacona mulata*,” as it was sometimes called - is captured in this rather inconspicuous passage taken from Lope de Vega’s play *The Grateful Lover*:

¡ Vida bona, vida bona,	Oh good life, good life!
y esta vieja es la chacona	and this old lady is the chacona
De las Indias a Sevilla	She has come to Seville from the Indies
Ha venido por la posta.	Delivered by post. <sup>24</sup>

It seems likely that De Vega was writing after the appearance of the dance on the streets of Seville, if we can judge by his odd and affectionate phrase “*esta vieja es la chacona*”/ “this (dear) old lady is the chacona.” “Here she is given shelter; here she dwells and lives,” De Vega continues, expressing Spain’s giddy embrace of the new import, which spread to Iberia after it had been popularized under the name of the *ciaccone* in several Italian cities.

The personification of the *chacona*, again with special reference to its West Indian provenance (“De las Índias...,” most likely from the Antilles), soon became routine, as apparently did its growing associations with an Iberian danced gentrification. Even more interesting is the importing of the figure of the Antillian woman of mixed race (the mulatto woman, *la Indiana amulatada*) and her transformation into the local Sevillian female (*la*

---

<sup>24</sup> “El Amante Agradecido.” Edición de la Real Academia (1916-1930), t.III, p. 123. The English version has become standard translation of De Vega’s lines.

*Sevillana*). Via choreographic exchange, females of the mulatto urban underclass at both ends of the Atlantic play out choreographic relations and displacements in order to arrive at an interchangeable port-city mulatto femininity. De Vega's collapsing of Iberia and the Antilles, and of metropole and colony, extolls the port-city mulatto female as the apparent embodiment of the choreographic and popular cultural essence of Iberian port-city social dancing. And so, while we can assume that the lives of peninsular and colonial women were substantially different and that different aspects of colonial and imperial life – especially colonial and ideas about sexuality, race and identity and those on the peninsula – shaped gendered expectations in ways that have yet to be fully grasped, we see here in these lines a tendency to imagine the gulf between females on either end of the Atlantic as small or negligible.

In the Portuguese-speaking world, the choreographic commentary and record keeping of one cleric, Frei Lucas de Santa Catarina, reveals more than a grain of clerical irreverence. The existence of such choreographic departures and returns between liminal enclaves of Portuguese and Brazilian ports is recorded in greater depth in the author's *Anatomico Jocosos*, now one of the most valued and comprehensive repositories of information on early-eighteenth-century Lisboa popular culture. A sea-shanty-like entry reads, "*Do Brasil em romaria/Os sons vem ali descalcos/Criam-se ali, ali crescem. /E dali se vao pasando/Pouco a pouco para as chulas, /piam piam para os mulatos*" ("On a pilgrimage from Brazil/the sounds arrive barefoot. /There they are raised, there they grow. /And from there they change/little by little into canticles/and they chirp and chirp at the mulattos").<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> For extract from Frei Lucas's *Anatomico Jocosos* on the transformation of dance, see Tinhorão (2001), 28.

The Luso-Brazilian poet Gregorio de Matos Guerra (1636-1696) wrote in a similar vein, taking note of and extolling the transformation of popular culture at both ends of the Portuguese Atlantic with the arrival of new musical and choreographic trends from the colonies. However, Matos Guerra was also quick to pen about the pangs of conscience occasioned by the popular celebration of the *calundu*, a popular choreographic antecessor of the *lundu*: “*O que sei é que em tais danças/Satanás anda metido*” (“What I know is that within such dances/Satan lies in wait”). The poem then concludes in this vein:

<p>E quando vao confessar-se encobrem aos Padres isto, porque tem por passatempo, por costume ou por estilo. Em cumprir as penitencias  rebeldes sao, e remissos sao de jejum, e cilicios  A muitos ouço gemer com pesar muito excessivo, nao pelo horror do pecado mas sim por nao consegui-lo.</p>	<p>And when they go to confess they intimate this to the priests since they have [this] as a pastime whether by habit or by preference. And when they fulfill their penance  they are rebellious, and remiss they are fasting, wearing garters  And I’ve heard many of them groan with quite excessive regret not from the horror of the sin itself but for not committing it.<sup>26</sup></p>
--	---

---

<sup>26</sup> Gregorio de Matos Guerra, “Preceito 1,” *Obras poeticas de Gregorio de Mattos Guerra: precedidas de vida do poeta*, Volume 1. Manuel Perieira Rebello Ed. Rio de Janeiro, 1882.

The poem, of course, does not omit to remind us of the extent to which even the semi-religious dances of the black population had spread throughout the mixed-race popular classes of the port of Salvador da Bahia on Brazil's northeast coast. The above poem describes ceremonies wherein a priest ("*mestre do cachimibo*") would invoke the *calundus* in order to interpret the romantic destiny of unwanted men and women ("*mulheres desprezadas*" and "*galãs desfavorecidos*"). The poet's account of such rituals, which included dancing to the accompaniment of drumming, would have been easily recognized in its day. Other important clues can be found in Matos Guerra's verses. He also uses the words "pastime" ("*passatempo*"), "habit" ("*costume*") and personal preference ("*estilo*") to describe the attitudes of this particular set of lower-class *pardos* (Brazilians of mixed European and African ancestry) who, after a night of watching such dances, felt compelled to report their transgression at the confessional (although, as the lines tell us, it is not the crime of voyeurism that weighs on their conscience, but that of not being able to partake in the "sin" itself). This thirty-six-line poem documents, with notes of satire, the emergence and growing centrality of dances and rituals that pertain uniquely to Brazil's mulatto urban underclass. The positioning of the poet in this poem is worth noting and lands with particular forcefulness in the closing line, where Iberian monastic values of chastity, penitence are all undercut all at once. The expression for the leisurely or the extra-ecclesiastic is represented by *lundu*, which parries the Catholic monastic ethos and affirms a preference for the pluralism of mulatto syncretic religion over Iberian monotheism. Accordingly, social dance functions as an allegory of the edge, challenging imperial and clerical officialdom.

Having commented on a few choreographic forerunners of the *fandango* phenomenon in the Spanish and Portuguese speaking world, I now follow the *fandango* Iberian dance as it

traveled along the three trade axes discussed previously. With variations of *fandangos* surfacing along each of the major convoy routes, the choreographies that were created from this port-city nexus display a geographical reach and richness that reflect continuous patterns of interaction between colonized and colonizer, islands and (in a sense) mainland, and center and periphery. Following some of these interactions through the *fandango* cannot thus increase our understanding of the porous borders presented by ports and of maritime trade in the transmission, cross-fertilization and stylistic evolution of cultural artifacts.

### The *Fandango* Choreographic Lineage

Having commented on a few early choreographic forerunners of the Hispanic and Portuguese world, I will introduce the *fandango* family of musical and choreographic forms. Within this interwoven world of choreographic exchanges between the Iberian Peninsula and its colonies, the *fandango*, a genre of predominantly Hispanic affiliation, is especially ubiquitous. At its generative lies its Iberian forms, which are distinguished by distinctive ways of tap dancing and flirtatious interactions between couples, with standardized melodic and accompaniment patterns. These formulae appear to have coalesced from Spanish- and Portuguese-derived elements by the eighteenth century and have since continued to flourish and evolve in their particular port-city milieus across the Atlantic and Pacific.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> The work of historian John Charles Chasteen is indispensable to establishing a foundation upon which to connect dances of port cities of the Iberian Atlantic. In "The Prehistory of Samba: Carnival Dancing in Rio de Janeiro (1840-1917)," he speaks of the creation of a shared dance tradition that drew strongly on the African heritage of the inhabitants of Iberian transatlantic seaports in the Americas, a tradition identified most readily and most centrally by its polyrhythmic accompaniment. Chasteen cites the influence of Iberian *fandango* as fundamental to all of these port-city varieties in the sense that it provides the basic choreography of an encounter between one man and one woman, influencing the footwork by giving it more *zapateado* (a foot stamping effect for which the dancer needs shoes), and a tendency to curve and raise the arms (*braceos*) - all of which are exemplified as well by contemporary *flamenco* (32-33).

Originating sometime around the early eighteenth century, *fandango* became the dominant social dance in the Iberian world, spreading from Spain and Spanish dominions across the Atlantic and Pacific. The dance was introduced to its Lusitanian neighbor, whose influence in both oceanic systems was also considerable. Spanish and Portuguese harbors became cradles of distinctive *fandango* cultures. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, *fandango* varieties within port cities along the two galleon routes spread from ports of Hispanic Caribbean, Central and South America, and the Philippines to the hinterlands where they became called by different names as christened as national choreographies during the nineteenth century. Indeed, this fecund history of choreographic cross-fertilization is the most interesting aspect of *fandango*, which traversed the Iberian seascape, from port to port, invariably altered and often carrying a new name, like *rumba*, *mariner*, *pandanggo*, *milonga*, *fandango* and a myriad of other such choreographies, many of which have receded over the historical horizon, as the popular expressions of the disenfranchised have tended to be.<sup>28</sup>

A large number of common features existed among the dances that make up this choreographic family. Zoomorphism, specifically the mimicry of chickens, was not only the inspiration for Cuba's famed *rumba* complex, but also of an array of dances spread across the Andalusia, the Hispanic Caribbean, South America's Pacific coast, Mexico's Atlantic and Pacific

---

<sup>28</sup> In the Philippines, the word *pandanggo* is a Tagalog translation of the Spanish word *fandango* and is still the word used in reference to the national dance. Tinhorão (*Música popular de índios, negros e mestiços*, Petrópolis, 1972, 117-158) notes that many dances of the colonies became the national dances of the metropole, such as the Fofa, a mid-eighteenth-century choreographic product of Brazil. In like manner, the aforementioned *chacóna* and *sarabanda* went on, through adoption and revision by the French bourgeoisie, to become two of the staple choreographies of what is now called the baroque ballroom tradition (Very, *Ibid.*). These facts leave a nice grey area in which we entertain the question of whether or not the music and dances "of the colonizer" and those "of the colonized" - of Iberia and the Iberian colonies (and, indeed, of Europe and the Americas) - may be considered as such in the final analysis.

coastal areas and all the way to the Philippines. *Zapateo* - the intricate patterns of toe tapping and stomping of the heel - suffused throughout the dance culture not only of Spain and Portugal, but it is also perhaps the dominant point of reference for all of Latin America's *criollo* footwork. To this day, most contemporary folkloric dance companies in the Hispanic world include a local varietal of *zapateo criollo* in their performances.<sup>29</sup>

The characteristic dueling of the *fandango* family of dances can be seen in Peru Negro's all-male danced duels, on YouTube. Similar duels (reminiscent of cockfights) in Cuba continue to be danced on the street corners of cities like Matanzas, Cardenas and Alacranes. Everywhere one chooses to look: in the historic districts (the "*cascos viejos*") of San Juan, Havana, Lima and Veracruz, visitors will doubtless have come across the signature dances of courtship and gendered pursuit between men and women hunched over and encircling one another only to periodically make bodily contact (gestures suggesting the coition of roosters and hens). Variations of these gestures are found in the *umbigada* – the contact between dancers at the waist or belly – identified by Chasteen as fundamental to the development of the Brazilian maxixe and samba, as well as in the related *umbligadas* found in the dances of the Uruguayan *candombe* processions in cities like Colonia and Montevideo.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> This is a generalization, but I have determined this from spending many years looking over the available online footage of folkloric dance troupes, from the Hispanic Caribbean (especially Cuba), Mexico and Central America, the Iberian Peninsula, the Rio de la Plata Basin, the Philippines and many other areas. However, the growing number of troupes to have emerged since the early 1960s across the Hispanic world and the expansive nature of online dance culture makes an exhaustive listing of these groups and of their videos impossible.

<sup>30</sup> These dances are *rioplatense* variations on the Catholic carnival activities as found in Cuba and Brazil. *Candombe* processions are still danced in Argentinian and Uruguayan cities today. Weekly processions occur, for example, on the streets of the San Telmo neighborhood in Buenos Aires. They are occasionally found in the North in such areas as Tucuman, Salta and Jujuy, though they endemic to the *porteño* culture of the two *rioplatense* capitals.

Looking at dance in a transnational context and within a framework of manifold versions, we might also consider the notion of choreographic translation as an alternative set of optics. “Culture,” Homi Bhaba affirms in his reading of Salman Rushdie in *The Location of Culture*, “is both transnational and translational.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the Iberian maritime region may be characterized as a system of constant translation, development and transmission. The concept of translation is therefore an especially useful tool or metaphor, I would argue, in analyzing the nature of choreographic transformation and interchange between Iberian ports, not only because such translation has bridged gaps between social and performative contexts, but also in terms of the choreographic variance and ruptures that they mark. With variations of *fandangos* surfacing along each of the major convoy routes, the choreographies that were created from this port-city nexus display a geographical reach and richness that reflect continuous patterns of interaction. Following some of these interactions through the *fandango* reveal the interweaving of port cities, peoples and social strata within the Hispanic maritime system and the tension-filled process of approximation and divergence that *fandangos* underwent.

#### Peninsular *Fandangos*:

*Fandango* was the immediate choreographic successor of the *chacona* and *sarabanda* on the Peninsula, coinciding with the period of free trade and the proliferation of entrepôt ports in the Iberian world. It quickly became a dance of regional contours, with millions of adherents and practitioners across the Iberian maritime system. A lively couples’ dance traditionally accompanied by guitars and castanets or handclapping, or, alternatively, as a competitive male

---

<sup>31</sup> (2nd ed.), London, Routledge 2004, 175-98.

solo dance, the *fandango* was prominent in Iberia in instrumental, vocal and danced form; in all cases the dance was bipartite, with an instrumental introduction followed by successive cycles of improvised or semi-improvised variations.<sup>32</sup> The dance spread quickly throughout a geographical area encompassing the Iberian Peninsula, Latin America, and parts of Asia. This cross-continental circulation occurred in part as a result of exchanges in dance language and the embodied knowledge of local ports. The widespread traffic in social dance led to the development of large numbers of *fandango* varieties and a general efflorescence of the dance across continental and vice-regal borders.

After its appearance in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the *fandango* had become fashionable among the aristocracy and was often included in *tonadillas*, *zarzuelas*, ballets and operas, not only in Spain, but elsewhere in Europe as a result of French baroque stylizations of Spanish musical and choreographic material.<sup>33</sup> The choreographic traits of these parlor *fandangos* were closely related to the kinds of dancing performed in Spanish religious processions, suggesting a fixation on the form among French and among Francophile Spanish elites with *sevillano* and *habanero* street dancing. Many *fandangos* in the *flamenco* tradition, which served to crystallize *fandango*'s choreographic structure, especially those danced in Huelva near Cádiz, consist of multiple couples performing synchronized circular patterns of displacement, with plentiful styling in the arms.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> I have spent time comparing the song forms of different port-city musical styles, including the Cuban *rumba*, *son*, the *son jarocho*, the *cueca*, the *marinera*, the *milonga*, all of which share in the basic choreographic and musical procedures described above.

<sup>33</sup> The popularity of *fandango*, both instrumentally and choreographically, in places like France and Italy suggests that the exotic appeal of Spanish dance music in France [Manuel (2004), 156] continued after the *chaconne* and *sarabande* crazes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the baroque period.

<sup>34</sup> José Luis Navarro García, *Cantes y Bailes de Granada* (Arguval: 1993), 121.

In the painting below, which is an iconic baroque rendering of the Andalusian *fandango* by the French painter Pierre Chasselat, we see some of the foundational characteristics of the dance alluded to above, including the meeting and danced flirtation between a male and female, the *braceos* or *trabajo de los brazos* (the raised twirling patterns of the arms overhead), as well as a suggestion of tap dancing or *zapateado*, though such footwork is usually performed from a more grounded stance in the Spanish *flamenco* tradition and not on the balls of the feet. We also see two couples performing maneuvers that appear, more or less, to be synchronized. These elements coalesce in a typical Hispanic *fandango*, that is to say, prior to the *flamenco* era, where alternating couples and other formulas of interaction became commonplace.



Baroque-era depiction of the Iberian *Fandango*.<sup>35</sup>

A second Iberian form of the dance appeared in Portugal; where it goes by the name *Fandango do Ribatejo*. Unlike its Hispanic cousin, the Lusitanian dance involves two dancers facing off against one another in a duel of *zapateado* and singing, establishing which of the two performers is more versed in footwork and/or in vocal improvisation. The dancers and/or

<sup>35</sup> "Fandango-chasselat" by Pierre Chasselat (1753-1814) - Work by Pierre Chasselat (d. 1814; PD-Old). Licensed under Public Domain via Commons - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fandango-chasselat.jpg#/media/File:Fandango-chasselat.jpg>

vocalists may be male or female, young or old, challenging one another or engaging in what might be called a choreographic or vocal duel (*controversia*), which became paradigmatic of the dance and seems to have resulted in the association of *fandango* with a quarrel, fuss, or, otherwise, as a brilliant exploit.<sup>36</sup>

The video below illustrates a typical Lusitanian *fandango* performance. Apart from their distinctive instrumental settings, such as the use and dominance of the accordion over the guitar, there are also clear discrepancies between the two Iberian types in the dancing. Again, these *fandangos* center on duels between male dancers or, at least, on the theatricalization of one. Here we see two men who, after approaching one another and tendering a kind of ritualized salutation, part ways in order to occupy opposing corners, where they alternate at spontaneous bouts of footwork while the other marks the rhythm with a kind of basic step.



Figure. Example of a *Fandango do Ribatejo*, Portuguese male dance duel.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> This definition, again, is conventional wisdom. It is used in many popular Hispanic countries, both in the context of dance as well as in the context of everyday speech and *jerga* (slang).

<sup>37</sup> "Fandango - Lezirias do Ribatejo" February 8, 2008. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn1mI30tOBk>

### Fandangos of the Carrera de Índias

Following the convoy routes of the West Indies fleets trade, *fandangos* of various kinds are found in the ports of Havana in Western Cuba, in the nearby river port of Matanzas, and in Santiago de Cuba in Eastern Cuba, opposite Haiti. The establishment of Havana at the junction of the Caribbean, Atlantic and Pacific trade circuits as the principal point of egress and entry for the galleons made it a hub of *fandango* activity.<sup>38</sup> By the 19th century two forms of *fandango* were danced widely across the island by the island's Francophile elites. The first of these was known as the *danza* or *contradanza*, which arrived in Cuba as a direct result of interactions between the point of Havana, Santiago to Cuba, and the nearby ports of Haiti.<sup>39</sup> Built on the foundation of the peninsular *fandango*, the main characteristics of *contradanza* consisted of a meeting between male and female partner, who would stride in tranquil circular patterns of movement around one another. However, Cuban dancers seem to have added a number of embellishments, including the meeting of the couple in a closed embrace (as opposed to a hand-to-hand connection). Like the French and the Spanish versions, Cuba's *danza* also involved a partner-changing scheme based on a series of calls.

The first usage of the term *danzón*, Cuba's nationally-identified adaptation of the choreography from the 1850s, appears in Havana's daily paper, *El Triunfo*, which has been variously-cited for having provided a description of the dance as a coordinated dance of walking

---

<sup>38</sup> Alejandro de la Fuente describes Havana as the stopping point for all of the Spanish naval convoy fleets. Dance languages from all over the Hispanic world passed through Havana. While the majority of Latin American nations boast a single couple dancing lineage, Cuba has several, including the *rumba* and *son* complexes, the *danzón*, the *punto* and others.

<sup>39</sup> Carpentier, 146–47.

figures, or sequence dance, performed by groups of Matanzas blacks and mulattoes. The description speaks of dancers holding colored ribbons at both ends, and covering flower-covered arches, twisting and entwined the ribbons to make pleasing patterns. Similar sequence couple dances such as these, employing colorful props, such as candles, ribbons, scarfs (*bufandas*) can also be found throughout the Hispanic maritime world.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the *rumba* complex, explored in detail in the next chapter, reinvents and enriches Iberian *fandango* in a number of ways, dedicating entire branches to different tendencies within *fandango* choreography.

The video below shows the way in which sequence and partner-changing modes of dancing became an enduring element of Cuban popular dance after the vogue of the *contradanza* and *danzón*. Although much remains to be studied about the retention of this element during the first half of the twentieth century, it remains a staple of the evolution of *fandango* on the island alongside many of the other characteristics already mentioned.

*Rumba* is a multipart vocal, percussion and dance complex which emerged out of the social milieu of the harbor of the Guanabacoa district in Havana and the river port of Alacranes in Matanzas Province and an important elaboration of the *fandango* idea. A product of Yoruba, Congolese and Andalusian musical elements and embodied knowledge, it has since been re-conveyed to Spain as a part of a larger colonial-era commercial nexus between the ports of Havana, Cádiz and Seville and re-interpreted by gypsy musicians under the name *rumbas*

---

<sup>40</sup> See Chasteen, John Charles 2004. *National rhythms, African roots*, 75-76 for his citation of an article entitled 'El danzón', in *El Triunfo*, 25 July 1882. In terms of the use of props, this requires a much more exhaustive study, but common to the *flamenco*, *rumba*, *son*, *marinera*, *cueca*, *milonga*, and the Philippine *pandanggo* is the fact that they all make use to varying degrees of objects like candles (used for feats of balancing while executing difficult footwork), machetes and other sharp objects used in a display of virility, as well as scarfs and other colorful and other colorful objects (folds of the skirt) that are brandished to flirt and entice the male into pursuit. It seems that such objects are found both at the ballroom as well as the street-dancing end of the Iberian social dance continuum.

*flamencas*.<sup>41</sup> Like the *son*, the *rumba* is antiphonal, with a lead singer and a *coro* taking up the refrain in unison. Its lyrics may contain African or Spanish words and are articulated according to the rhythm. The older Matanzas style of *rumba* (the *rumba matancera* or *rumba de los cajones*), identifiable by the distinctive use of *cajones* (“shipping crates” used for the transportation of sugar and cod fish) in lieu of the ceremonial drums, bears the unmistakable imprint of both its maritime and river-port affiliations.

Within the *rumba* complex there are three principal types, each idiosyncratic on percussive, vocal, and choreographic levels. The *guaguancó* is a game of sexual flirtation and pursuit—explained in terms of a rooster courting or stalking a hen. Despite its sexual overtones, it is not infrequently danced within families. It is identified by the *vacunao*, designating the aggressive and sexually-charged thrusting of the arms, legs, and pelvis on the part of the male dancer as well as by the skilled evasions of the female *bailarina*.

---

<sup>41</sup> See McNeil, 128-130 for his analysis of the sugar trade and the Havana-Cádiz-Seville nexus.



Figure. Guaguancó: Vacunao. Conjunto Folclórico Nacional.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> "Guaguancó: vacunao." From "45E Anniversaire du Conjunto Folclórico Nacional: Fondé le 7 Mai, 1962." Retrieved from <http://cfnc45.blogspot.com/2007/07/galerie-rumba.html>



Figure. Guaguancó en Regla, “Los Aspirinas.”<sup>43</sup>

The video above shows a *guaguancó* danced in the modern-day neighborhood of Regla in Havana, one of the historical cradles of *rumba*. The dancers are Luis Antonio and Ismaray Chacón, members of one of the most celebrated *rumba* families in Cuba, nicknamed “Los

---

<sup>43</sup> “Baile Guaguancó: Los Aspirinas.” July 17, 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYD4waldkAA>

Aspirinas.” Luis throws a *vacunao* with his foot at 0:14, and his partner quickly covers her genitals with both hands. Another *vacunao*, this time with the hand, is executed at 0:18, where Luis moves behind her and reaches around her waist. He is masterful at distracting her with a number of false *vacunao*s (see 0:40-42), advancing toward her with flurries of foot and arm work designed to disorient her, though Ismaray is uncannily adept at evading such attempts.

The older and closely related *yambú* presents mimetic scenes of elderly seduction and flirtation (often interpreted by younger performers) against appropriately unhurried drummed accompaniment. While the male dancer may avail himself of innumerable improvised gestures to demonstrate his continued virility, the *vacunao* is strictly prohibited in this more docile choreography. The *yambú* in the video below emphasizes the dance’s mimetic character. The dancers enact and exaggerate the elderly character of the dance, with the male leaning on his walking stick and struggling to remain upright. The female supports his weight, thereby adding to the effect. As in other varieties of *fandango* surveyed in chapter one, we see the couple amble theatrically out onto the floor, setting the stage for the dance (see especially the examples of the Chilean *cueca*, the Peruvian *marinera* for cross-cultural analogs of this prelude).



Figure. *Rumba Yambú* as performed by Conjunto de Claves y Guaguancó<sup>44</sup>

*Columbia*, the fastest of the three main types, is danced by consecutive male soloists and showcases acrobatic virtuosity, prowess, and danced antagonism. This dance is also zoomorphic and is often seen as a metaphor in movement of the cock fight- because of its combative physical gestures, including a range of acrobatic feats. The outwardly combative appearance of *columbia* is counterbalanced by its interactive and conversational aspect, as soloists and percussionists enter into a dialogue of footwork and drumming on the high-pitched *quinto*, which alternates between a leading and accompanying capacity. *Rumba* specialists such as Yvonne Payne Daniel have drawn parallels between the male competitive *rumba* and the male solo dancing that takes place in the secret society gatherings of the “Abakuá” or “Carabalí” in Havana, alluding to Cuba’s transplanted slave population from areas surrounding the Cross River

---

<sup>44</sup> “Conjunto de Claves y Guaguancó: Yambu” from Cuban TV Special “La *Rumba*.” November 25, 2006. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_Nl1iyYIWg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_Nl1iyYIWg)

Estuary and the river port of Calabar in modern Nigeria. The stylistic affinity and confluence of *rumba columbia* and *abakuá* dance might therefore be conceived of as a form of cultural syncretism --a meeting and negotiation of two port choreographic systems or, perhaps, as the recreation of one port dance system within the vocabulary of another.<sup>45</sup>



*Rumba Columbia* as performed by Folclórico Nacional, *Columbia* solo with candle stick<sup>46</sup>

The *columbia* danced above by members of Conjunto Folclórico Nacional demonstrates the confluence of several defining aspects of the dance. The dance portion of the performance, which normally coincides with the improvised call-and-response section of the vocals, begins at

---

<sup>45</sup> Daniel, "Changing Values in Cuban *Rumba*: A Lower Class Dance Appropriated by the Revolution," *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Autumn, 1991), 2-3. See also Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 20, 36, 79.

<sup>46</sup> "Conjunto Folclórico Nacional: Columbia." December 11, 2006. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auwn\\_9jgHbw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auwn_9jgHbw)

around 2:00. We see several dancers engaging in a *controversia* – a danced cock fight – with each dancer improvising in sequence. The first dancer performs footwork while balancing a candle on his head (recall the use of candles as props in the Philippine *pandanggo saw ilaw* dance), followed by a sequence of male *rumbero* soloists, all of whom attempt the *columbia de los machetes*, brandishing the machetes used to by slaves to cut sugar cane and attempting daring strikes and arm work without cutting themselves. These gestures of combat and bravura link the *columbia* to other male solo dances of the *fandango* family.

*Rumbas de santo* or *batarumbas* are a relatively recent variation identified and classified by Yvonne Daniel. They were formulated during the mid-1980's in Matanzas Province and interlace secular modes of dance (such as contemporary Cuban salsa partnering or *casino* styling) as well as the vast array of Yoruba ritual invocations, rhythms, and dances, into the already densely multilayered cultural tapestry of *rumba brava*. After the sung section of the *rumba* many dancers enter the circular space in front of the drums with *guaguancó* steps, diverging from the sequential formula of the three basic types. Responding to a combination of percussive and vocal cues, couples then repeatedly shift back and forth between *guaguancó* forward-leaning and flexed posture and format of gendered pursuit, the upright body position and linear travel patterns of *son*, and the intricate turning combinations of *casino*. Finally, accompanied by a refrain of Yoruba chants, the dance segment closes with the characteristic gestures pertaining to the individual deities of the Yoruba pantheon.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Daniel, "Changing Values in Cuban *Rumba*," 3. There are one or two examples of these more recent types of *rumba* on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7kcAUoALTA>. However, the percussion is the only element that is showcased. Regardless, much has changed over the course of the last years in terms of the interaction between secular and religious Afrocuban music and dance. Religious repertoire, such as *Santería* and *Abakua* dance, has become increasingly interlaced with *rumba* in recent years on the island.

*Fandangos* of South America:

Spain's occupation of the pacific coast of South America allowed *fandangos* to cross overland, creating hinterland varieties of the dance, *bailes de tierra adentro* and *bailes serranos*.<sup>48</sup> The passage of traders, slaves and dances in what is now Chile, Bolivia and Peru produced yet another variation of the *fandango* known as the *zamacueca* that became a vice-regal dance craze in Alto Peru. Dances going by the abbreviated name of *cueca* have become associated with the national choreographic canon of Chile and Bolivia. The dance appears to have developed into a more *serrano* and/or *ranchero* dance, that is, of the plebeian culture of the mountains, including the use of ponchos, handkerchiefs and clothing associated with cattle ranching.

Like the Cuban *rumba* complex, the *cueca* is a zoomorphic and mimetic dance, reenacting the courtship of a rooster and a hen. The man approaches the woman and offers his arm, then the woman accompanies him and they walk around the room. They then face each other, hold their handkerchief in the air, and begin to dance. In the absence of physical contact, dancers engage through facial expressions and movements. Mirroring the *guaguancó*, the man is often seen holding a handkerchief to lure the woman, his movements and gestures both sensual and aggressive as he attempts to outmaneuver his partner, who, like the female *rumba* dancer, is at all times elusive, flirtatious and demure. While the Cuban courting dance generally unfolds in the man's favor, the *cueca* theatricalizes the triumph of the female, often ending with the man kneeling vanquished while the woman rests her foot triumphantly over his knee. Various

---

<sup>48</sup> This is a common expression used to refer to cultural forms associated with the interior or hinterland.

versions of this basic formula are found throughout Bolivia, in the cities of La Paz, Potosí and Sucre, as well as in Cochabamba and Tarija. In Peru, this dance went by the name the *marinera*, a name that suggests a linkage with the navy, with maritime culture, or, perhaps, with the Pacific coastal identity of sorts.



Figure. Zamacueca Dance.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> "Zamacueca-Chile" by Manuel Antonio Caro Olavarría - [www.portaldearte.cl](http://www.portaldearte.cl). Licensed under Public Domain via Commons - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zamacueca-Chile.jpg#/media/File:Zamacueca-Chile.jpg>



Figure. The Chilean *Cueca*. Championship dance.<sup>50</sup>

The particular *cueca* danced above allows us to appreciate the way in which the different types of *fandangos* often embraced characteristics from several other *fandango* strains. For instance, the theatrical saunter around the floor is a defining characteristic of the Cuban *danza*, *danzón* and of their shared predecessor, the *contredanse*. All of these dances, begin with a choreographed lap or *paseo* around the room, simulating real-life encounters between couples in elite parlors, salons, as well as in lowlier spaces where plebeian *mestizos* might meet and dance socially. We then see the male dancer pursue the woman, covering great distances on the dancefloor, mirroring with remarkable exactitude, the conventions of Cuban *rumba guaguancó*. Among other parallels may be counted the shimmying movements of the male, signifying the

<sup>50</sup> "Campeones de Cueca Chile," May 14, 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxfX04AW7oM>

ruffling of feathers. Other characteristics, such as impromptu *zapateo*, occasional clapping of the hands (*palmadas*), the wielding of handkerchiefs as decorative props and the twirling patterns of the arms above the head again and along other planes of motion all echo the Andalusian parent genre.



Figure. La Marinera Peruana/Peruvian *Fandango*<sup>51</sup>

These characteristics are more or less re-created in the Peruvian *marinera* (see above), though the *marinera* owes its opening sequence and its character less to the sequence-dancing approach of the *danzón* and more to the sexual pursuit formula of the Cuban *rumba*, where we find a separation of the couples from beginning to end. Sexual provocation by the woman with

<sup>51</sup> “Marinera Limeña Resbalosa (baile y canto) Evocación Criolla (Peru)” April 2, 2012. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2pi\\_eCSEGG](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2pi_eCSEGG)

sensual movement of her hips, a flirtatious smile and evasive manoeuvres that cause her to always look away from his glance are also hallmarks of the Cuban complex. The male, all the while, moves calmly and confidently in her direction, making frequent displays of virility through his footwork and in his handling of his kerchief.

#### *Fandangos* in the Southern Cone: Buenos Aires & Montevideo:

Like their Chilean and Peruvian cousins, the Argentinian *milonga* and *tango* dances make use of concepts from the sensuality and competitive dueling of Iberian *fandango*. These dances also owe much to the Cuban *danzón* as well as its choreographic heir, the *son*, whose influence is especially evident, musically, through the use of the *habanera* rhythm, a rhythmic cell consisting of a dotted quarter-note followed by three eighth-notes, with an accent on the first and third notes.<sup>52</sup> This figure is ubiquitous in *rioplatense* rhythms and forms the bass line of the tango.<sup>53</sup> For those who dance the port-city *rioplatense* version of the dance (as distinct from its more recent ballroom and cinematic incarnations) and keep up the great cult of its admiration in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, the writings of the author Jorge Luis Borges continue to define its authenticity and its zeitgeist. Here is how Borges' remarks on *tango* appear in Elliot Weinberger's compendium of the author's works of nonfiction. In this passage, one of the few

---

<sup>52</sup> *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean: An Encyclopedic History*. Malena Kuss, Ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), p. 165.

<sup>53</sup> As a bassist, I have spent time immersed in different Latin American popular musics, and I have found remarkable similarities between Cuban bass figures (*tumbaos*) and some of its precursors, with popular *tango* bass lines. In fact, the *tumbao* of traditional Cuban *son montuno* rhythm often depart from their syncopated phrasing and include sequences of four successive quarter notes, imparting to the dance the feeling of a walk. This is, of course, one of the primary characteristics of *rioplatense* couple dancing like the *milonga* and the *tango*. Claims that root *tango* musically in the *danzón* are numerous, though few books trace its choreography to the *son* with the exception of Tom Miller's travelogue *Cuba: True Stories* (San Francisco: Traveler's Tales, 2004), in his chapter on the famous Casa del Tango in Central Havana where the dance is supposed to have acquired its more advanced figures through the influence of local *soneros* in the 1930s.

that address the choreography of the dance, Borges has just finished comparing two *tango*-inspired poems selected from the “Heretic Masses” of Evaristo Carriego, whose biography Borges would later write. In the first, Carriego portrays men dancing in pairs on street corners, since the women of the town would not want to take part in such “lewd debauchery” - a custom which Borges confirms from his boyhood experiences in the Buenos-Aires neighborhood of Palermo. The second lyric depicts a humble wedding party: the groom’s brother is in jail; two rowdy boys are poised for a fight, and the bride’s uncle “takes it upon himself/to see that the dancing stays proper though festive,” on which Borges remarks:

The momentary glimpse of the strict uncle, which the two stanzas capture, highlights people’s first reaction to the tango - “that reptile from the brothel,” as Lugones would define it with laconic contempt (El Payador, 117). It took many years for the Northside to compel the tenements to adopt the tango - by then made respectable by Paris, of course - and I am not sure that this has been completely successful. What was once a devilish orgy is now a way of walking.<sup>54</sup>

So unmistakable is the “walk” enshrined in these sentences that most lay Argentines (and Uruguayans) would recognize it as iconic to the dance imaginary and popular lore of the entire Rio de la Plata basin. The ability to “walk the tango” was, after all, the style preferred by the old *tangueros* dancing in the Barrio Alto and around Puerto Madero before the later arrival of more elaborate ballroom- and Hollywood-inspired turning patterns, but it is also the swagger of the mythical urban *compadrito*, the sophisticated guardian of the *orillas* - Buenos Aires’ riverside

---

<sup>54</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, “A History of the Tango,” in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Elliot Weinberger, trans. Elliot Weinberger, Esther Allen, and Suzanne Jill Levine (New York: Penguin, 1999), 395-396

demimonde – always wielding a knife; a pimp, brawler and dancer of *tangos* and *milongas*. These are the characteristics that coalesce in this consecrated paradigm of Argentinean underworld masculinity. But *tango*'s imputed sense of orgiastic violence (or, perhaps, of violent orgy) is given an even more numinous treatment in Borges's essay. In one of his ballads, the Spanish baroque writer Francisco de Quevedo called a duel a "dance of swords" - nearly identical to "game of swords" ("*sweorda gelac*") appearing in the anonymous Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* in reference to a battle. Bearing in mind Schopenhauer's *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Borges notes that "[Quevedo's] Dance of swords...invites us to link two dissimilar images in order for 'dance' to imbue 'combat' with joy, but it does not speak directly to our blood, does not recreate such joy in us...; the old *tango*, as music, immediately transmits that joy of combat which Greek and German poets, long ago, tried to express in words."<sup>55</sup>

The notion of a duel and of a sensual or romantic encounter are both central to the concept of *fandango* and are interlaced both in *tango* lore and in the choreography itself, producing gender-bending contradictions, as shown in the video below. Male-on-male *tangos* are both ubiquitous in Argentina and Uruguayan ports and are proverbially known for being one of the earliest ways in which *tango* was practiced and perfected. Men conjure the *compadrito* of *bonairense* urban lore, channeling his edginess and violence, but they also learn to project the effeminate elegance of followers.

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 397.



Figure (above). Male Tango (as danced at the ports of Montevideo and Buenos Aires in the absence of female partners during the early twentieth century)<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> “Los Hermanos Marcana.” February 12, 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbbnIUeDs9U>



Figure. “*La caminata*,” Antonio Todaro and partner “walking” the *tango*, a hallmark of the traditional *rioplatense* version of the *tango*.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Fandangos* of the Manila Acapulco Galleons:

In this section I focus on the characteristics of the main *fandango* varieties found along the Manila galleon trade route, which include those of the port cities of Veracruz and Manila. These

---

<sup>57</sup> Rick McGarrey. “Searching for the Modern Style: A brief history and some women’s techniques.” From “Tango and Chaos in Buenos Aires.” (Publication date unknown). Retrieved from [http://www.tangoandchaos.org/chapt\\_3search/5todaro.htm](http://www.tangoandchaos.org/chapt_3search/5todaro.htm)

*fandangos* of the Pacific have much in common with their Atlantic counterparts, illustrating cultural and choreographic continuities between the two maritime systems. Again, these interactions likely occurred in Havana, where ships going to and returning from each convoy route anchored to take on supplies. The first of these varieties is the *fandango jarocho*, which is regarded as the regional dance of Mexico's Caribbean coastline, as well as the official dance of port city of Veracruz, historically the site of the oldest and most important port in Mexico and of an enduring blend of Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic styles of music and dance. Like other *fandango*-based dances, female dancers known as *jarochas* improvise flirtatiously with their white frilly colonial skirts, while the male dancers perform *zapateado* patterns derived from *fandango*. These *fandangos* of the port generated the later *son jarocho*, Mexico's national dance, which displays an amalgam of *fandango* traits from Andalusia, Havana and Veracruz, recognizable today in the Andalusian *flamenco seguidiyas* and the Cuban *guajira* dances of the island's more Hispanic interior.

In the video below, we see a typical *fandango jarocho*, characterized by a set of choreographic figures performed by multiple couples, who move around each other (frequently switching partners, as in the *contradanza* and the *danzón*) while performing a variety of coordinated stomping patterns and twirling movements of the arms and hands above the head. There is a close resemblance to Cuban *fandango* counterpart dances – especially in the use of the Cuban *guayabera* – but there are also includes a number of distinctly Iberian elements in the attire, such as the fan, flowers arrayed on the headpiece, aprons, a lace top, and Andalusian footwear, which amplifies the percussive effect of the heel-stomping.



Example of the Fandango/Son Jarocho Veracruzano.<sup>58</sup>

The second major *fandango* variety found along the Hispanic Pacific convoy route is the *pandanggo saw ilaw*, which is one of a great variety of *fandango* types danced in Manila. The *fandango* arrived in the Philippines during the 18th century, becoming a popular dance among the elites and later adapted by different communities. The different versions of the Philippine *pandanggo* are unified by the shared feature of handclapping, or *palmadas*, common to Iberian, Cuban, Peruvian and other *fandango* lineages. In *pandanggo* below, we again find coordinated

---

<sup>58</sup> "Mexican Folk Dance: Fandango Jarocho & La Bruja." September 20, 2015. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMu3ywj\\_8qE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMu3ywj_8qE)

figures executed in unison by multiple dancers, waving and twirling candles over their heads and below their waists in the place of handkerchiefs or other such props.



Figure. Philippine *Fandango* or Pandanggo Sa Ilaw.<sup>59</sup>

Other Manila *pandanggos* share features of the Portuguese *fandango do Ribatejo*. In the video below, which depicts a *pandanggo rinconada* we find again the Lusitanian formula of a single competing couple, who engage in a *zapateo* controversy until a victor emerges. When one couple tires or a particular danced *controversia* winds down, another couple might enter the circle in rapid succession. However, like the all-male *columbia* form of Cuban *rumba*, the musical accompaniment accelerates after each repetition until the dancers are finished.

---

<sup>59</sup> "Philippine Folk Dance Pandanggo Sa Ilaw" January 20, 2009. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwVFufKoscU>



Figure. Philippine *Fandango* Duel, Pandanggo Rinconada.<sup>60</sup>

The *pandanggo* above, which hails from the Rinconada District in Camarines Sur, displays the various characteristics listed previously, reproducing in several ways the Portuguese version of the dance. Especially noteworthy in this choreography is the alternation of soloists while the opposite dancer stands in place marking the beat, in this case through handclapping. Although in this particular *pandanggo* the movements of the male and female dancers are all apparently choreographed and synchronized, they nevertheless serve to create the appearance of controversy, spontaneity and liveliness that define the Portuguese style. The presence of the

---

<sup>60</sup> "Philippine Folk Dance – Pandanggo Rinconada." January 25, 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxj0D2RMKjo>

Catholic cross in the background bespeaks the occasional connection of *pandanggo* to religious processions, showing a confluence between this *fandango* and similar Iberian processional dances lineages.<sup>61</sup>

### 3 Charts:

The Spanish dances of the period that appear on this list have been subject of little study when compared to either English country dance or the French styles. However, French ballroom dances such as the minuet were widely adopted at fashionable courts. Beyond this, the evolution and cross-fertilization of dance styles is an area of ongoing research.

- 1) Stratification of social dance in the Iberian world, including choreographic hyper-centers (France, Italy, Germany)
- 2) Versions of the Iberian *fandango*, both courtly (*danza*) and popular (*baile*)
- 3) Stratification of couples dancing according to the following categories: 1) European ballroom; 2) Iberophile (European and North American re-creations of national traditions; 3) National traditions; 4) Regional & local choreographic lineages.

---

<sup>61</sup> Francis Very (Ibid) has demonstrated that one type of *chacóna*, mentioned earlier, was associated with the Corpus Christi celebrations in Spain during the Siglo de Oro, along with the *Sarabanda*, *Morisco* and other choreographies known as *bayles de cascabel*. The existence of religious processions in the Philippines called *fandangos* suggests that Peninsular *fandangos* may also have been found in such processions. The presence of popular dance in Iberian processions is also discussed in depth by Gerardo Fernandez and Fernando Juarez in *Estabilidad y Conflicto en la Fiesta del Corpus Christi* (La Mancha: 2002). *Rumbas* in Cuba are believed to be linked musically to the *comparsa* rhythms of the Catholic carnival, performed on Día de Reyes. This view seems demonstrable in light of their shared basis in *rumba clave*, suggesting that the dance may have been danced in the context of carnival when restrictions on black styles of dance were permitted. My research has also shown a consistent connection between social dance and popular religiosity in the Iberian world. Catholic and syncretic religious fraternities, referred to as *cofradías*, figure heavily in the history of popular dance in both the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking worlds, as analyzed by Tinhorão in *Os negros em Portugal: uma presença silenciosa* (Caminho: 1988), which is a foundational study of African and Afro-American contributions to Portuguese popular culture.

1.

<b>English/French</b>	<b>Franco-Iberian</b>	<b>Peninsular</b>	<b>Local (port-city)</b>
Waltz	Canarie	Canario	Zapateo
Minuet/Menuet	Chaconne	Chacona	Fandango
Bourree	Passacaille/Pasacaglia	Zarabanda	
Passepied	Sarabande	Fandango	
		Jota	
Forlane	Folia		
Musette	Fandango		
Tambourin	Fofa		
Rigaudon			
Gavotte			
Gigue**			
Loure (slow Gigue)			
Courante			

2.

Franco-Iberian	Regional
Dances/Danzas	Bailes/Corpus Christi
Fandango	Ribatejo
(Chacona)	Murciana
(Sarabanda)	Malegueña
(Pasacalle)	Granadina
	Muricana
	Rondeña
	Morisco
	Valenciana
	Canario

The figure above schematizes Iberian dance according to *danzas*, which were courtly dances shared by Iberian and French aristocracy; and *bailes*: theatrical and popular dances found in religious processions and carnivals. As Francis Very documents in his study of the *chacona*, it was common to find multiple versions of the same dance across these categories. Many *danzas* often appeared in Corpus Christi processions with a different choreography, allowing for freer movement of the limbs and which were closely monitored by the Deputation of Ceremonies and the Ecclesiastical Council.

3.

European	Iberophile/'Latin'	National Dance	Local/Regional
Walz	Rhumba	Rumba complex	Rumba Matancera
Menuet	Mambo		Son Oriental/Santiaguero
Quadrille	Cha-Cha-Cha		Conga de los Oyos
Country Danse	Paso Doble	Flamenco complex	Fandangos de Huelva
Mazurca	Samba	Maxixe, Samba	Samba de Pe, Samba do Morro
Shotische	Habanera	Marinera	Fandango del Callao
Polka		Zamacueca, Cueca	Fandango Chileno
Fox-Trot			
		Son & Fandango jarocho	Son Veracruzano
		Milonga, Tango	Tango porteño
		Pandanggo	Saw Ilaw (Manila), Rinconada

### Rueda de Casino– A Case Study of Choreographic Cross-Pollinations

The *rueda de casino*, which is a popular choreographic practice in Cuba, is presented here through an examination of a particular contemporary performance in Santiago de Cuba in Oriente Province. Christopher Rogicki of Fuákata Cuban Dance has named and transcribed some of the *rueda* moves taken from this particular choreography, which enables me to represent the performance as it appears on screen and to map its choreographic grammar and to indicate instances of choreographic echoes of *fandangos* from around the Hispanic maritime world. In the future, it is my intention to develop this into a separate work.

The *rueda* is performed to the song “Mi amiga chichi,” of the group Elito Revé y su Charangón, a particularly popular group within Oriente Province known for its blend of *timba* with *son* and *changüi* repertoire. Like most Cuban popular song, this one consists of three sections (see my comments in Chapter Four). The first part or introduction corresponds to the entrance of the dancers onto the dancefloor. The verse section begins with the *rueda* and the *montuno* or antiphonal section corresponds with the onset of the more ornate figures.



Figure. *Rueda de Casino* from Santiago de Cuba.<sup>1</sup>

## Historical Overview

The *rueda de casino* was first introduced in the social clubs of Havana, such as the Casino Deportivo de la Playa. It developed as a form of *son* that was updated to accommodate the arrival of new forms of music and dance from the States, most notably the Lindy Hop, to which it owes its basic open-position step. To dance *son* as it was danced in the casinos was quickly referred to as “casino dancing” (“bailar casino”) and to dance Rueda was a practice that quickly took root in the nascent casino culture of 1950s Havana. The dance spread across the island, and now each region, city and neighborhood has its own *rueda*. By looking at a *rueda* from Santiago de Cuba, the island’s chief eastern port, we are looking at a *rueda* culture that has been enriched by several cultures. The kinds of choreographic confluences that are found in *rueda* performances like the above owe their complexity to the fact that the port has always served as an important area of commercial activity and cultural transition. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and in particular in the wake of the Haitian slave revolt in 1791, when the city received a large influx of French and British immigrants. The amalgam of French and English courtly dances from the European hyper-center with other choreographic lineage streams from Iberian and African (Bantu and Mandinka) cultures makes Santiago a particularly productive site for the social dance analyst. When we add to this already abundant mixture the influence of salsa, reggaeton, hip-hop and other contemporary dances from Western Cuba, the Caribbean and the US, this *rueda* presents a fascinating case study for intra-insular, transnational and trans-generational interactions and cross-pollinations in social dance.

There are, in the *rueda*, several steps that dancers of any group will have in common.

They are as follows:

Figure	Execution
Basic	Basic forward & back Salsa step from closed position
Abajo	Down (Same as basic step but pivoting shoulders & hips
Exhíbela	Exhibit her (Right turn for followers while leaders step side-to-side
Dile que No	Tell her no (Cross body lead into open position. See following video for explanation and demonstration <a href="http://youtu.be/afOzmMBdCBk">http://youtu.be/afOzmMBdCBk</a> )
Guapea	Cuban Basic Step in Open Position where Leaders & Followers both step Back & Forth Mirroring each other
Dame	Give me (1) (Partner changing in the Rueda - <a href="https://youtu.be/3APWuCjHSD4">https://youtu.be/3APWuCjHSD4</a> )
Dame Otra/Dame 2*	Consecutive partner-changing/skip one follower and dile que no.
Enchufla (Doble)	Plug (Leader & follower switch positions - twice for “Enchufla Doble,” ending with a Dile que No. See <a href="http://youtu.be/oLfQHT-JnlA">http://youtu.be/oLfQHT-JnlA</a> )
Un Fly	
<u>Vacílala*</u>	Like Exhibela. Couple separates, outside turn for follower.
Vacila con paseo	Vacila and three Enchufla steps
Paséala*	Two consecutive Dile que no’s while passing follower behind back

Bing Bong

Adiós con la Hermana\*

From open position to closed position and change partners

Siete

Setenta\*

Coca Cola\*

Dile que no and inside turn for follower

The *rueda* may be danced by any number of couples. Although conventional *rueda* is danced in a circle, certain groups and choreographers incorporate linear in and other geometric patterns combinations involving columns of couples. Couples are evenly-spaced and arranged in close proximity, such that, from open position, the follower of the neighboring couples is within an arm length for partner changing (*dame*). The leader or caller should be clearly audible or otherwise use hand signals that correspond to the movements. Unless the choreography or figures prescribe opposition or non-conformity, all the couples will execute the exact same steps and figures, and, as it is in the cases of its sequence-dance antecedents like the *Menuet*, *contredanse* and *quadrille*, uniformity of movement is one of the defining features of *rueda de casino*. In the video below, we follow the dancers of the *rueda* group Casino.com under the leadership of Yanek Revilla Romero, paying careful attention to the choreographic grammar of the *rueda* and the origin or reference points of the different choreographed group figures.

This is a first step in understanding and in demonstrating the confluence of choreographic practices within the Iberian maritime system. Note, I include the input of the French and English ballroom in view of the fact that Spanish elites and French elites danced in this same repertoire,

and that this repertoire is known in dance circles to have entered Cuba choreographic via the main slaving harbors in Haiti, such as Cap Francais and Môle Saint-Nicholas during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### PRELUDE (0.01-1.01)

##### Description:

The male partner conducts his lady into the position in the column to which the couple has been assigned. Upon completing improvised sequence of casino figures, each couple comes to a pause and stands motionless in closed position, a procedure known as “*manequín*”. They await the arrival of each couple to the circle. Each of the figures employed has a rich transcultural history of its own\*. For the purposes of this analysis, I will be focusing exclusively on the choreographed partner-changing figures.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Couple; Jonar and Zudián (0.01 – 0.16)

##### Figure:

##### Execution

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Salida                              | Entry onto the dance floor                                       |
| 2. Paseala                             | Transition from cross-body lead, passing follower behind back    |
| 3. Hook spin                           | leader’s outside turn over right shoulder) beat ‘5’, ‘6’ and ‘7’ |
| 4. Vacílala.                           |  |
| 5. Dile que no + Paseala               |  |
| 6. Exhíbela (cross-handed) + hook spin |  |

7. Tiempo España walking and rotating in closed position

2<sup>nd</sup> Couple: Ernesto (“Pucho”) and Ania (0:16 – 0:24)

1. Salida
2. Dile que no + Paseala
3. Exhibela
4. Closed position

3<sup>rd</sup> Couple: Karelia and “Guapo” (0:24 – 0:40)

1. Salida
2. Exhibela
3. Enchufla
4. Exhibela (Cross-handed) + hook spin Right hand to right hand, leader raises arms and performs a hook spin at the same time as followers outside turn
5. Enchufla doble + outside turn Transition from Enchufla doble into outside turn in one count of eight beats instead of sixteen
6. Enchufla (Cross-handed) A variation of Enchufla executed right hand to right hand
7. Closed position

4<sup>th</sup> Couple: Yordanis Agüero Delgado and Noralis Cando Moreno

1. Salida
2. Enrosca “Dile que no” while walking, resembles paseala

Performed with and connection, right to right

3. Vacilala
4. Vacilala
5. Medio coca cola\* Half of a turn for the follower led from “Dile que no” into an outside turn for the leader with change of hand
6. Paseala
7. Exhibela
8. Closed position

Choreographic Reference Points for Couples Entrée:

Allemande, Courante, Quadrille, Minuet, Gigue, Contredanse

At this point, viewers should bear in the mind the following characteristics of the *fandango*, which appear throughout the performance in various guises:

- **Arranques or bullas** or unprompted elation or outpourings of emotion that dancers may emit
- **balanceo y vaivén** swaying or circular motion of the torso and hips.
- **Braceo/trabajo de los brazos** a dancer's use of the arms in the air
- **jaleo**- vocal inspiration given from one dancer to another or from the audience
- **Marcar, marcando** - to mark time in the absence of musical accompaniment
- **Palmadas** (Iberian *fandango*) – handclapping, which in *rueda de casino* of Santiago de Cuba are called “pelotas”
- **Oposición** - refers to movement of the body or of couples in contrary directions or along contrary planes.

BOW (0:59-1:02 or one count of 8 beats)

As in abovementioned dances, there appears a moment of acknowledgement between the dancers once they all assume their predetermined starting positions. This would seem to correspond to the typical bow section of a court *menuet*, at which point the male and female would incline, bringing their feet into posterior position prior to the various figures and evolutions. While there is no bow here, per se, the couples face each other without moving acknowledging one another and awaiting the signal from the caller (Jonar) to initiate the choreographed figures. After the caller gives them the count, they use the cross-body lead to get into open (*guapea*) position, initiating the *rueda*.

## FIGURES

### 1. “Tela de Araña” (The “Spider’s Web; 1:03-1:18)

This group move recalls and corroborates descriptions given about the *danzón* provided in the periodical *El Triunfo* mentioned earlier provided by Carpentier and Chasteen, which describe the dance as a coordinated dance of figures involving twisting and entwining of the ends of colored ribbons to make pleasing patterns. Alternatively, this move also corroborates similar references attributed to the *danzón* as a kind of wreath dance, in which the whole company would execute for the enjoyment of onlookers a choreographed series of entanglements and disentanglements. These features and concepts define the *ruedas* of Santiago de Cuba, where more of creolized dance culture exists, combining Spanish, French and Afro-Cuban dances as well ideas from courtly, street dances (*carnival de los ojos*) and Afro-Cuban religious dances.

- “Dile que no”
- “Dame con las manos” (all couples join hands)

Choreographic reference:

*Minuet, fandango, contredanse, danzón, son cubano*

- Modified *Paseala* (men extends left hand and reach for left hand of follower from opposite couple);

Choreographic reference: *Passecaille, son cubano* ‘paseo’

- *Rueda* breaks into two smaller circles of two couples.
- *Alardes*
- Enchufla con cadena modified (circle performs a “chain”, men perform alardes over their own heads and over the followers.
- Arcoiris (butterfly; men and women go back to back fanning arms overhead.)
- Engancho (“Hook”) – Men hook the ladies arm to close to the distance for Dile que no.

Choreographic reference: *Contredanse, fandango (braceos)*

2. “Cadena Complicada” (The “Chain,” More Complex Version; 1:19-1:38)

Choreographic references: *Contredanse, fandango (braceos)*

3. “Pasillera” (Take a stroll; 1:40-2:10)

The essence of this call is to create a context in which the leaders and followers may separate and *pasear*, with leaders and followers performing synchronized figures that, while done free or “suelto,” are complementary and mirror one another.

Choreographic references: *Passecaille, zapateo*

4. Enchufla pa’l medio (leaders meet in the middle)
5. Suelta Pasillera            leaders and followers separate perform footwork on their own

	for 2 measures
Hombres pal medio	leaders meet in the center of the circle and huddle
Suelta para los hombres	men perform footwork figure in unison
Pasea con media vuelta	leaders add half a turn
Vacilala	
Suelta + Dile que no	leaders and followers face one another and perform synchronized figure before recovery)

Choreographic reference points: “Punteando” or intricate paseo steps and movements that are not part of the improvised footwork (*zapateado*), including coordinated group 'paseo' (walking steps) and 'mudanzas' (more complicated movements (lit. "variations"))  
*Passecalle/Passacaglia* – walking or sauntering steps; *Chacona, fandango, pandango, milonga, tango*

#### 6. “Ajiaco” (2:14 – 2:59)

Leaders and followers separate again and execute a series of traditional Cuban dances to the beat of timba:

- Mambo Step (leaders and followers tap the balls of their feet, leaders beginning in their left foot and followers with their right. The tap on beats ‘1’ ‘3’ ‘5’ ‘7’. They rotate around each other.
- Cha-cha-cha sweep – Dancers sweep across the floor dancing *contratiempo*, followers moving up one position and leaders moving down one position.
- Cha-cha-cha con salto – Dancers perform a basic cha-cha-cha step and leap perform a dame dos leaping on beats ‘6’ ‘7’ ‘8’
- Pilón – Leaders and followers execute the basic step of the pilón dance, which simulates the grinding of coffee. As the leaders recede, the followers advance, thereby creating a dynamic of *oposición*.
- Exhíbela and duck under
- Enchufla + son transition – couples advance one couple up the *rueda* and mark the fourth beat.

- Son basic – Couples do a basic son step
- Son “8” – Couples perform a son “ocho” step
- Dile que no + open position – Couples perform a Dile que no and face the center of the inner circle (guapeando)
- Enchufla doble a lo sonero – An enchufla doble performed with son style (at the waist)
- Back-to-back + and full rotation
- Exhibela con mannequin – Leaders come to a full stop with arms raised on beat ‘3’, ladies execute an outside turn with hip and lower body movement (*despelote*)
- Dame + Dile que no

Choreographic Reference Points:

Pilón - *zamacueca* (advancing and retreating steps performance by both males and females; this appears in the Cuban *pilón* dance, but appears to be inspired by the *zamacueca*), *cueca*, *conga*\* *comparsa*, *ombligada/umbigada*

Mambo (hopping, jumping back steps, leaps)

Cha-Cha-Cha (sweeping steps)

Son Cubano

Danzón, Contredanse

*Tembleque* (Torsion y convulsion; *duende*\*, the point at which the dancer reaches an ecstatic state, marked by gyrations)

#### 7. “La Soga” (3:02-3:18)

- Enchufla + dame 2 (leaders skip one follower moving up the circle; couples clap in unison on beat ‘6’)
- Modified Vacilala + grind
- Unwind
- Dame con las manos
- Entanglement (circle contracts and expands)
- Dile que no

Choreographic reference points: There are a number of contemporary dance techniques employed in this section, such as the *despelote* or grinding motion of the hips. However, these also have a relation to *balanceo* and *vaivén* in *fandango*. Additional echoes include the entwining of the hands from *danzón* and the frequent displacement between couples up the circle, typical of English country dances, the *contredanse* and its Cuban descendants.

## FIGURES 6-8. (3:22 – 5:16)

As I am unfamiliar with these sequences, I will leave them for a later version of this analysis. It is, however, worth commenting on the choreographic references that bind these figures together, especially their common use of the characteristics of the *fandango* listed above.

## FINAL REVERENCES

As in the *allemande* and the *quadrille menuet*, the *rueda* closes with a sequence of final acknowledgements, in which, beginning from the initial configuration of the *rueda*, the couples makes eye contact and the male leader conducts the lady from the *piso* (to her seat).

Other Choreographic Reference Points:

“Salida”/ “Cierre”/” Mutis” - Entry or Exit sequence; *tango, flamenco, fandango* (all varieties)

## Conclusion: The Sensuality and Liminality of Port-City Dance

This labyrinthine maritime atlas of *fandango*, as reflected in the choreographic analysis performed above, generated a vast and interconnected cultural lexicon. The *habanera* dance, the nickname given to the *danzón*, also signified the female protagonist of the Havana’s mulatto underclass. The related terms “*marinera*” and “*jarocha*” were not merely terms for local women of the ports of Callao in Lima and Veracruz; they were also the names of the local types of regional *fandango* choreography. Yesenia Selier notes that in the nineteenth century, Cuban minstrel theater named its main character, *La Mulata*, “*de Rumba, de Rumbo, de Rango*,” a *rumba* dancer, a streetwalker, a pretender or a snob, respectively.<sup>62</sup> These various terms take

---

<sup>62</sup> Selier, 89. This is essentially a restating of her discussion of *rumba* and its meanings and applied to the transnational dance culture of the Iberian maritime world.

port-city varieties of *fandango* as a touchstone, describing local racial and gendered types by their proximity to choreographic genres, and vice versa.

As we have seen, the origins of the *fandango* phenomenon are affixed to the bodies that moved in between Iberian ports. The shared social fabric of this transnational milieu, in which its musical, choreographic, cultural and ethical mores were formulated and put into practice, reflected an unequivocal rawness, sensuality and vitality that stood in stark contrast to Catholic Iberian norms, the most salient of which can be counted maintenance of the home, chastity and subservience to the men by women, and piety generally. This reflects the fact that, as transitional (and trans-vice-regal) topographies, Iberian transatlantic port-cities were neither entirely metropolitan nor colonial, but rather a kind of liminal space that was constantly at the cutting edge of social, musical and choreographic change and that provided and means whereby men and women could negotiate the draconian structures that sought to limit their daily choices, particularly during the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the Counter-Reformation in full force.<sup>63</sup>

Seville's trade monopoly forced the populations of Iberian ports to rely heavily upon nongovernmental institutions for both social stability and commercial security. Throughout the colonial period, these port-city (sub)cultural enclaves operated alongside official civic institutions, functioning as a kind of laboratory within which social transformations occasioned by the advent of transatlantic commerce between the Spanish and Portuguese metropole and their various maritime departments in the Americas could be observed in aggrandized perspective. Accordingly, new types of economic activity begot new groups of people and the conflicts that arose between them and various groups owing to their deviance from the dominant order were

---

<sup>63</sup> Christopher M. White. *A Global History of the Developing World*. (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. 25.

concentrated in the port-city, which emerged as the locus of conflict.<sup>64</sup> For instance, all-male secret societies that originated among freemasons and other laborers near the docks in Iberian ports, appearing in the newspapers with greater frequency during the nineteenth century, became involved and associated with military conflicts on behalf of the state as well as frequent clashes with police and colonial authorities. Such a collision between the national center and port-city peripheries is exemplified in the Abakuá secret society in Havana and whose members became a source of labor on the wharves of Havana, Matanzas and Cardenas in warehouses for over a century, and who were both celebrated and persecuted during both the colonial and neo-colonial periods. Shubi L. Ishemu notes that, through the secret character of the port-city fraternities “was politically positive as its fearless, valiant male members actively participated in the struggles against slavery, against Spanish colonialism, labor unions, and the defeat of United States aggression against the young Cuban revolution in 1961. century.”<sup>65</sup> However, nineteenth-century newspapers were quick to indict them of fall blood libels. On March 10th, 1812, the daily *El Popular* alleged that an Abakuá initiation consisted of demonstrating one’s personal bravery by murdering a random passer-by. These kinds of charges have been heaped on the brotherhood for in relation to an extremely wide-ranging record of delinquency, solidifying into the creation of a black legend about them, in every sense of the word.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Çağlar Keyder, Y. Eyüp Özveren and Donald Quataert, Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire: Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* Vol. 16, No. 4, Port-Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean 1800-1914 (Fall, 1993), 520.

<sup>65</sup> Shubi L. Ishemu. “From Africa to Cuba: An Historical Analysis of the Sociedad Secreta Abakuá (Ñañiguismo),” *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 29, No. 92, Africa, the African Diaspora and Development (Jun., 2002), p 253.

<sup>66</sup> Miguel Cabrera Peña. “José Martí and the Future of Blacks.” *Reflections on the Race Problem in Cuba*. ISAS, p. 31.

Another example of collisions between Iberian authorities and secret societies in Iberian-American port cities can be found in the *capoeiras* of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia, who, like the Abakuá, were received ambiguously by wider Portuguese and Brazilian society and whose warlike performances at military processions, like the Cuban *comparsas*, were accompanied by music, dance, and spirited interactions with the spectators. In the end, through their famed contravention of social norms and derision of public officials, they were regarded as dangerous and violent hoodlums. On the other hand, they have solidified their status in the Brazilian cultural imaginary as symbols of Brazilian martial culture and bravery, having been recruited for their bravery during the War of Paraguay (1865) and also as symbols of black solidarity and resistance against the abuses of state power.<sup>67</sup>

Establishments that were particular to the space of the port, as well as other institutions and cultural practices, provided both a sense of cultural and choreographic cohesion in (and across) the region. Such institutions included slave *cabildos* (mutual aid, religious, and recreational societies) urban elite and middle class dance clubs and halls, patios, schools, and most notably, the *casas de cuna* ('cradle houses') and their cultural variants, where white men went to socialize and/or sleep with women of color and where such women often sought to become involved with white men. In Cuba, descriptions of these liminal environs may be found in Cirilo Villaverde's novel *Cecilia Valdez* (1882). Similarly, during the rhumba craze of the 1920s, the cabaret became an important site of choreographic and ethno-racial confluence, both through its symbiosis with the prostitution industry and as a conduit for male and female 'rhumba' talents, who performed in theatrical venues as well as in film. Famous examples

---

60 See Maya Talmon Chvaicer, "The Criminalization of Capoeira in Nineteenth-Century Brazil." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82.3 (2002) 525-547, Duke University Press.

include Rene and Estela Rivero, cited by Selier as having danced in the same luxurious dancing halls where North American-influenced versions of the Cuban popular songbook where the *danzón* and many other Iberian port-city genres had originated: the brothels, the *academias de baile* (dance halls), and *café cantantes* (singing taverns).<sup>68</sup> Cuban elites, which included Spanish merchants, nobility and military, learned to be flexible regarding their musical choreographic dispensations and looked toward local music and dance expression with a combination admiration and censure. Meanwhile, cultural, musical and choreographic elements continued to arrive from other ports and flourish intra-regionally, thereby contributing to a unique and robust Iberian maritime culture of social dance.

I should say that I owe my understanding and characterization of these dances and of their creators as dances as liminal or “border” dances first to Peter Manuel, who, in *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World* (1988), invokes Victor Turner's concept of “liminality” as a way of describing musical forms situated between rural and urban – a point of particular relevance to our study of Iberian port cities and their artistic and choreographic issuances. Here is how Turner himself defined the term:

[m]eaning' in culture tends to be generated at the interfaces between established cultural subsystems, though meanings are then institutionalized and consolidated at the centers of such systems. Liminality is a temporal interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cultural 'cosmos'.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Selier, 94-95

<sup>69</sup> See Turner, 41.

Serena Pellarolo attributes a similar concept of liminality to the *tango* in her now famous essay “Tango: Glitches in the Hetero-National Matrix of a Liminal Cultural Production” (1982), deriving her concept of liminality in part from Turner and also from Gloria Anzaldúa’s notion of “border spaces,” or those ‘in between [that] form a third country’...whose spaces were established, she summarizes, ‘to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them,’ they are ‘a vague and undetermined place ... in a constant state of transition’ where the ‘prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants . . . those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal.’<sup>70</sup>

These scattered shards and fragments combine to encapsulate several of the imbricated relationships – between environment, race, gender, and social class – to which this chapter and dissertation direct themselves and help to more fully situate and account for the powerful vortex of culture and creativity constituted by ports.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the Iberian world contains presents a myriad examples of secret societies and brotherhoods, underworld archetypes and ethics, the existence and dissemination of which across maritime space conveyed allowed for the generation of a new oppositional consciousness among the inhabitants of ports.<sup>72</sup> Dynamics of conflict in ports recounted above have provoked and immortalized a view of the liminal dances as more primal and charged, and, thus, as more authentic. As we shall see later, this sense of authenticity becomes heightened in opposition to ballroom choreographies, which, in turn, became perceived

---

<sup>70</sup> Anzaldúa, p. 78, as summarized and re-iterated by Serena Pellarolo, p. 412.

<sup>71</sup> A variation on the theme of a “vortex of behavior” as coined by Joseph Roach in *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: New York: Columbia UP, 1996.

<sup>72</sup> See Pellarolo, *Ibid.*

as diluted or enfeebled mutations of their originals, with hegemonic representational conventions, and as global products for mass commercial consumption (Chapter Three).

In summation, the choreographic legacy of the galleon routes, as well as their heritage and spirit, still continue to be nurtured and to influence the countries through which they passed. For Spain, apart from accruing fruits of cross-cultural fusion and inter-civilizational dialogue, this global choreographic legacy has lent great symbolic value. Varieties of *fandango* and the many national dances they spawned now embody something about Iberia's perspective on the world. They not only culturally reached beyond the countries of the galleon routes but also accepted and assimilated many of their cultural, musical and choreographic elements and traditions. This multiculturalism of social dance has been a hallmark of Hispanic maritime civilization, one premised on unity in diversity. Spain itself, despite its imperial role, proved in the realm of dance to be open, accommodative and liberal to outside influences and at the same time did not shy away from exporting the best of its cultural, musical and choreographic traditions. Accordingly, the galleons provided the earliest opportunity for this circular traffic between colonizer and the colonized. The inhabitants of Iberian ports Latin had discovered a choreographic identity even before the nations that surrounded them became liberated.

Perhaps it was in large part due to this eclectic, but liminal cultural foundation that the Iberian Atlantic and Pacific would traffic in so many dance creations during its transition from a unified vice-regal choreographic sphere to a patchwork of nations at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Although many of these dances are now mentioned in scholarly literature and texts on dance, they are almost always presented as part of a national dance tradition, or cast as 'Latin American' choreographic heritage. Their origins within a vast, historical port-city nexus are rarely, if ever, mentioned. Even after the wane in popularity of

*fandango*, nationally-identified dances, such as the *tango*, the *rumba* and *flamenco*, still retained elements of earlier multicultural and traditions that had taken root there during and after Spanish expansion.

Finally, and more importantly, global flow of *fandango* addresses perspectives beyond the Atlantic as a closed or self-contained space. In the larger context of regional and global flows, it invites us to consider the Atlantic as part of wider networks, a space of exchange, and an expanding paradigm beyond the parameters of its own geography, moving beyond national, regional, and continental divides through an entangled dance history and culture. The historical legacy of *fandango* challenges critical orthodoxies that have drawn sharp lines between the experiences and representations of the Atlantic world and its wider global context, in particular in relation to the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

## CHAPTER TWO

*BAILE POPULAR CUBANO: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY GLANCE*

I first went to Cuba in the summer of 2004 with New York University. NYU was among the only institutions to offer academic licenses for Cuba travel in those years, and so the prospect attracted students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels from an array of U.S. universities. We were housed in Havana's El Vedado district for four weeks and enrolled in courses in Cuban history, music, and art at the Centro de Investigación Juan Marinello just off of Revolution Square and the Instituto Ludwig, also within Vedado.

The interlocking barrios of Centro Habana, where I spent and still do spend much of my time, constitute one of many districts where black *habaneros* reside and are known as a haunt for *Afrocuban* ritual and popular *timba* music. One day, while attending a weekly folkloric performance of traditional *Afrocuban rumba brava* at the Callejón de Hamel, I met a brother and sister who introduced themselves as locals from the neighborhood. They took me with them to their nearby apartment – one of fifteen or so within a tumbledown concrete building – where they proceeded to give me a demonstration of what they referred to as “*salsa cubana*” or “*casino*,” which implies a style of dancing traditional *son* as it was danced in the *casinos* and social clubs in Havana in the 1950's. Taking note of how they cross-referenced the disparate bodily phraseologies of *santería*, *son*, *rumba*, hip-hop, I was struck by the realization that what I was witnessing was, in the truest sense, a salsa. Whereas international showcase Salsa varieties (Salsa “on 2”, LA style etc...) were concerned foremost with turn patterns, this Cuban street-based counterpart was a vast repository of dances, combining borrowed elements into a unique composition.

This experience gave me a first glimpse not only of the scope and dimensions of Cuba's popular choreographic genealogy, or of contemporary *casino*'s appropriative relation to toward traditional Cuban dance, but also an understanding of how conservatism around dance tradition in Cuba is countervailed by deeply ingrained cultural values of invention and transgression. In Cuba, both traditional and contemporary Cuban as well as foreign dances experience perennial reconfiguration and recombination as the corollaries of improvisation and of the kinesthetic articulacy of individual dancers.

An important development accompanying the advent of Cuba's choreographic modernity has been the emergence of a new amalgam of choreography and improvisation within traditional dance. Various aspects of these processes in contemporary Cuban music have been approached by a growing body of literature (e.g., Saunders 2008 and Perry 2016). In this chapter I explore the operation of these processes with respect to the modernization of *rumba* and *son*. In both genres, a growing importance of choreography and stylistic cross-pollination has been counterbalanced by a narrowing and codification of the traditional choreographies into a dogma of the "pure" and the "traditional," allowing little room for novelty. The processes are thus subject to ever-increasing complexity and polemics—hinging on choreographic style, aesthetics and even ethnicity (blacks and non-blacks, Cubans and foreigners, and conservatory-trained and unofficial dancers and performers). These disputes are compounded by the sheer diversity of forms of *son* and *rumba* (regional, local, traditional and contemporary, which are, by the very nature, resistant to categorization and to circumscription within canonical perimeters.

For the purposes of understanding the shifting role of choreography, and of tensions between choreography and improvisation, it is noteworthy that most of the basic repertoire of *bailes*, including their conventional footwork patterns, was standardized by the folklorists during

the early 1960s. The innovation that abounds today in what I call neo-traditional *son* and *rumba*— even when performed by particularly creative stylists —consists primarily of various kinds of novelty within the confines of tradition, as opposed to the invention of new dances that go by new names.

Although popular dances are assumed to have evolved in a collective and anonymous fashion, certain individual dancers and dancing families are regarded as having played key roles in enriching, refining, codifying, and popularizing these dances (e.g., the Chacón family of Regla, Havana, especially of Luis Chacón and Luis Antonio with the *rumba columbia*). Meanwhile, scholars like Barbara Balbuena and a number of self-proclaimed scholars like Yoel Marrero (2000) have reconstructed plausible, if speculative, evolutions of contemporary *casino* dance out of precedents like *danzón* and *son* and have attempted to attribute these processes of creation to known individuals, albeit it in a speculative fashion. Even *casino*, which was introduced during the early 1950's, appears to have developed in a collective manner, rather than being the creation of any particular known artist or group of artists, despite claims by numerous groups to the contrary.

To begin with, it is important to stress that those who study dance amass from a variety of backgrounds (choreology and ethnomusicology, performance studies, anthropology, folklore etc...), a fact which has led to conflicts between those who, for instance, view dance from a choreological perspective, attending to the study movement and its notation – its shape, dynamics and functionality –and those who advocate a study of society through dance performance. Met with this underlying schism, scholars of dance have adopted several paradigms and approaches, focusing at times on the question of power dynamics (Hanna 1988, McGrath 2013), ritual action (Mendoza 2000), poetics and discourse (Brandstetter, 2015) as well as the

issue of dance and cosmopolitanism (Wulff, 2013; Zimming 2013). This bent of the dance researcher in the direction of cultural studies or the theoretical concentration on the way in which dance relates to matters of ideology, social class, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality and others, was championed first and foremost in the research of Andrée Grau of Roehampton University, whose theoretical writings on the Tiwi community in Australia were modeled on the inquiries of John Blacking (1928-1990). In the world of Cuban dance, the writings of Yvonne Payne Daniel have been the most important, especially as regards Afrocuban dance. Like Daniel, I too approach these phenomena as one surveying the ethnic features of Cuban dance in accordance with the cultural milieus from which they emerge (nation, region, neighborhood, family lineage etc.). In that sense, I regard aspects of *rumba* and *son* primarily as a mechanism of socio-cultural interaction. Cuban popular dance is implicated in the formation of group and individual identity – at the global, national, regional, local, familial and other levels. Thus, movement and social identity are thus inseparable in the minds of those who execute the movements, onlookers, and those who are otherwise enveloped in the embroidery of dance performance.

### Cuban *Rumba*: Social Dance of Western Cuba

For nearly two centuries, the tripartite *rumba* complex has had a strong capacity to generate hybrids, ranging from the impromptu galas known as *rumbones*, from which the term derives its name, to the commercialized and carnivalesque repertoire performed cabarets, theatres and elsewhere in the 1930s and that were revived in the 1960s by professional folkloric dancers for non-Cuban audiences. The Cuban *rumba* sutured and solidified in the Americas two important formulas of social-dance interaction – games of sexual pursuit and conquest as well as combative

duels between male dancers. The playful and combative aspects of the *fandango* become heightened in the Americas as a result of the particular changes that accompanied the passage of the dance through the port of Havana.

Since the early 1970s, the *casino* dance craze<sup>73</sup> – the popularity across the island of the Cuban national forerunner and cousin of Salsa around the world– together with a set of extra-choreographic factors, has rendered *rumba* even more multifarious, releasing a swarm of groundbreaking, extensive, current, and highly widespread substyles that now coexist alongside traditional “pure” *rumba brava*.<sup>74</sup> Despite the fact that scholarship on Afrocuban dance increased dramatically since the years of prohibition, producing a voluminous store of material for outsiders who have flock to the island for a combination of dance instruction and sex tourism (*jineterismo*), almost all of these have focused on the traditional complex rather than on the contemporary status of the dance and its praxis.

As an expansive and genre-bending social dance complex, modern *rumba* necessarily includes a range of new hybrids that have arisen and overtaken traditional dance in recent decades and that have served to amplify the reach of Cuban dance culture around the world. Although this chapter is only intended as an entry point, I hope it may serve as an attempt to contextualize the modern *rumba* and to put its present and cumulative choreographic dimensions into sociocultural and political context. These styles include, as we have already established, the traditional tripartite complex known as “*rumba brava*,” recent fusions of *rumba* with Afrocuban

---

<sup>73</sup> This is a term used to describe Cuban style salsa. It refers to new ways of dancing *son* in the social clubs called “casinos” during the 1950’s and was heavily influenced by the arrival of the lindy hop. (See Appendices, p. 198, “Founders of Casino” video interview.

<sup>74</sup> This term refers to the traditional *rumba* as danced in the port city of Matanzas, in places like Unión de Reyes and Alacranes.

religious dance, and, of course, with contemporary *timba* and *casino* dance and the variety of related commercial popular musics (reggaeton, *ubatón* etc.), which are dealt with herein.

For modern *habaneros* and *matanceros*, local choreographic culture, the revolutionary socialist project, and Afro-Cuban identity are inherently intertwined. *Rumba* and its contemporary derivatives have come to play an important role in Cuban political life, both through explicit policies of the Ministry of Culture, and by dint of the zeal of both the revolutionary establishment and of foreigners who have become enamored by the ‘authenticity’ of Afro-Cuban cultural and choreographic expressions, most notably, of Afro-Cuban syncretic religion (Santería, Abakuá, Palo etc.) and social dances.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, the *rumba* complex has shaped and continues to shape modern national, regional and neighborhood identity politics, acting as ongoing harbingers of cultural and artistic change.

### The Afro-Cuban Identity of *Rumba*

Spanish imperialism levied onto Cuban blacks a particularly severe and protracted experience of impoverishment, which endured well beyond the official manumission of the island’s slave population toward the end of the nineteenth century. The characterization of *rumba*, both by Cuban and foreign authors, as a chronicle of the dispossessed, has been proverbial as it is

---

<sup>75</sup> E.g., María Teresa Linares, "Sobre nuestra tradición musical", *Ensayos de música latinoamericana: selección del boletín de música de la Casa de las Américas*, La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1982; Odilio Urfe, "La música folklórica, popular, y del teatro bufo" *La cultura en Cuba socialista*. La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1982. These authors imply that only non-commercial and “traditional” dance are worthy of being worthy of validation, national and otherwise. Similarly, foreigners have tended to value non-commercialism, preferring, at times, traditional Cuban music over “Salsa” and, more often, popular dance styles from economically depressed urban areas like Centro Habana over Cuban music produced for foreigners such as that of the Buena Vista Social Club. Also, see Moore, for his analysis and critique of choreographic anti-commercialism in Cuba (1995).

unsurprising, and the genre continues to be associated with persecuted blacks, whose aforementioned colonial history of exploitation and economic disenfranchisement was compounded by neglect after the revolution.<sup>76</sup> This sense of Afro-Cuban oppression has been a perennial hallmark of *rumba* lyrics, and current political and economic events in Cuba have, if anything, increased the demand for musical and choreographic vehicles for social commentary – though more contemporary genres like *timba* and *reggaeton* have largely supplanted the *rumba* for young Cubans today as a political mouthpiece – both in terms of *rumba* lyricism and, much more frequently, through choreographic innovations. As I have described, Havana and Santiago de Cuba, sustained by commercial activity and by the constant transshipment of goods between the metropole and the colonies, were arguably the most cosmopolitan cities in the New World. Owing to its position at the junction of the Pacific and Atlantic trade routes, Havana boasted a particularly rich cultural life, bringing together and projecting far and wide the myriad of forms of popular music, social dance and visual art of its multiethnic communities, which might be said to have lived together and to have coexisted in a state of productive tension.

Since its coalescence and crystallization in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, diluted and commercialized forms of *rumba* have flourished and faded both in accordance with bourgeois taste and with the political changing of the guard, but the traditional *rumba brava* endows the genre with certain choreographic foundations. And so, even in a context neo-traditionalism or revivalism, contemporary *rumba* dancing acts as a rich repository of kinetic history. In contexts where *rumba* has served as a folkloric entertainment for American audiences (i.e. the performances of Folclórico Nacional, Cutumba, Yoruba Andabo, Raíces Profundas and others), dancers have tended to adhere to a very canonical array of movement, eschewing any borrowings

---

<sup>76</sup> Acosta, p. 54. Also in Moore (1995), p. 169.

from contemporary Cuban dance and from the black diaspora which might disturb or otherwise fail to live up to the expectations of their audiences. Moreover, one function of *rumba* and particularly of the stage and cabaret-oriented dance varieties (i.e. the touristic *rumba* of the Tropicana dancers, which is little more than a commercial farce of Havana's legendary popular carnival, see Chapter Three), has always been to distract and amuse rather than to enact and broadcast vociferously the grievances of the black urban population.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, even these commercial expressions flaunt the *machista*, sensual, aggressive qualities which, although by no means unique to the Cuban choreographic context, are typical of it. Furthermore, *rumba* lyrics vacillate between and express a tension between frivolity and sorrow which might be regarded as two poles of the urban mulatto and *Afrocuban* musical and choreographic corpus. Just as *rumba* has always coexisted with and nourished commercially-oriented substyles, so have its texts -- especially in their private or lower class milieu-- served as persistent and affective vehicles for expression of the anxieties and vicissitudes of *habanero/matancero*, *Afrocuban*, and mulatto daily life.

Many traditional texts from the traditional *rumba* songbook, *cancionero rumbero*, reflect their urban mulatto origin. In this category, for instance, are those extolling and sanctifying the ideal black or mulatto woman, syncretized in *Afrocuban* religion as the black Mary:

---

<sup>77</sup> Louis Perez, Cuba. *Between Reform and Revolution*, n. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, p. 306. Robin Moore also discusses the phenomenon of *Afrocuban* dance as spectacle and the overrepresentation of blacks in cabarets as a result of economic hardship (1995, p73).

Figure. *Rumba* lyrics: “Ave Maria Morena” as sung by Conjunto Folclórico Nacional (*Conjunto Folclórico Nacional, Areito LDA-3156*)

Bele bele bele bele be

*Coro: A, a a*

Bele bele bele bele be

*Coro: A, a a*

E, la la la, etc.

*Coro: A e*

*Coro: A na na na na na, etc.*

*Que bueno, que bueno a e*

*Que bueno, que bueno a e*

*A e*

Bangó, bangó, bangó

Que me muero en guerra

Hoy sí que me muero en guerra

Hoy sí que me muero en guerra

Muchos que tenían estrellas

Muchos que tenían estrellas

No supieron gobernar

Raúl, Fidel y Almeida

Han puesto el mundo a temblar

*Coro: A na na na na na, etc.*

*Que bueno, que bueno a e*

*Que bueno, que bueno a e*

*A e*

Morena, morena que se acaba el rabo

*Coro: Ave María morena*

While it is predominantly within the context of the *cancionero rumbero* (see above figure) that social identities of *rumba* are most clearly and readily expressed, my research has nonetheless demonstrated that *rumba* dancing also functions as a symbol of identity. The specifically Afro-Cuban and urban character of *rumba* dance is clear in its use of body isolations, bravado and acrobatic feats.<sup>78</sup> Within this framework, *rumba* includes *bailes* specifically associated with urban origins and others derived from inland *criollo* dances such as the Hispanic *punto* and *zapateo*. The rural dances are markedly more relaxed than their urban counterparts, just as the rural *rumbas* of Matanzas province are slower in relation to the frenetic sound of Havana-style *rumba*. Finally, in terms of its underclass affiliation; it is obvious that some basic aspects of its aesthetic are antithetical to those of Western parlor or ballroom dancing (*baile de salon*, the dancing of the Hispanic and French elites, particularly the hybrid choreographic lineage of the Franco-Hispanic *danza* in the latter part of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth centuries).

*Rumba* has experienced dramatic reformulation since the days of the revolution, and these developments are a product of the ongoing tension and harmony between Afro-Cuban and other ethnic groups on the island. While enclosed *rumbones*, informal parties or gatherings combining dancing, rum drinking and *jineterismo* (prostitution), have been an important context for the genre since the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, so have other settings in which such dancers earn money by dancing for domestic and foreign spectators in the context of folkloric performance.<sup>79</sup> This professionalization and folklorization of *rumba* has occasioned seismic

---

<sup>78</sup> Afro-Cuban dance is characterized broadly by movement of one part of the body independently of the rest. This means that you isolate one part of your body, which moves, while the rest of your body remains completely still.

<sup>79</sup> In *Music in Cuba*, Alejo Carpentier noted that “everything can be labelled [a rumba]; all of the rhythms constituting Cuban music . . . everything which can be performed in 2/4 time can fuse with this genre

shifts in the character of the dance since the triumph of the revolution in 1959.<sup>80</sup> Concomitant with these transformations has been a kind of augmentation and malleability of its meaning, that is, the ever-increasing elasticity with which *rumba* dancing is employed by dancers and teachers in Cuba and abroad who use the dance as a supplement to other forms of dance instruction. This is especially true in the world of New York (“On 2”) Salsa.

The broadening of *rumba* from an enclaved expression of urban blacks and mulattos to a national and international dance has dramatically affected its choreographic style. While exaggerated Afro-derived legwork continues to be appreciated, standards governing the use of the *vacunao*, travel patterns and displacements evident in recent videos of *rumba* instruction have tightened considerably; *rumba* dancers and folkloric troupes that now abide by these standards appear to be less tolerant of deviation<sup>81</sup> Another development particularly prominent in the tourist-oriented *rumbas* of the Callejon de Hamel, which employ the greatest number of local amateur *rumba* ensembles, is the emphasis on the links between *rumba* and Afro-Cuban dance.

---

which, more than a genre, represents an "atmosphere" or feeling . . . in Cuba there is no single 'rumba', but various 'rumbas'. . . the word "rumba" has passed into the parlance of the Cuban as a synonym for revelry, lascivious dance, carousing with loose women of the street. (1946, 242; Moore's translation [1995])

<sup>80</sup> Note the formation of the Conjunto Folclórico Nacional in 1962, at which time popular urban dances became canonical or orthodox, codified for pedagogical purposes and performed by professional dancers in theatres for an audience of spectators. Cuba's period of professionalization coincides with appearance of folkloric dance companies such as Mexico's Ballet Folclórico and Peru Negro as well as with the formation of Alvin Ailey in New York City in 1958, which achieved a similar kind of professionalization in other marginal dance traditions in the Americas.

<sup>81</sup> There is a split in contemporary *rumba* pedagogy within the last several years between *rumberos* of the street (*bailaores*) and those of the stage and tourist ambit (*bailarines*). The former dance freely and combine elements of popular dance (and dances from abroad introduced via tourists) free, while *bailarines* now teach and dance within strictures that characterize older manifestation of the dance.



*Rumba* instruction from Folclórico Nacional Cutumba (Santiago de Cuba)<sup>82</sup>

The video above is from a popular *rumba* instruction video by Folclórico Nacional Cutumba from Santiago de Cuba. The male dancer, José Carrion, is one of Cuba's most prominent folklorists and demonstrates a number of travel patterns for the various types of *rumba*, as well as timings and strategies for employing *vacunaos* that have now become canonical and orthodox. For example, all of José's *vacunaos* are done on the first beat of the measure, without exception. This methodology of *vacunao* is taught by the main folkloric groups, who now teach the *vacunao* this same way. *Bailaores* may throw their *vacunao* on any beat of the measure, and especially on beats that the female partner is less likely to anticipate. In Santiago de Cuba, for example, members of *Casino.com* and Sabor DKY, amateur groups that

---

<sup>82</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-fkLDckT9E>

include graduates of the state folkloric system, encourage dancers to execute the *vacunao* on beats four, seven or eight.<sup>83</sup>

Another disagreement between modern *bailaores* and *bailarines de rumba* relates to the placement of the man's body relative to the woman when the *vacunao* is executed. Today, many men will perform the maneuver while standing behind the woman, a choreographic development of the last twenty years in Havana *rumbas* that is regarded by most folklore professionals generally to be in poor taste and immodest. Such attitudes reveal the extent to which prejudices against the sexuality of urban mulatto expression have been perpetuated even in a political environment that supposedly extolls the cultural expressions of Cuba's mulatto proletariat. It is common to see this kind of *vacunao* at the weekly *rumbas* of the Callejon de Hamel in the neighborhood of Central Habana (see video below: 0:42):

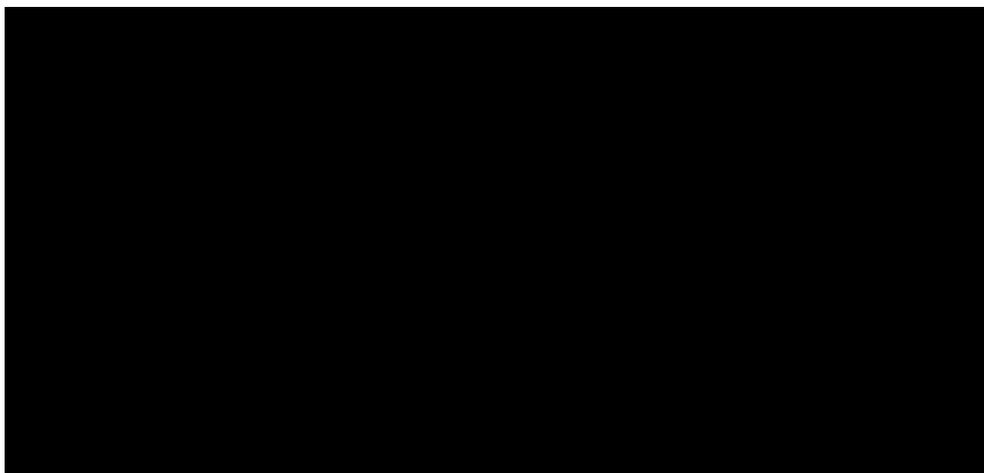


Figure. *Vacunao* done from behind ("por detrás," Callejón de Hamel, Havana.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> I have frequently witnessed a contrast between *rumba* instruction by professionals and the kind of instruction we received in Santiago. Our instructors, Yanek Revilla and Duniel Nuñez Bernal, also a graduate of national school of dance (ENA), taught unorthodox variations of the *vacunao*.

<sup>84</sup> "Rumbata, Callejon de Hamel." September 29, 2007. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGDNX05SrN8>

Son Cubano: Sensual Couple Dancing in Oriente Province

Where *rumba* can be characterized as western, *habanero*, and *matancero*, *son* is eastern, *oriental*, *santiaguero* and *baracoano*, that is, from the neighboring cities of Santiago and Baracoa. In its early Oriental (from “Oriente”) form, the *son* was consistent with the instrumental configuration of Santiago’s troubadour groups, or *conjuntos de trova*, containing a *tres* (a three-stringed variant of the guitar), the guitar, bongos, and one or two singers. Like other representative rhythm and dance complexes of the *fandango* family, *son* is bisectional and antiphonal, consisting of a verse and refrain, also referred to in contemporary Cuban musical terminology as the *son* and *montuno*, *tema* and *estribillo*, or, alternatively, the *pregón* and *refrán* sections (see Chapter Four for James Robbins’ designations of these terms). It is the choreographic heir of the *danzón* and shares several of its characteristic features, including an upright posture and circular and angular patterns of footwork (as opposed to linear) with steps accentuating the upbeat, *contratiempo*.<sup>85</sup> Other characteristics, such as the appearance of a more pronounced movement of the hips caused by the alternating flexion of the knees, have been assimilated into modern Cuban salsa, also called “*casino*.” Both the *danzón* and the *son* may be regarded as musical and choreographic products of the kinds of cultural mixture that occurred in eastern Cuba, resulting of the crosspollination of French and Hispanic culture. Explanation of *son*’s trajectory from urban margins at the harbor to the national center as a westward overland “transfer” to the capital is a generally held, as is the participation of *soneros* in local musical activities, such as the so-called

---

<sup>85</sup> *Contratiempo* refers to a 2,3,4 (pause) 6,7,8 pattern of footwork, as opposed to the typical 1,2,3 (pause) 5,6,7 (pause) stepping patterns found in most contemporary non-Cuban varieties of salsa. However, the *contratiempo* footwork of *son* differs from the ballroom mambo step. In Cuba, it outlines the upbeat pulse of the anticipated bass line (*tumbao*) and also the rhythmic contour of the clave (clave, where \*=eighth note: \*\* X \* X \*\* \*/X \*\* X \*\* X \*)

*coros de son*, patterned after the famed *coros de clave*.<sup>86</sup> In this way, the *son* took root in Havana's dockside barrios where it interacted with the burgeoning secular expressions of black and dark mulatto *habaneros*.

As a member of the choreographic lineage of *danzón*, the *son* is danced in closed dance position and involves stepping sequences – walking in various directions, including linearly (forward and back, side to side), and is punctuated by sharp falls, or *caídas*, where the male dancer will quickly drop to the floor and catch himself supported by both his female partner and his own core strength. The feet move to the beat of either the *congas* or the *claves*, and the hips move opposite to the feet. It is also distinguished by the use of the *tornillo* or “corkscrew,” a figure in which the man changes the positions of the body, even holding it horizontal, while the woman's resistance keeps his body in continual motion (second image). He moves from one corkscrew to another, effortlessly shifting his body weight and level.

---

<sup>86</sup> See Linares (1981), 66, 107.



Figure. Traditional son, performed by Yoannis Tamayo and Miriam Rodríguez<sup>87</sup>

*Sones* like the performance above reflect the traditional *oriental* choreography. The dancers are Yoannis Tamayo and his partner Miriam Rodríguez, who were among the best *soneros* in Santiago de Cuba until their recent emigration. The couple advances toward one another, *suelto*. After establishing the beat by marking *contratiempo* with forward moving sidesteps, they meet in closed position. They dance with clearly-defined roles: he improvises his footwork within the *contratiempo* timing and she demarcates the rhythm (*marcando*). The couple moves across the floor in circular and angular patterns of displacement, with the man indicating the path with his non-leading arm (*paseos*). At times, he pitches her hand outward,

---

<sup>87</sup> "Fabulous Son Dancing in Santiago de Cuba." August 7, 2004. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/zKICJuhfri8>.

causing her to turn and for the pair to separate (*vacila*); Yoannis executes a number of *caídas* – falling movements that simulate drunkenness – catching himself by supporting his weight on Miriam’s shoulders and coming back to a standing position (0:27, 0:58, 1:57); static poses, in which the couple comes to a standstill (1:25), extended sliding *zapateo* variations (1:45). The couple also executes two *tornillos*. One is performed by Miriam (2:11), with Yoannis walking and supporting her from behind in an “*exhibela*” (“show her off”) position. Yoannis then executes a full *tornillo*, corkscrewing on one foot lower and lower until he lies with his back, inches from the floor, and with his free arm extended for dramatic effect.



Figure. Yoannis Tamayo executes a full *tornillo* at the Casa de la Trova in Santiago de Cuba<sup>88</sup>

### *Rumba & Son in Cuban Salsa/Casino*

*Casino* has surfaced within the last several decades as one of the most significant innovations in Cuban contemporary dance. On the island, it takes its place as part and parcel of a dynamically

---

<sup>88</sup> Eric Freeman, From the “Salsa a La Cubana” video series. Retrieved from [http://www.salsaville.com/salsa\\_a\\_la\\_cubana\\_new.htm](http://www.salsaville.com/salsa_a_la_cubana_new.htm)

interwoven tapestry of religious and secular dance complexes, such as *son*, *rumba brava*, *lucumí* liturgical dance (*santería* dance), and *baile abakuá*. While largely eclipsing traditional forms in terms of both popularity and praxis, it nonetheless continues to play a vital role in the way in which tradition is continually reformulated and re-imagined outside the precincts of the official folkloric apparatus.

Rhetorically, *casino* aligns itself with and otherwise reinforces shifting ideologies and affinities within Cuba's tri-racial social structure. On the one hand, it maintains strong ties with lower-class urban black culture and serves as a critical point of articulation of Cuban black solidarity and resistance to social norms. On the other and with a view to the global community, *Casino* provides focus of national and cultural self-definition, as a repository of rapidly evolving conceptions of *cubanidad* ("Cubanness"). It is viewed by many, for instance, as the national dance of Cuba, succeeding the earlier (19th- and early 20th-centuries) *danzón*, *son* and the *rumba* forms. More importantly, since *Casino* draws almost uniformly from Hispanic ("*criollo*"), *Afrocuban*, and dance genre of racially mixed origin, it conforms to a longstanding tri-cultural, mulatto metaphor of Cuban nationhood. Irrespective of racial background Cubans regularly invoke *casino* to underscore the idiosyncratic flavor and virtuosity of Cuban national dance expression as it contrasts with a World Music/ international ballroom notion of "Latin dance", as well as in relation to Puerto Rican, pan-Caribbean and Nuyorican Salsa dance styles and approaches.

Although I will only touch on political and economic facets of *casino* indirectly, I recognize continuing political and economic change in Cuba not only as important catalysts for shifts in the dance's local meanings, but also as determining forces in its European and recent North American dissemination. Indeed, my purpose is not to present *casino* as a static and

unitary cultural artifact, but as a living complex – as a multifold system of ever-expanding ramifications rooted in the Cuban landscape, but with truly global contours in the twenty-first century.

Distinguishing between *casino* and different national and other varieties of “salsa” is possible even at a superficial level. In the most basic sense, *casino* travel patterns are angular, as opposed to the linear (front-back) patterns of all Salsa styles, including New York (Mambo on “2”), LA style, Puerto Rican, so-called “Dominican,” Costa Rican, and others. *Casino*’s basic step, the *guapea*, constitutes a Cuban stylization of the “Sugar push,” a hallmark of the Lindy Hop. In this stepping sequence, both partners are brought together, join hands, and swing back to their original positions.

The differing appearance of *salsa* and *casino* evolution is due to their distinctive evolution. Although both dances are linked in their mutual indebtedness to *son*, their ensuing development was shaped by the politico-economic divide of the embargo. Salsa’s departure from *son* consists of two coincident happenings: the re-territorializing of the *son* from Havana to New York as a consequence of the migrations of Cuban musicians at the time of the revolution, and the rapid influx of local Puerto Rican musical and socio-cultural influences.<sup>89</sup> Conversely, many view the relationship between *casino* and *son* as a discreet and continuous musical lineage. This traditionalist view is evidenced by the articulation and labeling of *Casino* dance by Cubans at various times as *son actual* (“contemporary *son*”).<sup>90</sup>

### Genesis, Rueda de Casino, Fusion and Variation

---

<sup>89</sup> Leymarie (Ibid).

The task of providing an authoritative account of *casino*'s emergence is complicated, as I have mentioned, by a scarcity of written information on popular dance in the post-revolutionary age. In a certain sense, this can be interpreted as coinciding with an underlying official antagonism toward all things popular and danceable.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, *casino* may be viewed as one element of a larger concatenation of post-Revolutionary rhythmic novelties, now passé, including the *boteo*, the *pilón*, the *pachanga*, and the *mozambique*, that flourished on the margins of official state discourse. These examples stand in contrast to the Castro government's symbolic appropriation of genres such as *son* and *rumba*.<sup>92</sup>

*Casino* is purported to have made its earliest appearance in Havana proper. Juan "El Abuelo" Gómez, president of the Fundadores de Casino, expands on this view. He underscores *casino*'s symbiotic bond to the competitive culture of *ruedas de casino* in Havana dance halls during the early 1950s (see Appendices, p.198). Although *Casino* functions independently of the *rueda* as a one-on-one partner dance, its legacy must be evaluated at least partially in relation to the social culture of *ruedas*.

*Rueda* variation at the *barrio* ("neighborhood") level has and continues to correspond to variation in individual dance styling. The highly popular televised competition "Bailar Casino" ("Dance *Casino*"), now viewable outside Cuba on youtube.com, registers the practice of neighborhood *rueda* competitions, revived in recent years, and showcases the stylistic peculiarities of dancers according to urban district. The paradigm of local development of

---

<sup>91</sup> In his chapter entitled "Música Bailable" under the Revolution, 1959-1989," Perna looks at the correlation of between changes in music and in cultural policies, and underlines how, throughout this period, Afro-Cuban popular music was often marginalized in favor of other musical styles with more European influence, such as the *nueva trova* phenomenon.

<sup>92</sup> See Robbins, pp. 182-200 for his discussion on the political symbolism of *son*. For the revolutionary appropriation of *rumba*, see Daniel (Ibid).

sequences of turn patterns and their corresponding vocal/manual cues has accompanied *casino*'s global transposition and circulation. A staple figure of *rueda de casino* in Paris, for instance, is the TGV, named for the high-speed rail transit system. While certain basic sequences carry over transnationally for the sake of intelligibility, particularly those belonging to the Cuban or later Miami canonic repertoire, *rueda* repertoire in the global setting is vast and ever-expanding.<sup>93</sup>

Another major axis of stylistic variation is region. Although micro variation undoubtedly occurs within smaller provinces such as Matanzas, Santa Clara, and Guantánamo, a tracing and prioritizing of these variations is far beyond the scope of this paper. Only the urban centers of Havana and Santiago de Cuba operate as *casino*'s two stylistic poles. Characteristics of so-called *habanero* and *santiaguero* styles have been documented and disseminated largely through Eric Freeman's "Salsa a la Cubana" demonstrational video. Assembling dancers from professional and amateur backgrounds, "Salsa a la Cubana" orients itself around the premise of a contrast between Havana and Santiago varieties. *Santiaguero* dancers ("Chirri" Roberto Nordet la Valle, Eydel Francisco Grinan Balbuea, Ibert Vázquez Moreno, Joel Fernandez Ferrer, Leidis Holedin Napoles, Norberto Vaillant Leyua, Sunny Soriano Malo de Molina, Yaqueline Abiaque, and Yumila Botorino Narino) exhibit the retention of traditional *son* and *rumba* in their styling. *Son* retentions, broadly speaking, include the use of traditional upright "closed" position, tight and controlled circular movements, *contratiempo* timing (breaking on "2"), and the appearance of gliding steps through constant knee action and alternating weight transference between the balls of the feet and the heels. *Rumba* retentions, conversely, are especially present in male styling

---

<sup>93</sup> The only attempt to codify and catalogue *rueda* calls was made in the 1990s by the dancers of the Salsa Lovers dance program in Miami. However, these schools and their syllabus have evolved away from the core Cuban set of figures and now teach what is regarded as "Miami style" *casino*, distinguished by the combination of the back-stepping ("back-rocking") of ballroom and the intricate "knotty" turns (*vuelatas* and *nudos*) found on certain parts of the island.

and range from the sporadic shimmying of the shoulders in imitation of the *gallo* (rooster) typical of *guaguancó* dance dynamics, to the *flamenco*-inspired rapid footwork improvisations of *columbia*, the competitive male modality of *rumba*.

Male *habanero* dancers Adonis Wilson, Deyris Drake Neningen, Ismael García Darroman, “Onoris” Roberto León Chacón, “Rex” Alex Cruz Borges, and Yovany Quiroz convey signs of combined *rumba* and hip-hop styling. Hip-hop characteristics include a “pop-n-lock” (alternating muscle isolations and contractions) approach to motion and the punctuated use of acrobatics such as full splits, leg lifts, and corkscrews. The combination of *rumba* styling and of hip-hop, which are common to Havana style *casino*, can be seen in the video below, recorded in Havana for the televised competition “Bailar Casino (2006)”:



Salsa dancers (*casineros*) from Havana, Vladimir and Lilian<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> “Vladimir y Lilian, Bailar Casino” October 27, 2009. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXezNJhNnRY>

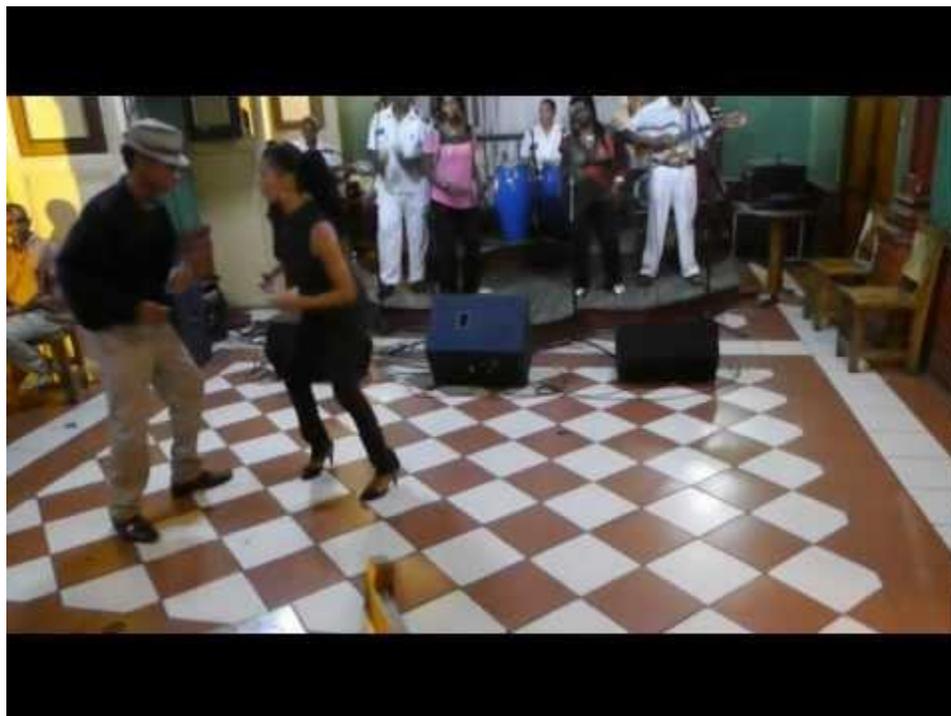
As I have suggested, proclivities towards choreographic conservatism in Cuba are offset by frequent transgressions. Consideration of the growth of *casino* in and around this tension raises questions about the nature of musical and cultural transformation in post-revolutionary Cuba as it occurs at a crucible of tradition and innovation, as well as global and local spaces. Within these expanded conceptual parameters, more passive notions of Afro-Hispanic syncretism, creolization, or hybridity as they are often used to explicate the formation of New World cultures and aesthetics (i.e. the fusion of Hispanic and African cultural traits into a new, “third” cultural composite) are insufficient for understanding the nature of Cuban popular dance (*baile popular cubano*).

When dancing to Cuban popular music, or *timba*, which is a mix of genres, *casineros* are prompted to reference disparate dance “languages,” both from within the Cuban rhythmic lineage, and globally through transnational ties with the black diaspora. Not merely a movement in musical, cultural, and ideological unification, but also of the contrary aesthetic aspirations of street and conservatory ambits, *timba* has created a framework for a new model of dance crossbreeding. In spite of attempts at homogeneity and codification, mainly due to an increase in dance tourism since *timba*’s inception, the embodied knowledge of dancers passes openly between social spaces and spurs interactions that had previously been curtailed by social and racial disparities.

### Rumba in Son Cubano

*Rumba* and son are essentially intertwined choreographic systems even outside the context of *Casino* dancing, though there has been no acknowledgment or analysis of the ways in which

these dance complexes interpenetrate. *Rumba* footwork and interactions are particularly common in *son* following a basic turn or *vacílala* (“separate and check her out”), which causes the couple to break closed position and separate. Couples will typically revert to *rumba guaguancó* in this context. In video below, Onel, a dancer of traditional *son cubano* from Santiago de Cuba, takes the lateral sidesteps of *guaguancó*, and throws his *vacunao* at (2:59). This is a recent intervention of one genre into the other.



*Rumba in Son Cubano. Onel and Yalenis, Santiago de Cuba*<sup>95</sup>

In the following video, Yanek Revilla, another inhabitant of Santiago, with whom I have had much contact and under whom I have studied, the champion dances with Miriam Rodriguez, one of the stars and international icons of the contemporary Santiago *son* scene. They dance in what Yanek describes as *son modern* (“modern son”) as distinct from *casino*, a contemporary local variation of *son* only danced in Santiago and cultivated by a clique of elite dancers from those neighborhoods, including Revilla himself and his groups *Casino.com* and the competing team the Rueda All Stars, led by Jorge Luna Roque. These dancers have made significant amendments to Son dancing in Cuba and around the world by introducing elements of *AfroCuban* dance (especially *rumba*) into the Son choreography (which involves moving such foot and arm work into a *contratiempo* or ‘on 2’ count), and by appropriating moves and patterns from *casino* dancing. Note Yanek’s use of *rumba guaguancó* at 4:03, as well as his *vacunao* at 4:07 and again at 4:16.

---

<sup>95</sup> “Son Cubano: Onel y Yalenis en la Casa de la Trova” July 29, 2012. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/AILLDZ9oXzo>



Figure. *Rumba* Guaguancó in Son. Yanek Revilla, Santiago de Cuba.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> "Yanek Revilla bailando en la Casa de la Trova, Festival de la Trova 2014" May 11, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jW5MI7mTvAo>



Figure. Casino.com, Rueda de Son, *Rumba* Intro.<sup>97</sup>

In this video above, Revilla’s group performs a *rueda de son*, or a partner changing version of *son cubano*, a format that is traditionally reserved for contemporary *casino*. The *rueda* begins with a choreographed *rumba guaguancó* section. The couples perform the basic *rumba* step together with a synchronized series of arm movements that bring them from separation to closed position. The commentary below the YouTube video provided by one user enable us to reflect on tensions between conservatism and modernization. The user “Método del Cuadro del *Casino*” offers his critique of the piece:

---

<sup>97</sup> “Yanek Revilla, Casino.com bailando son en un ensayo.” January 29, 2004. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq7JYyn0wrc>

*Bueno yo creo que marcan en contratiempo y punto, pero ni el son lleva rumba como se comienza la coreografía ni incluye tantos elementos del casino como se observa aquí. El casino por ser hijo del son si incluye muchas figuras del son por un problema simple de cronología pero el son no tiene ciertas figuras que son exclusivas del casino. Es linda la coreografía y los muchachos tienen buen nivel pero obviamente esto no debe ser considerado una coreografía de son/I believe they are marking contratiempo and that's it, but the son does not contain rumba the way the choreography begins nor does it contain all of the elements of casino that are seen here. Casino, as a child of the son, has many figures from son, but the son does not have figures that exclusive to casino. It's a beautiful choreography and the dancers are of a high caliber, but this should not be considered a son choreography. (My translation)*

### **Son Cubano in the Rumba Complex**

The use of *son* and even of *casino* in *rumba* dancing is very common. The man will bring the woman into closed position and dance a semblance of son (on 2 or on 1) against the *rumba guaguancó* clave. This makes it easier for the male partner to trick and thereby to 'vaccinate' the woman as seen in the below video of dancers of the folkloric group, Muñequitos de Matanzas. In this video, Revilla and his partner Karelia Despaigne dance a traditional *guaguancó* for foreign dance students (a fact that must necessarily be considered in viewing this dance). European and American dance students have come to expect a carnivalization of Cuban dance,

that is, to see quotations of its ‘authentic’ elements on active display, even if they appear out of their original choreographic context. Revilla brings Despaigne into a closed embrace, interrupting briefly the open-position, separated portion of the dance, which causes Despaigne to abandon her guard and creating an opening for the *vacunao* (see 0:45-52).



*Son in Rumba Guaguancó*<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup>December 16, 2009. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG70nv3NYzc>

Reggaeton- Cubatón/Timbatón in Son Cubano

Reflecting the paucity of scholarly and journalistic attention focused in recent decades on *casino* and of *son moderno*, these dances can no longer claim mass popularity in the way they used to. Hence, the triptych of *rumba*, *son* and *casino* have with the passing of time become relegated to the category of urban mulatto dances, or, alternatively, as urban mulatto forms of choreographic expression. It was not until the early the early 2000's, however, that a new *rumba* and hip-hop-related popular music and dance emerged that has gained a truly mass audience, creating new channels for voicing ideologies that provided the impetus and the animus of the traditional and modern *bailes*. The birth and growth of *reggaeton cubano*, which is also called *cubatón* or *timbatón* in order to differentiate it from the genre of the same name that became popular in the US and Puerto Rico at the same time, can be seen as an obvious tonic, engendering in its wake a variety of derivative subgenres of social dance that address an evolving set of socio-cultural, economic and political factors and changes.

As I mentioned in the introduction, Cuba's technological renaissance has yet to take place. However, the initial entry and spread of the mass media on the island – particularly of internet access and “hot spots” – has further promoted this process of choreographic efflorescence. Although not yet fully achieved, increased discretion of the individual in matters of art has also diminished a significant impairment of social dance culture; for example, while the Castro regime was hardly able to ban Cuban hip-hop or *timba* in the 1990s, it regarded such music as degenerate and corrosive of revolutionary ideals. Indeed, such has been the insularity of the dictatorship that it banned the public performances of the *timba* band Charanga Habanera in the 1997 because of its sexually explicit lyrics and the lewd behavior of the performers.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> I am referring here to the infamous “Suspension Concert,” which resulted in public admonishment of the ensemble and a six-month travel ban.

More important catalysts in the development of *cubaton* (Cuban reggaeton) have been continuing urbanization, the mass migration of plebeian *orientales* (inhabitants of Oriente province) to Havana, as well as the steady emigration of Cuban dancers to European and North American cities. As in other countries in Latin American and elsewhere, the process of urbanization has generated new aesthetic penchants and proclivities, a corollary of which has been the rise of syncretic amalgams of traditional and modern dance elements, and also of local and imported elements. Urbanization – the movement and displacement of Orientales to the capital along lines similar to the early twentieth-century – has had an incalculable impact on Havana’s urban landscape, as well as on its popular musical and choreographic expressions. It is this subculture of *orientales*, like the early urban *soneros*, that is currently seeding new choreographic cross-pollinations of *casino*, *rumba*, *son*, and hip-hop which have become among the most visible components of Cuban popular culture beyond the walls of the embargo.

Choreographically speaking, North American hip-hop has constituted an important agent of variation and renewal for *rumba* and *son*. Contemporary *rumba* as danced by urban dancers incorporates stylistic references to hip hop through popping and locking, and it enjoys popularity, along with *cubaton* and hip-hop-inflected *casino* dancing, in Havana’s dance clubs, like the Casa de la Música Galiano and elsewhere. In the video below, the dancer Jonar González, cousin of Yanek, dances *son* at a Cuban salsa party in Montpellier France. At (2:14), we see the couple separate, following musical cues that lead the couple from *son* into a reggaeton step, known as *despelote* (shimmying of the chest and lower body, see Chapter One choreographic analysis), switching briefly from *contratiempo* to the downbeat (on “1” timing):



Jonar González and Ksenia Bacan. Reggaeton in *Son*.<sup>100</sup>

#### Conclusion:

Admittedly, it is ironic to hear and read of the continued marginalization of urban *habaneros*, *matanceros* and *santiagueros*, especially within a socio-economic and political context that aims, at least rhetorically, to better their condition. But perhaps more important is the legacy of protracted poverty and oppression, the state's lingering economic beggary, and above all, the perception that this culture continues to thrive even in the face of political impotence and marginalization. Conceived of as the best marker of the island's distinctiveness and national character, traditional *rumba brava* continues to enjoy official state endorsement as a kind of museum piece of Afro-Cuban dance for the national stage (as well as in the form of nostalgic

---

<sup>100</sup> "Jonar Gonzales y Ksenia Bacan 2012 - festival Sabor Cubano de Salsa Colegio!" April 12, 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkBGS9hYBok>

versions of *son* that dominate the continue to dominate the choreographic palate of tourists vis-à-vis the Buena Vista Social Club phenomenon), forms which, although they continue to animate audiences and attract much-needed capital, do so regrettably by glossing over the stark hardships of modern underclass urban life under the revolution.

Given that Afrocuban social dance – and particularly the *rumba* and *son* complexes, which overlap fundamentally in contemporary Cuban salsa or *casino* dancing – has traditionally been the single most defining facet of Cuban culture, it is small wonder that modern derivatives of *son* and *rumba* should be of special visibility and symbolic importance in *habanero* and *santiaguero* life and that they should continue to be the primary means through which urban mulatto identity is demonstrated and celebrated. This primacy is reflected by a plethora of folkloric amateur folkloric groups, schools and instruction materials that cater to *rumba*, *son* and religious dances. Thus, both the work of Cuban dance specialists like Barbara Balbuena and the contemporary dance programs of Yanek Revilla, Karelia Despaigne, Jorge Luna Roque and the Rueda All Stars, and the Havana-based youth group Los Luceros del Camino can be said to be aimed at extolling the importance of social dance as the most cherished emblem of national, *habanero*, *matancero* and *santiaguero* identities-including but going well beyond the exoticized spectacles of present-day cabaret exhibitions.<sup>101</sup>

In the interim, thankfully, a different sort of prominence and visibility is currently accorded to the choreographic novelties of these ports through elevated levels of tourism. Helpful as well have been a creeping democratic transition, the broadening in 2016 of the island's bandwidth thanks to the negotiations between the Cuban state and Amazon, mounting

---

<sup>101</sup> These are the names of Cuba's most highly-regarded *casineros* and *rueda* groups, under whom I have studied as a dancer and with whom I now collaborate in music and dance tourism.

political activism among the urban underclasses, and the continued choreographic impact of the global black diaspora.

The relation between urban mulatto identity and the *rumba* and *son* complexes of dance continues to be especially cherished and discernible. The need to highlight this relationship acquires additional urgency by the light of historical and contemporary obfuscation and negation of the connection. During the 1930s, to a generally-held belief in the inferiority of Afro-Cuban music and dance led dancers to create cosmetically-revised versions of the *rumba* and to promote *son* abroad. Finally, a similar kind of manipulation and stultifying of Afro-Cuban culture was attempted during the early 1960s by the revolutionary state, which codified, staged, embalmed and enshrined a folkloric version of the dance in order to sell to domestic and foreign audiences the fulfillment in movement of revolutionary ideals.<sup>102</sup> On that note, in the next chapter we consider the refinement of the *rumba* and its historical entanglement with *son* in the “rhumba craze” of the 1930s.

---

<sup>102</sup> See Daniel (1995).

## CHAPTER THREE

TOBACCO AND SUGAR: COUNTERPOINTS BETWEEN *SON* AND *RUMBA*

*El tabaco es oscuro, de negro a mulato; el azúcar es clara, de mulata a blanca. El tabaco no cambia de color, nace moreno y muere con el color de su raza. El azúcar cambia de coloración, nace parda y se blanquea; es almibarada mulata que siendo prieta se abandona a la sabrosura popular y luego se encascarilla y refina para pasar por blanca, correr por todo el mundo, llegar a todas las bocas y ser pagada mejor, subiendo a las categorías dominantes de la escala social.*

(Tobacco is dark, ranging from black to mulatto; sugar is light, ranging from mulatto to white. Tobacco does not change its color; it is born dark and dies the color of its race. Sugar changes its coloring; it is born brown and whitens itself; at first it is a syrupy mulatto and in this state pleases the common taste; then it is bleached and refined until it can pass for white, travel all over the world, reach all mouths, and bring a better price, climbing to the top of the social ladder.)<sup>103</sup>

Introduction

Between the 1910s and 1920s, the prerogative of *danzón* as Cuba's national dance was increasingly challenged by the *son*, whose climb from underclass urban margins in Santiago de Cuba to Havana's elite social clubs, and from there to the ballrooms of New York, London, Paris and elsewhere, offers a kind of choreographic analog of Ortiz's account of sugar in the quotation above. For those familiar with the racial and socio-economic hierarchies of Cuban dance, Ortiz suggests tacitly to readers that many latent popular dances had disappeared without fulfilling their potential. His work, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y azúcar* (1940), was not a work of

---

<sup>103</sup> From Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo del Tabaco y Azúcar* (1940). English translation as it appears in *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 9.

mere sentiment; it was a work of augury. Indeed, as the *son* arrived from Havana in international ballrooms, *rumba brava*, a dance of Havana's darker-skinned urban underclasses, was criminalized and kept out of public view, confined to the *solares* and *patios* of Havana tenements in 1930. This is the "counterpoint" to which both the quote above and this chapter attends, namely, the perception of *rumba* as an authentic representation of Cuban identity as a natural corollary of its isolation, and the *son* as a figure of racial and cultural betrayal as a result of its commercial appropriation and dissemination in North America and Europe during the so-called "rhumba craze." By distinguishing the traditional *rumba* complex from the *son*, and *son* from the "whitened" and universalized offshoots it generated, I am connecting what have been viewed as disparate phenomena.

My aim in this chapter is to explain the reasons why urban mulatto dance culture, embodied by *son*, took on a new importance during this period, as well as to highlight a number of refinements to which *son* was subjected as a result of its national and international promotion. To an extent, this exalted position is evinced by the mobilization of Cuba's intelligentsia around the idea of racial mixing as part of a quest to define Cuba's national essence, and, importantly, by the enactment of Cuban identity and "Latin-ness" on the part of cosmopolitan elites in the international rhumba craze.

#### Tobacco as *Rumba*: Colonial Prejudices against 'Black Dance' and the Machadato

Underlying *son*'s national and global popularity as well as the invisibility of traditional *rumba brava* are perennial biases against Afrocuban arts that carried over from the colonial period. Adopting a worldview and terminology inherited from Western art music, authors of the early musical histories of Cuba tended to overlook the musical contributions of black slaves and their

descendants. These biases are evident as early as the sixteenth century in both the Hispanic and the Portuguese Americas.

Other than the written commentary of Catholic missionaries on various indigenous musical ceremonies, some of the first official documentation offering a profile of the dances in the New World described them as “black dances” – all-night galas put on by slaves on Sundays and other festivities of the Catholic calendar affording them a brief respite from their labors, at which time they are reported to have consumed huge quantities of sugar alcohol and performed the most varied “leaps” and “contortions” to the accompaniment of drums and whistles. The space created by Iberian authorities for such festivities was a part of a campaign of “benevolence” designed to bring slaves into the economic and the theological fold of the colonial apparatus.

During the early twentieth century, the word “song,” as opposed to dance, was especially favored, as an expression of a shared penchant among Cuba’s (and most of Latin America’s) early musicologists for melody and the lyric over dance. Indeed, the general paucity of scholarly commentary on social dance may itself be an indication of the generally low esteem in which dance (especially that of the popular classes) was held in comparison to the musical and lyrical arts. Conservatives condemned the subdued Afro-Cuban influence musical influences found in certain mid-nineteenth century ballroom genres such as the *contradanza* and *danza* covered in Chapter One. In some cases, controversy over these “Africanisms” reached such proportions that despite their popularity among younger dancers they were banned in societies and clubs.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Moore, 1997, p 19.

Finally, Afrocuban musical and choreographic culture was impacted by the political and cultural policies of President Gerardo Machado (1925-1933). The “Machadato,” as it is often referred to, had a profound influence on Cuban popular music particularly as regards the visibility and reception of African-derived stylistic traits, and especially of the traditional *rumba* complex. During this period mandates were issued targeting “African sounding” percussion in a number of popular genres as well as dance music (*musicaailable*) generally. In this way, while the experience of the latter was one of unremitting re-assignment, modification and of ever mounting visibility from the local port to the international ballroom, the former was largely removed from the public eye and became, essentially invisible, eventually being restricted to the *solares* (“patios”) of Guanabacoa residences and to the *cabildos* on the outskirts of urban centers as sites related to Afrocuban cultural resistance and preservation.<sup>105</sup>

#### Bleaching Sugar: The Dissemination and Stylistic Alteration of *Son*

In the previous chapter, I briefly outlined the development and relocation of *son* under the stewardship of different groups – such as the Cuban army and urban choral ensembles – and the dynamics of musical changes that took place. I mentioned how western Cuba, and Havana in particular, hosted the eastern rhythm and it acted as a safe haven for *santiagueros* and their distinctive musical traditions and a cultivating ground for the propagation and alteration of Santiago traditions. Of special import is the fact that *habanero* elites appropriated the *son* and danced it socially in all-white social clubs, although such elite spaces maintained a cautious if not suspicious stance toward the sensual content of *son*.

---

<sup>105</sup> Leymarie, 54-55.

The nationalization of *son* was rooted in the rhetoric and artistic forms that flourished during the Wars of Independence throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, at which time the meme of racial unity had become a hallmark of nationalist discourses. They were a crucial factor, for instance, in rebel ideology, and became pillar of anti-empire rhetoric, with the mythical idea of a mulatto nation exploited at every possibility.<sup>106</sup> Ironically, such discourses of racial rapprochement quickly gave way to a failed official project of “whitening” (“*blanqueamiento*”), to be achieved through successive waves of European immigration, a historical fact for which Ortiz’s reference to the bleaching of sugar also serves as a reminder. This period also witnessed the rise of an early forerunner of the *son* referred to as *guaracha*, a rhythm associated with the comic productions of the *teatro vernáculo*, also known as the *teatro bufo* or *teatro de variedades*. This form of popular theater first developed towards the mid-nineteenth century out of zarzuelas (a type of light opera) and similar Peninsular genres of stage entertainment and featured primarily *sainetes* or one-act farcical sketches distinguished from peninsular versions by a tradition of parodic tradition of “blackening,” in which white Cuban actors would blacken their faces using a burnt cork or charcoal paste and present a sequence of sung and danced exchanges between a threesome of stock racial and gendered types: the Negroito (the cunning black street vendor), the *Gallego* (the naïve, hardworking and gullible Spaniard), and, again, the voluptuous and deceitful *Mulata* as their shared object of desire. The main roles described above represented characters that might be found anywhere within the boundaries of Havana’s urban milieu and whose typecast identities replicated the complexities of racial miscegenation in modern Cuba.

---

<sup>106</sup> Pedro Serviat “Solutions to the Black Problem,” and Tomás Fernández Robaina “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Black Question,” in Pedro Perez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs eds. *Afrocuba: An Anthology on Race, Politics and Culture* (New York: Latin American Bureau, 1993), 77-90 and 92-105

Gradually taking on local characteristics, minstrel theater and its racialized characters became fertile ground for the *guaracha*. On stage, Selier argues, these characters became “cultural apparati to be embodied,” acting as promoters or as a “menace” to the Cuban national project.<sup>107</sup> Such a practice of cosmetic masquerade had already become a hallmark of Cuban popular culture, having been taken up, for example, as one of the central tropes of Cirilo Villaverde’s foundational fiction “Cecilia Valdes” (1839) and adapted into a popular Zarzuela by the composer Gozalo Roig in 1932. In the novel, Villaverde’s mixed-race female protagonist is portrayed coating her face in a veneer of maquillage to gain entry into Havana’s white-dominated salons where she mingles with bourgeois Spanish males over the *contradanza*, a dance craze which arrived in Spanish-ruled Cuba via England, France, and Santo Domingo and which came to flourish in the principal port cities of Santiago de Cuba and Havana. Of course, in a caste society like that of nineteenth-century Cuba, interracial encounters involving mulatto women and white men all tilted in favor of the male partner - made these highly unequal relationships. Like the national apotheosis of *samba* of the carnival in Brazil, *son* achieves its national contours, at least in part, by dismissing the asymmetries of gender, class and race that accompanied such choreographic encounters.<sup>108</sup>

Ironically, as Robin Moore has observed, the caricatured blackening that epitomized these productions was complemented musically by a stylized “*rumba*” finale, at which time all of the actors would convene on stage in what would have been a clearly identifiable allegory of

---

<sup>107</sup> Selier, 92.

<sup>108</sup> See Chasteen (1996), 35. See first chapter for my mention of ‘casas de cuna’ for interracial encounters through social dance prior to the twentieth century.

national solidarity and racial harmony.<sup>109</sup> Such danced sequences were divorced considerably from the traditional *rumba*. Robin Moore cites the replacement in the theater by European orchestral instruments, such as the cornet, violin, clarinet, bass, keyboard, and *timbal* or tympani. He also cites important advents in wardrobe, namely, of *rumbero* and *guarachero* costumes – the male typically dressed in colorful shirts with heavily ruffled shoulders and sleeves, the woman affixing a "tail" or train of similarly ruffled material behind her. These same costumes were eventually adopted by a number of twentieth-century tourist venues and became associated with cabaret exhibition *rumba* as well, discussed later in the chapter.<sup>110</sup>



Figure. The “Negrito” enamored by the Mulata.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>109</sup> See Robin Moore discussion of the guaracha in “The Commercial Rumba: Afrocuban Arts as International Popular Culture” *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Autumn - Winter, 1995), pp. 165-198

<sup>110</sup> Moore, 174.

<sup>111</sup> “Teatro Cubano: Folclore e Identidad.” Retrieved from <http://www.cuba24horas.com/es/artes/36-teatro/71-teatro-cubano-folclore-e-identidad-i>



Figure. "The Mulata, the Negrito and the Gallego on stage together for a guaracha "*rumba*" finale."<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Berta Martínez, "El tío Francisco y Las Leandras, La mulata, el negrito y el gallego; la triada del bufo cubano." Retrieved from <http://www.encaribe.org/es/Picture?idImagen=8334&idRegistro=704>

Carnavalesque Exhibition *Rumbas*: The Tropicana”

In the 1930s an entirely new *rumba* emerged, popularized in cabarets like the Tropicana Club in Havana’s barrio Marianao. The new exhibition *rumba* resembled its predecessor in the very limited sense of being an urban creation with no particular rural appeal, in its very occasional use of sensual couple dancing, and in its presentation of a sensational vision of mulatto urban life. In other respects, however, the new *rumba* was quite distinct from its marginal predecessor, being essentially an exoticized and hyper-eroticized attempt at recreating the atmosphere of Cuba’s carnival for tourists.



Figure. Exhibition *Rumba* of the Tropicana in Havana’s Barrio Marianao.<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> This is a photo of Ariacne Trujillo Durand (center stage), a friend and former principal dancer of the Tropicana cabaret.

A typical cabaret *rumba* would reiterate and stereotype an urban carnival procession or *comparsa* (see Chapter One for my mention of processional dances). Other numbers, or *rumbas*, might contain more varied dance sequences, again reflecting their origins among urban dancers and marginal social actors. While traditional choreographies have been known to be used, their usage became exceptions rather than the norm.

Since the mid-century decades, *bufo*-style *rumbas* have been largely forgotten in Cuba, and in years since the revolution, Cuban musical discourse makes use of the term "*rumba*" invariably to denote precursors of the stage which should more properly be called "*rumba brava*," and not in reference to exhibition *rumbas*.<sup>114</sup> In general, however, the rise of the cabaret *rumba* reflects the predominance of the carnivalesque in Cuba and, as I shall suggest further, a broader process in which the more serious content of *rumba brava* lyrics were sacrificed to what amounted to a hyper-erotic spectacle of Africanisms. Similar spectacles can be seen in the dance performances of the contemporary cabaret shows in Havana, such as the "Guajirito," the restored "Tropicana," and the "Cabaret Parisen" at the Nacional Hotel.

#### *Afrocubanismo* and the National Celebration of *Mulataje*

Examining the dissemination of the *son* and the various reasons for its popular appeal, particularly in contradistinction to the fate of traditional *rumba*, demands discussion of the period beginning in the early 1920s and extending through the end of the revolution against Gerardo Machado in the mid-1930s. While metaphors of African contagion and degeneration were common for one generation of Cuban musicology, converse metaphors of genesis and procreation were also commonplace for their successors, as they were bound to be for those who

---

<sup>114</sup> Again, see Daniel (1991 & 1995) and for her discussion of the Cuban Ministry of Culture and its appropriation of *rumba*.

hoped to establish racial solidarity as the foundation of a national musical lineage. As Moore observes, aside from the tremendous political and social turbulence with which it is associated, this period also gave rise to dramatic aesthetic changes in the production of both popular and elite arts broadly, an important result of which was the repositioning of traditional Afro-Cuban artistic expression relative to other forms of musical and choreographic production so that they came to play a much more important ideological and stylistic role – as he puts it – in contemporary conceptions of *cubanidad* (Cuban-ness) and national culture.<sup>115</sup>

*Son* was promoted and chaperoned to mainstream popularity through the activities of the *afrocubanista* intelligentsia, who drew active inspiration from Afro-Cuban themes and cultural forms. By dint of their artistic priorities, the *son* was ushered from the margins of Cuban society to the national discourses of racial hybridity and promoted as its stylistic embodiment. Again, this phenomenon had an analog across the Atlantic, only this time in South. Opening his long *ensaio*, the inaugural and most revered critical voice on the history of MPB (“Musica popular brasileira”) showed that he was perhaps no more forward-thinking than Sanchez de Fuentes regarding the incursion of foreign influences on national expression when he observed that the then popular *maxixe* – the immediate choreographic precursor (at least in name) of the samba – was being “infiltrated” by the influence of North American jazz and Argentinean *tango*. And yet, in this same opening, the familiar racial and national qualifiers come together in one incredibly smooth and forceful crescendo:

*Por mais distintos que sejam os documentos regionais, eles manifestam aquele imperativo etnico pelo qual sao reconhecidos por nos. Isso me comove bem.*

---

<sup>115</sup> Moore, “Commercial Rumba: Afro-Cuban Arts as International Popular Culture.” *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Autumn - Winter, 1995), pp. 166.

*Alem de possuirem pois a originalidade que os diferenca dos estranhos, possuem a totalidade racial e sao todos patricios. A música popular brasileira e a mais completa, mais totalmente nacional, mais forte criacao da nossa raça/* However distinct the regional documents may be, they manifest that racial imperative through which they become recognizable to us. I find this moving. Besides possessing an originality which distinguishes them from their foreign counterparts, they possess a racial totality and are, all, of the nation. Brazilian popular music is the most complete, the most totally national, and the most potent creation of our race.<sup>116</sup>

Inviting is it - almost a rallying cry - the way in which these phrases seem to marshal together and surge from the analytical into the patriotic. It is all there to emphasize the one central and critical point that Andrade wished to enjoin on all Brazilians, whether of European, Amerindian, Afro-Brazilian, or any of the classifications that were still in use for the country's *mestiço* population: Brazil's popular music is the shared patrimony of all races.

Try to imagine for a moment the power exerted by Andrade's commentary. By a few strokes of his pen, he had almost single-handedly framed the way popular music and dance would be conceptualized for decades to come. He had achieved the impossible, having engineered a common musical inheritance and made it into a broadly inclusive point of social solidarity: one musical ancestry for one *mestiço* Brazilian race. Arguably, some of that persuasiveness may be attributed to the impressive mobilization of Brazilian society during

---

<sup>116</sup> Mario de Andrade, *Ensaio Sobre a Musica Brasileira*, 3d ed. (Sao Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1972), 24-25.

Getulio Vargas's Estado Novo around the idea of *mestiçagem*. As Chasteen notes, state support for the music and dance of the popular classes was not merely rhetorical during this period, it was also financial.<sup>117</sup> In a similar way, in Cuba, the *son* arrived at the forefront of the island's national imaginary and became tied to a widely-diffused myth of social leveling already a defining characteristic of the *rumba* itself as it had been developed as a race and class equalizer in the comic theater.

The political project of the *afrocubanistas*, at the helm of which stood Alejo Carpentier, the poet Nicolas Guillén and other literati and members of the intelligentsia, served to counteract the political program of then president Gerardo Machado, whose prohibition and criminalization of urban underclass expression mentioned previously they sought to overturn. In fact, the combined harnessing of popular culture and of the labor movement of the sort that happened in Brazil during the 1930s would not happen in Cuba until the second decade after the Revolution, with the formation of the Ministry of Culture and the consolidation of its influence over all matters pertaining to music and dance. In any event, myths of social cohesion and the de facto targeting of black and urban underclass expression constitute a kind of paradox underlying the whole of *son*'s Golden Age, its *época de oro*.

### The "Rhumba" Craze in Cuba and Abroad

As the foregoing examples make plain, definitions of *rumba* are something of an enigma from their first appearance in the comic theater due to various factors. These include the fact that the term itself has a rather wide range of meanings and lends itself to differing interpretations and

---

<sup>117</sup> Chasteen (1996), p.31.

emphasis. *Rumba* is the Spanish verbal noun derived from the verb *rumbiar*, which means “to party” while a “*rumbon*” is a noun used to refer to any party involving music, dance and drinking.<sup>118</sup> Cubans continue today to emphasize this meaning, primordial meaning of the term by calling any kind of music and dance gala by the name “*rumba*,” whether the music and dance styles are traditional or popular and contemporary.

However, an added layer of terminological vagueness arrived when *sones* became exported with regularity to several locations in Europe and North America and called by the name “rhumba” (note the Anglicization of the term). This more precarious confusion occurred as a result of the trans-positioning of the rhythm geographically and spatially between Havana’s cosmopolitan social clubs, such Havana’s Casino Deportivo and Yacht Club, where North American and European elites were exposed to local musical and choreographic trends, and the international ballroom as an emergent site linked to the formulation (and codification) of new global music and dance crazes, including the *tango*, *samba* and *paso doble* (ballroom *flamenco*; see Chapter Four).

---

<sup>118</sup> Esteban “Cha Cha” Bacallao, personal interview. June 20, 2004.



Figure. Sociedad/Social club son performance. *Rutina de Tornillos*, contratiempo.<sup>119</sup>

The above video is taken from the film “Mexico Lindo” (1938) and shows a *son* routine by René Rivero and his wife Estela, Cuba’s first choreographic ambassadors to the outside world. In this scene, we see the interior of a Havana social club or *sociedad*. The couple performs a series of *tornillos* taken directly from the traditional *son*, suggesting that, at least at

---

<sup>119</sup> August 21, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMIE3uTIBjw>

this level of mediation, the earlier universalized versions of *son* were still relatively close to the original.

As regards the level of transformation and whitening of the *son* in the post-Rivera stage, it becomes particularly significant for comparative purposes to have a formula of the various features that are more or less endemic to the tradition *son* complex, prior to its transatlantic departures and its refinements. A typical *son* might include any of the following, as performed in the video below by two dancers from the traditional Cuban dance group Rueda All Stars om Santiago de Cuba:



*Son* demo, Santiago de Cuba from the Rueda All Stars<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj9HzSr-JF4>

- 1) Basic lateral (0:01-03) – The couple steps from side to side on beats 2,3, and 4, pauses on the 5<sup>th</sup> beat, and again on beats 6,7, and 8, pausing a second time on beat 1. The male partner begins with his left foot, and the woman with her right. The couple will generally accentuate the strong upbeat of the clave on 8, which serves as a terminus for all of son's basic figures.
  
- 2) Basic linear (forward and back; 0:-03-0:07) – A variation on the lateral basic, performed forward and back, with the man stepping forward with his left and the woman stepping back with her right.
  
- 3) Lateral travel (left) and recovery step/directional change (0:08-0:12) – The couple strolls to the left for two or more counts of eight beats.
  
- 4) Lateral Travel (right) and recovery (0:13-0:20)  
  
When they reach the eighth beat of the second cycle, they take one step to the left on beats 2,3, and 4, and begin traveling the in the opposite direction for two or more counts of eight.
  
- 5) Dile que no/Cross body lead (0:21-0:23) – This movement is used to bring the woman from the closed embrace to open position, with both the man and the woman face forward, connected by one hand.
  
- 6) Rodeo (ladies walk clockwise around man) + outside turn (0:24-0:30) – This movement is no doubt derived from sequence partner dances like the danzón and the French

contredanse. The male dancer guides his follower by stretching his hand out, indicating the pathway. She then walks around him in a circle as he maintains his loose grip on her hand, passing it over his head. The man will usually end this figure with a basic outside turn on beats 6, 7 and 8.

- 7) Pasea or angular traveling across the floor (0:31-0:38) – This figure also stems from the aforementioned ballroom predecessors, strolling around the room in semi-circular patterns of motion, with the man guiding the female to pass in front of him on each revolution.
- 8) Basic cross steps (0:59-1:04) – This variation on the basic linear steps distinguishes son from all of its rhumba ballroom offshoots as well as from its later salsa descendants after the revolution, both in Cuba around the world. The couple performs a figure eight pattern on the floor, moving forward and back and side to side in combination.
- 9) Static poses (1:08-1:14) – One the signature characteristics of son is the tendency for dancers to freeze in postures that accentuate the elegance and/or bravado of the dance, often remaining immobile for several measures, as in the video above.
- 10) Dile que no + inside turn or “Coca cola” (1:16-1:18) – While the turns of son overwhelmingly consist of outside turns known as “Vacila,” my research has shown that inside turns, which are included in the lexicon of contemporary casineros in Cuba under the name “Enchufla,” danced on beats 2,3, and 4, and Coca-cola, which is danced on beats 6,7, and 8. These inside turns are very common in the ballroom rhumbas of London and in salsa dancing generally.

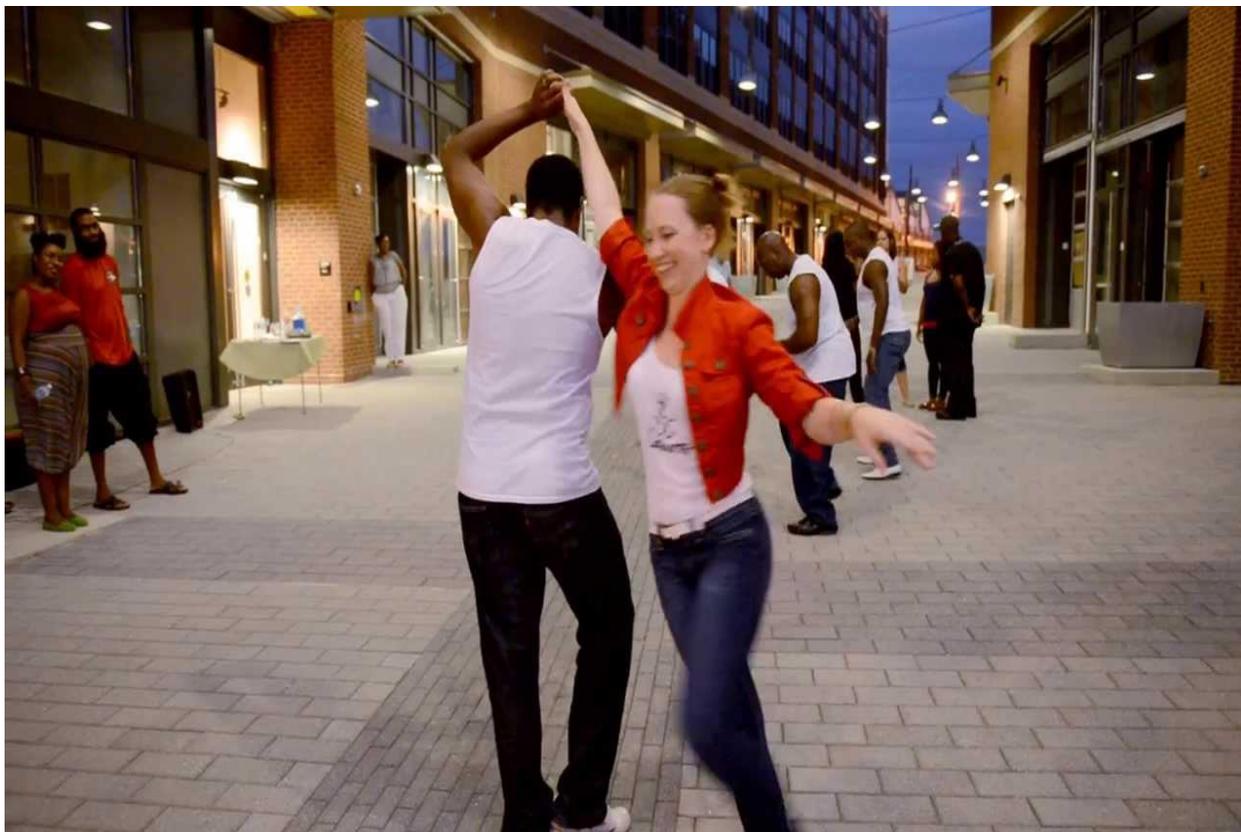


Figure. Dancers Adrian Valdivia and Amanda Gill perform a rodeo of *son* in Washington D.C.

11) Caidas (Male partner - 1:24, female partner 1:25 & again at 2:23) – As intimated in Chapter Two, *Son* includes a number of “falling” moves, where the man or woman fall, supported by the arm or shoulder of the leader or follower. These movements simulate drunkenness, hinting again at the incubation of the dance in Havana’s taverns and similar establishments.



Figure. Caida (lateral; performed off a cross-body lead).<sup>121</sup>

12) *Tornillos* (for examples of the male *tornillo*, see previous videos from Chapter Two:

Yoannis Tamayo and Jonar González and see above video, 1:47-2:09). – The *tornillo* or corkscrew, which I have already discussed at length, is *son*'s most identifiable maneuver.

As seen in the photo below, they are often performed by both men and women,

depending on the core strength, flexibility and athleticism of the *soneros*.

<sup>121</sup> October 30, 2015. Retrieved from

[https://www.google.com/search?q=caida+son&biw=1777&bih=887&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjul8eXpNLKAhXMcj4KHZJQBewQ\\_AUIBygC&dpr=0.9#tbn=isch&q=son+dance+tornillo+&imgc=eJadq4i\\_\\_bKRMM%3A](https://www.google.com/search?q=caida+son&biw=1777&bih=887&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjul8eXpNLKAhXMcj4KHZJQBewQ_AUIBygC&dpr=0.9#tbn=isch&q=son+dance+tornillo+&imgc=eJadq4i__bKRMM%3A)



Figure. Tornillo de la mujer (led from a *vacila* or two-handed outside turn)<sup>122</sup>

#### The *Son* as “Rhumba” Abroad:

From the 1940s onward, stylized, elaborated forms of traditional *son* began to be widely performed in commercial contexts on the Continent- especially dance halls - in English towns, primarily by non-Cuban professional dancers. This diverse category of dances slowly became codified and soon came to be called *rumba* or rhumba by the dancing public in New York, London and Paris. As *son* disseminated and evolved in these contexts, the need for new material led dancers and dance instructors to incorporate a wide variety of non-Cuban genres into the repertoire, especially the fox-trot and the waltz. Such a conflation of *son* and jazz music with

<sup>122</sup> Unknown couple, from “Cubanizate 2015 Son Cubano Tornillo,” [https://www.google.com/search?q=Son+dance&biw=1777&bih=887&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6MXcpNLKAhUCCz4KHTTLAEkQ\\_AUIBygC&dpr=0.9#tbm=isch&q=Son+cubano%2C+tornillo+mujer&imgsrc=j1PruDeBXUIPKM%3A](https://www.google.com/search?q=Son+dance&biw=1777&bih=887&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6MXcpNLKAhUCCz4KHTTLAEkQ_AUIBygC&dpr=0.9#tbm=isch&q=Son+cubano%2C+tornillo+mujer&imgsrc=j1PruDeBXUIPKM%3A)

lyrical references to *rumba* had already been in evidence, to a certain extent, in the nineteenth-century theatrical genre of the same name mentioned previously.<sup>123</sup>

While some references to non-Cuban versions of *son* remain enigmatic, it is clear that by the 1880s the *son* had become an important, popular, and well-defined dance type on the island. From the 1930s to the mid-1950s, couples like Estela and René Rivero, Pepe Riviera, and other dancers of “rhumba” in Cuban cabarets popularized a sort of cinematic or staged version of the *son*, abounding in flowery, delicate gestures, beginning to verge on a somewhat more effeminate, salon style of dance. By the 1950s this style had definitively passed out of vogue in Cuba and is currently regarded by most Cuban audiences as diluted and insipid; again, the cabaret rhumba is no longer performed in Cuba, except as re-creations of pre-revolutionary nightlife in the cabarets of the Hotel Nacional, the Tropicana, the Guajirito and others as a consequence of the vogue of the Buena Vista Social Club.<sup>124</sup>

The emergence of these *rumbas* (rhumbas) coincided with a period of intensified contact between Cubans, Americans and Western Europeans, not only through a general increase in tourism on the island, but especially in the form of the many Cuban soldiers who traveled to Europe during the Second World War (see Doris Lavell’s account). After the independence of Cuba from Spain in 1898, personal, economic, and cultural exchanges between Cuba and these areas persisted, with the transformation of New York and Paris into bohemian cities where black cultural forms in general were becoming widespread, acquiring some of their historical status as surrogate cities for Havana in the North.

---

<sup>123</sup> Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 181

<sup>124</sup> These are names of popular cabaret style performance halls in Havana, primarily in Old Havana, Vedado, where tourists can still view commercial, touristic forms of *Son* that fell out of popularity with the revolution. Indeed, these forms of dance all but disappeared when Castro closed the cabarets.

At the turn of the twentieth century, and especially during the 1920s, the Latin Dance crazes (*rhumba*, *samba*, *tango* and *paso doble*) capitalized on major technological advents that fostered idiosyncratic forms of transnational and local interactions. In many respects, we may say that the ballroom rhumba evolved as a transcontinental entity, easily straddling the Atlantic, which was traversed by jazz ensembles, immigrants, soldiers, touring bands and dance acts, and eventually films portraying new dances from the peripheries. In other respects, the dance developed a set of distinctive and generic features. Hence, for example, the extent to which one could speak of a distinctive ballroom or box rhumba style of dancing rhumba (again, see Lavelle's remarks).

This, in particular, I wish to emphasize. The creation of these new choreographic phenomena involved not only the transmission of stylistic and structural features but also their affective resignification as they moved from Cuba abroad.<sup>125</sup> Most obvious in this category was the way that the *son* in places like the US, Britain and France, could either function simply as an abstract genre that conjured images of a nebulous, sensual, non-European location, in which a dancer might have an experience of controlled immersion in marginality from within the confines of bohemian European neighborhoods.

The Parisian fetish for all things exotic led, in turn, to the birth of an exportable "Latinness" that, when imported to other European cities such as London, was often adopted and performed uncritically as authentic dances for the greater part of the 1930s and early 1940s. Thus, ballroom rhumba as a set of choreographic and cultural practices constituted an exercise in exoticism: advocating a controlled immersion in cultural marginalia while setting perimeters that serve to preserve and reify elite white supremacy on the one hand, and foreign commercial

---

<sup>125</sup> See Manuel (2004) for his explanation of the linkage between geographic dissemination and resignifying of popular music.

hegemony on the other.<sup>126</sup> As it was redefined in the cafes and cabarets of Paris, *son* as rhumba remained in Europe and emanated outward to other locations, for example, back to the United States where it continued to form new commercial composites. This sanitized reworking of the *rumba* for North American and European audiences constituted an early and powerful influence on how the genre would enter ‘Latin’ ballroom repertoire, although big band *rumbas* and other Cubaphile performance contexts.



Figure. Chuy Reyes, early North American Rhumba.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Selier, 90.

<sup>127</sup> Chuy Reyes and his Orchestra. “Rhumba Boogie” !!!, April 10, 2009. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7w\\_kBjENes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7w_kBjENes)

The video above depicts a rare cabaret performance by Chuy Reyes and his Orchestra, one of the harbingers of “Latin Dance” culture in North America, offering a glimpse of early interpretations of *son* by non-Cuban dancers. After a minute or so of *descarga* (instrumental improvisation), which consists in the signature *son* clave crossed with boogie-woogie style rhythm, the couple saunters out onto the tile. They begin separated and slightly hunched over, evoking the traditional *rumba*, though their movements are perceptively non-Cuban. There is no *vacunao* and none of the traditional extensions of the arms. At 1:13, the couple executes a *tornillo*, a maneuver which, as I have indicated, is associated with *son*. Remarkably, it is the female who executes the maneuver, with one important alteration: the man, instead of walking clockwise around the woman, thereby enabling her to find her balance, encircles her in the opposite direction. Also, the timing of the dance is on the first beat of the measure (1,2,3 pause, 5,6,7, pause...) and not on the second, perhaps the most defining choreographic element of *son*. Although this represents an isolated rumba performance, it nevertheless offers insight into the range of liberties foreign dancers tended to take, ranging, at times, from slight imprecision to total infidelity toward the local root choreography.<sup>128</sup>

An important exponent of “Latin” dance was Doris Lavelle, who, along with her partner Pierre Zurcher Margolle, became pioneers of Latin American dancing, developing them around the basic ballroom box step that had emanated from the first “couple dance”, the waltz. I was fortunate some time ago to stumble onto a rare video, in which Lavelle recounts the process

---

<sup>128</sup> In *son*, there are no inside turns, which in Salsa is referred to by the name “Enchufla.” With the exception of *son moderno* or contemporary *son*, which has been enriched by the dance language of Casino, all basic turns are variations of “Exhibela” (see Appendix, p. 206, for short inventory of basic figures), where the male raises his arm and guides the woman to walk out and around (over her right shoulder) and back into the neutral, or closed position. I have studied these distinctions between *son* and salsa in Santiago de Cuba under the tutelage of Yanek Revilla and Karelia Despaigne.

through which she and Pierre first encountered and went on to codify the rumba for British ballroom dancers. I have transcribed this interview below from the original video clip.

Before the war, I and my partner, Pierre [Margolle], were looking for a new dance. We had heard [that], on the Continent, the rumba was being played a lot and by a lot of famous bands. So, we went to Paris, and we found the clubs where the best bands were playing. And we went to one called the “Cabane Cubaine” in Montmartre. There, right into the early hours of the morning, rumba was played. Many famous band leaders, including Don Bareto, came to play after midnight, after they had finished at their own clubs. And we saw, very much, rumba dancing. We learnt it...we had lessons from somebody from the club. Then, we came back to England and introduced this dance. We called it the “square *rumba*.” It had a certain amount of success. We ourselves were very successful, but some of the other teachers were a little apprehensive about teaching new dance. But we really persevered and carried on. During the war, many Cubans came with the American army. We had a friend in the Cuban consulate, and he always said to them, “Do you dance *rumba*?” And, if they said yes, he’d send them along to us at 96 Regent Street, which, afterwards, was always called “The 96” by everybody, because we had so many foreigners come to our studio during the war. When I danced with these Cubans, I found that they were using a different rhythm, and I felt a little uncomfortable. I could always follow, but I didn’t feel comfortable. Also Pierre, he did not feel comfortable. So we decided, as soon as it was possible, to go to the home of the rumba, Cuba, which we did. Just after the war, as soon as the Bank of England allowed us the currencies,

which was in the 1940s and early 50s, we went along to Havana. There we got to know the only real professional who taught there: Pepe Riviera. And he immediately said to Pierre, “but you’re dancing on the wrong rhythm!” So, we set about learning it. Every night, we went to Cuban clubs until about four in the morning, watching *rumba*, dancing *rumba*...having lessons the next day. This we did for a period of about three weeks or a month. And we came back to England with this *rumba*, which did not start on the 1 in the bar; it started on the second beat of the bar, and [with] English people it was very difficult to make them see what a wonderful dance this was. We pushed on with it; we ourselves demonstrated it; we always got very much applause; and eventually, after a certain number of years, of trying and of going back to Cuba, every two or three years coming back with marvelous variations, having danced to really wonderful orchestras, including Sonora Matancera, who had with him Celia Cruz singing, eventually we got the English public and the teachers to start to dance it. Now we had to name the steps, and you’ll find later that I call certain steps “hockey stick,” “natural top,” “spiral”... We named all these steps. We gave them names that we thought probably were rather like what we were doing with our feet. For example, on the “spiral,” you rather dance like on a spiral staircase; the “hockey stick” is like the shape of a hockey stick. For the “top,” we turned to the right or the left on the spot, and so on...And these steps we named and [they] are now in the syllabus of every society all over the world.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> “Lavelle qui explique la *rumba* extrait.” Dubar, Christian. Published April 23, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rwCuyB6ZbY>

Lavelle's account is revelatory, especially since it is one of the few interviews on record describing the contact between rhumba dancers from the Continent and Cuban *son* dancers. As such, it constitutes a record of the dissonances that local Cuban dancers likely felt in such encounters with foreign rhumba (*son*) practitioners. In her account of lessons with her instructor Pepe Riviera in 1947, she recalls Riviera's dismay at the fact that they were dancing on the downbeats (*a tiempo*) and not on the upbeat (*contratiempo*). It is clear from video examples of Lavelle's lessons in Cuba that her time with Riviera was spent making her rhumba more "local."

Lavelle's partner Pierre wrote about his experiences studying *son* in Havana in an article entitled "Three Weeks in Cuba," in which he demonstrates several areas of confusion about the genre. He characterizes *son*, *danzón*, and *bolero* as interchangeable dances, bespeaking the generalizations to which Cuban popular dance was increasingly subjected with the arrival of British and North American dancers of the newly formed Imperial Society in London. In his discussion of what he calls the "Cuban System" and the "American System," he refers again to *son* as a ballroom dance. He superimposes nascent English ballroom concepts onto the city, its nightlife and dance culture. Telling as well is Margolle's anecdote about the Cuban ballroom pedagogy and judging system, suggesting that Latin Ballroom dance culture had totally pervaded the island (at least within the hotel circuit) by the time of his arrival:

London, Friday, December 19th – New York, the next morning – New York-  
Miami overnight the following Sunday – Miami-Cuba (a matter of 80 minutes) on  
the Tuesday! This is how one travels these modernistic days. This is how it  
happened that one Christmas Eve I was dancing in Havana in my quest to

discover the latest developments of the most modernistic of all dances –the Cuban *Rumba*.

There are very few Dancing Schools in Havana. I made my headquarters during my stay in Havana at the best one: The Sydney Trott Dance Studio in the delightful “Bajo la Luna” (Underneath the moon) Patio (Spanish Courtyard) of the Hotel Nacional de Cuba, Havana Millionaires’ Hotel. Every year the Havana Municipal Council organizes a big *Rumba* Contest; many thousands of people watch the contest. I was fortunate enough to have lessons every afternoon with the 1947 *Rumba* Champion and to practice every night with his partner.

The Ballroom *Rumba* in Cuba is known as the “Son”. The “Son”, according to the tempo of the music is divided into “Danzon” and “Bolero” (slow tempo) and “Guaracha” (quicker tempo). The name of “*Rumba*” exclusively applies to the exhibition version of this dance.

There are many night clubs in Havana, but the best dancing is seen in the “Academias” which are the equivalent of our “Palais” and are usually smaller. I discovered that visitors to Cuba usually dance the style of Ballroom *Rumba* that we do here, the Cubans call this the “American System”.

Systema Cubano

The Cubans themselves dance the “Sistema Cubano” which I have brought back with me and which is the most fascinating Ballroom Dance I have ever come across. The “Systema Cubano” is, of course, in many ways similar to our “American System” but the rhythm is different (it is danced on the “off” beat). Some of the movements somewhere resemble the “Jive” but the latter dance is unknown in the Cuban Ballrooms. This point should be remembered by those who like to imagine that the *Rumba* has been influenced by the Jive. The only form of the Fox Trot danced in Cuba is a sort of “Rhythm Dancing” similar to ours. The Paso Doble is played extensively and danced in a very simple way. The Dance Programmes include about 80 per cent of Cuban Music. I was able to obtain most interesting and useful information on how *Rumba* Competitions are judged in Cuba and the United States.

#### The judging

Marking is done on the “Olympic Point System”, judges concentrating on important points: Rhythm, Position, Authenticity, Originality, etc. Each point is marked from 2 to five: 2-poor, 3-fair, 4-good, 5-excellent. The Cuban judges attach the highest importance to Style and Deportment and both the Cuban and American judges agree that the couples who indulge in exhibitionistic or suggestive feats should be marked down. This, of course, does not mean that the competitors’ dancing should be dull or lifeless. On the contrary the rhythm of the Cuban ballroom experts is terrific and their variations most attractive. I was thrilled by their demonstrations. But they are always perfectly natural and their balance and control are superb!

I am convinced the *Rumba* in this Country will succeed I have had the honour to be asked by the Organisers of the “Star” Ballroom Championship to be their adviser in the *Rumba* Contests. The Ballroom *Rumba* in South America is immensely popular because it is kept as a ballroom dance. I have made every effort to make this point clear to everybody concerned with the “Star” *Rumba* Championship. If this principle is followed I am convinced the *Rumba* in this Country will succeed not only as a Competition but also as a Standard Ballroom Dance.

*Pierre Jean Phillip Zurcher Margolie (Monsieur Pierre)*<sup>130</sup>

Two videos of Lavelle and Margolle, Cuba and London:

Below are two videos of Lavelle and Margolle. The first was recorded during their original trip to Cuba as recounted above, and shows the couple in instruction with local *soneros* Pepe Riviera and his unknown partner. The second was taken later in Lavelle’s life from her London studio. She demonstrates calls out and demonstrates her own names for the Cuban moves she and Margolle had studied, which form the basis, as she claims in her interview, of the syllabus used by the contemporary imperial society.

In the video below, Lavelle can be seen with her partner Pierre Margolle dancing *son/rhumba* on a rooftop in Havana during their first trip to Cuba in 1947. However, in the absence of sound, it is difficult to ascertain on what beat the couples are stepping, though they

---

<sup>130</sup> PDF of Margolle’s original article available at <http://www.dancearchives.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Three-weeks-in-Cuba-By-Monsieur-Pierre.pdf>

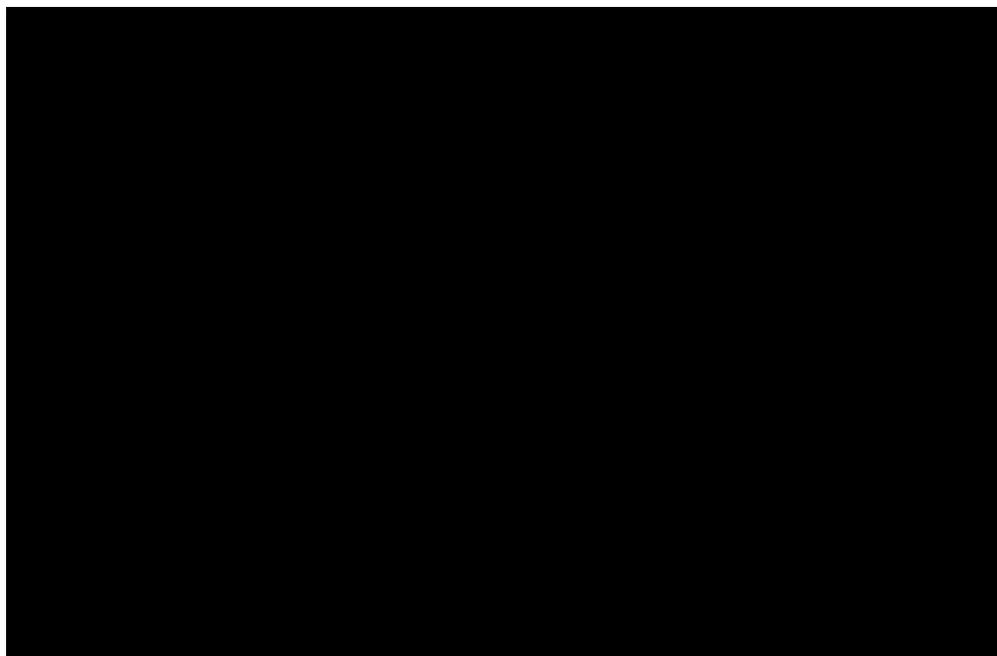
appear to be synchronized with Riviera and his partner, which suggests that they are dancing *contratiempo*. This early record of their dancing shows the degree to which the *son* would become transmuted under their stewardship.



Lavelle and Margolle, Son lessons in Havana<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> "Pierre & Lavelle: Havana 1947." May 19, 2013. From the Archive of London Theatre of Ballroom. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLNf34dbhw>



Doris Lavelle and Pierre Margolle, dancing their own codified ballroom rhumba – the square rhumba after their trip to Havana in 1947.<sup>132</sup>

In the clip above, we see a codified “square” or “box-step” rhumba. It begins with a disclaimer that the music and the dance are not always synchronized. However, even if we grant that Lavelle’s performance is danced *contratiempo*, in *son* time, we can still assemble a number of attributes that are expressly absent from the three vignettes of their lessons in Cuba with Riviera. This allows us to conclude that, thanks to Lavelle’s efforts, a ballroom rhumba had already become concretized, codified, and transferred to the Continent. In this new ballroom-style rhumba include the following:

---

<sup>132</sup> Video retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI-HThOvabU>

- 1) Back rocking, giving the dance a bouncy appearance. Typical of Ballroom
- 2) Inconsistent relation to the beat, oscillating from *contratiempo* (on 2) to on 3.
- 3) Hip movement, again contributing to a bouncy appearance. The illusion of hip movement in Cuban *son* is created by the alternating flexion of the knees and not by through any direct hip action. The dancer bodies in *son* is meant to appear level.

While the vogue of the *son* in Cuba is well documented, the documentation of the ballroom rumba remains scarce. These videos constitute the first known presence of Cuban dance in the United Kingdom. Lavelle and Margolle's modified *son*/ "rumba" hangs somewhere between the hypo-eroticized and the exotic – in any case – a sanitized re-creation of the *son*. Though Lavelle and Margolle are not seen wearing competition apparel, the sort that appear as glamorized equivalents to daily apparel worn in the barrios of Havana, the streets of Rio, the bullfight arenas of Seville, or the nightclubs of Harlem. Here, cultural gender roles are virtually annulled. The dynamism, flirtatiousness is eradicated, rather than emphasized, as in the in the liminal national dances associated with Iberian transatlantic port cities.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, we have gleaned the semantic flexibility and adaptiveness to which the term *rumba* became subjected. Originally denoting a vocal, musical and choreographic form of marginal tenure and affiliation, the *rumba* came to signify a stylized stage song often more similar to the contemporary *son* coupled with a dance sequence that may have been closer in appearance to carnival processions. In the ballrooms of the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, diluted versions of the *son* dance were marketed and codified under the name "*rumba*" (or

rhumba), also stylistically much more choreographically akin to *son* as well as to the foxtrot than to traditional *rumba*. In 1996, a guitarist and recording executive Ry Cooder initiated a global music movement with his album and documentary "Buena Vista Social Club," whose retrospective and nostalgic character invoked the pre-revolutionary golden age of *son* and the *bolero* and its ties to an idyllic rural tradition. The last several years have witnessed a tremendous vogue of "Buena Vista-inspired" cabaret performances (modeled on the exhibition *rumbas* of the Tropicana Club), whose core genre is traditional rural *son*, and which is accompanied by dancers who mix and mingle Afro-Cuban and other urban dance traditions, again, into a kind of carnivalesque composite.

There are other concluding perspectives I would like to suggest. During the 1920s, the *son* had become global in the most literal sense of geographic scope, thriving in various mediated and altered forms in New York, London, Paris, and in other European urban centers. It had attained and maintained its global contours through its exotic choreographic profile. The popularity of *son* within and without drove a wedge into *rumba* and *son* genre. On the one hand, they were variously but vividly perceived as belonging to the Atlantic and Caribbean cultures of the eastern and western Cuban ports, in the case of traditional *son* as the national dance, and abroad as something more generically Latin, or just as readily as exotic dance music. Thus, to be a *rumbero* or a *sonero* in the purest sense of the word rewarded the intense devotion offered by locals in Havana and Santiago de Cuba, while to dance 'rhumba' in the ballrooms held the attention of Latin dance devotees elsewhere, in addition to the fleeting notice of people exposed only to "African" and "savage" dances in early North American and European cinema. It might be said that, for these different populations, the period between 1920 and 1940 in Cuban dance

was either a historical footnote, a dalliance, or an intimate and overriding focus for emotional life.

Whether as a caricature of Cuban dance and/or an elaboration of established ballroom repertoire, the ballroom rhumbas developed as a thoroughly non-Cuban entity. Accordingly, as noted above, the musical accompaniment it employs, from its earliest recordings, often bear some little resemblance to known Cuban dances. In addition, the lyric content of the North American and European commercial rhumba also illustrates the senses in which it had been at once both imported and domesticated. The absence of references to Cuba in many songs bear testament to the extent to which the rhumba craze might be best regarded as simply a foreign idiom whose specifically Cuban origins were irrelevant. Somewhat in the manner of a catch-all term, the rhumba could even be identified not with Cubans, but, as we have seen, with its local performers, American black jazz combos and associated whitened dance acts, as in the aforementioned "rhumba boogie".

Other than London, the rhumba took on a special importance in France during the 1920s and 1930s, in order to satisfy the demands of an emergent European counterculture that was beginning to express fears of stagnation. In that context, codified ballroom dances such as those created by Lavelle and Margolle acted as a balm for European ennui, though they sought to sanitize and de-sensualize the choreography to the greatest extent possible. Although having virtually nothing in common Cuban *rumba* itself, to a considerable extent these choreographies parallel the sanitized portrayals by urban white Cubans of the *rumba* in the *guaracha*, as previously noted.

Counterpoints between *son* and *rumba* continue to be found in Cuba in the wake of the revolution. Following a general re-appraisal of black Cuban contributions to national culture during the 1960s and 1970s and the ensuing foundation of national and regional folkloric dance troupes, the *rumba brava* has come to occupy the former exalted position of *son* as the one of the official national dances. The promotion of *rumba brava* in Cuba's folkloric age, akin to the political promotion of *son* during the 1930s, entailed a combination of academic classification and codification as well its movement onto Havana stages, the latest spatial corollaries of which have been pointed to by Daniel:

A shift from the street corner or home patio (solar) to the stages of patio-like theatres and community centers has occurred as a direct result of new and multiple performance opportunities made possible by government cultural programs and through the Ministry of Culture. Each neighborhood has a culture house that offers a variety of events including classes and performances. *Rumba* is taught along with many other traditional and modern dances (as well as entirely different courses," as described above, *rumba* has been incorporated into national foci through its position on the national calendar and its repeated performances throughout the year, especially in Havana and Matanzas.<sup>133</sup>

Moreover, as Perna has also noted, the repositioning of *rumba* in social space has generated a split within the genre between its manifestation as an artifact of the culture houses (*casas de cultura*) and as a living dance phenomenon which has continued to evolve autonomously within

---

<sup>133</sup> Daniel, *Changing Values in Cuban Rumba*, 3.

Havana's urban slums in municipalities such as Marianao, Los Sitios, Cayo Hueso and Centro Habana.<sup>134</sup>

The now defunct theatrical *rumba* subsided within the first few decades of the twentieth century, as cabaret *rumbas* disappeared for the first three decades of the revolution when such performances were made illegal by the Castro regime and all of the tourist cabarets were shut down. In days since their heyday, however, a new version of the cabaret *rumba* has contributed at least indirectly to the renaissance of the cabaret phenomenon. The most distinctive feature of these cabaret shows is the fusion of the *guajiro son*, as re-introduced into popular repertoire by the success of the Buena Vista Social Club recording and documentary, traditional urban mulatto dances, and the attire of the carnival. Indeed, it is common to read or hear that these Buena Vista-inspired cabaret performances, as their name suggests, owes as much to the commercial phenomenon of world music as it does to Cuban popular culture.

In the last several years, these kinds of cabaret have enjoyed considerable popularity, which, like the appeal of the Buena Vista phenomenon generally, was based on the predilections of foreign audiences rather than serious Afro-Cuban listeners, dancers or viewing publics, who continue to bemoan these kinds of shows. By the early 2000's, the Buena Vista cabaret together with the *son*, was definitively in vogue. Mirroring cabaret *rumbas* of the 1930s, Buena Vista *rumba* evokes Cuba's pre-revolutionary past, while also bearing little if any particular stylistic relation with contemporary Cuban music. However, although Cuban musicologists have yet to take on these cabaret performances as serious objects of analysis, it is reasonable to regard them as derivative of the early-twentieth-century exhibition *rumbas* of the

---

<sup>134</sup> Perna, 173.

Tropicana, occupying the same status as a spectacular, exoticized substyle enjoying appeal among visitors and fueling the local economy. Insofar as one can in this sense posit a certain line of continuity from cabaret *rumba* through Buena Vista *son* shows, the transition from Afro-Cuban-based imagery to rural *guajiro*-based imagery is perhaps the most conspicuous change. The parallels with the earlier cabarets are equally manifest: In both cases one can trace a line of evolution – with various external influences – from Cuba’s own exoticized and staged presentations of the dance culture of Havana’s urban margins to a staging and commodification of the “authentic” culture of the hinterland.<sup>135</sup>

The visibility, invisibility and stereotyped-appropriation of Afro-Cuban dance and reflect the dominance of Eurocentric notions of civilization within nascent global Latin dance culture. In the context of such suppression, the period from 1920 to 1940 represents both a pivotal moment, one in which Cuba collectively reinvented itself by negotiating a new equilibrium between "black" and "white," and one in which a whitened and nebulous conception of Latin-ness becomes an obsession of European and North American elites. Notwithstanding these patriotic and primitivist notions, the opening of Cuban middle classes and elites to the island’s cultural marginalia is significant.

In the contrast between traditional and commercial *rumba*, Cubans have established clear and irrefutable divisions between domains of black and whitened choreographic expression, divisions which have been productive of local, national and global performance sensibilities. The passion and appeal of the *rumba* and of Afro-Cuban urban music and dance generally captivated the exotic imagination of many travelers and tourists to the island. The surge in

---

<sup>135</sup> From personal interview conducted between with Karelia Despaigne, principle dancer and choreographer of the Buena Vista Cabaret at “el Guajirito, December 17, 2015.

visitors made Cuba a leader in music, dance and sex tourism and helped to thrust the *son* into the international spotlight. *Son* has become one of the island's chief export commodity and Cuba sits once again at the junction of important musical and choreographic routes, despite its continued economic and cultural isolation. In the dynamic relationship between Afro-Cuban and whitened *rumba*, traditional *rumba brava* becomes sequestered and local, contrasting with *son* ("rhumba") abroad as a kind of "whitened" and universalized catch-all term that encapsulates a range of hybrids – between the street and ballroom and between pure and diluted forms of dance. To put it another way, commercial *rumba* existed and operated within the public white realm, while *rumba brava* evoked (and largely still does invoke) among practitioners the intimate expression of a sequestered and authentic "black" choreographic realm.

The relationship of the rhumba craze to the development of "Latin dance" is a topic that demands further exposition. In fact, I intend to address some of these complexities at greater length in my future work. The purpose of this chapter, however, has not been to provide a detailed description of the movement but only to indicate the broad differences between different choreographic tendencies and their personification in particular performers of the period. Highlighting these counterpoints, in my opinion, will set the stage for those interested in exploring the theme of choreographic globalization and in the transformation of social dance across time, geographic space and social strata. Regardless of the specific choreographic tradition being analyzed, every street dance of Iberian maritime origin or affiliation that arose to global popularity during the 1920s and 1930s tended to experience similar kinds of alteration, to adopt similar social functions and to be interpreted by national and global actors in predictable ways as well.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## ENCOUNTERING COMMERCIAL DANCE: THE “MOTIVOS DE SON” &amp; “THE HAVANA LECTURES”

So far, we have established that social dance in the Iberian world should be understood as consisting of three broad dimensions. First is its port-city or liminal dimension, by which I mean that Iberian transatlantic sea and river ports shared and trafficked in sensual couples and male competitive dances with other ports. This form of broadly-occurring choreographic family, which were all based on formulae of interaction that originated in the Iberian fandango, was marginal to mainstream Iberian society both on the Peninsula and in its overseas dominions, or perhaps, liminal, in the sense that it resisted total identification with the metropole or the colony, or with Hispanic, African and/or indigenous dance culture. Finally, the ‘bordered’ or liminal character of these dances was also apparent through an underlying verve, vitality and sense of authenticity that these dances acquired vis-à-vis their opposition to mainstream social norms that tended to deny and sublimate sensuality and violence.

The second dimension is the national mediation of forms of dance inspired by port-city originals, i.e. the large-scale transformation and appropriation of such marginal *fandango* practices by newly-formed Latin American nations during the nineteenth century (and during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the specific cases of Cuba, Argentina and Brazil). In Cuba, the *son* and the *rumba* enter into a kind of contrapuntal relationship throughout the twentieth century, experiencing patterns of appropriation and re-appropriation at two critical junctures: the birth of the Cuban nation following the collapse of the Spanish empire and the occupation of the island

by the United States, and again after 1959 with the socialist rebirth of the island and the mobilization of *rumba* and of *son* in the service of revolutionary and folkloric ideals.

I then identified a third choreographic dimension, which constituted the primary focus of the previous chapter, namely, the varied theatrical, commercial and ballroom-affiliated refinements and transmutations of marginal and national dances. Of special import to our discussion are those dances practiced by cosmopolitan elites of various national backgrounds and that were divorced, at times to a considerable degree, from their originals, shedding at times any and all references to Havana and Santiago as geographic sources, to Afrocubans and underclass mulattos as its progenitors, and, ultimately, to the Cuban nation itself. By means of this double-mediation and appropriation, involving not only the transmission (or, more often, the omission) of original stylistic features and its affective resignification, the term *rhumba* in abroad functioned in different ways for different categories of dancers: as a term somehow suggestive of the black diaspora (hence, the "Peanut Vendor" as sung by North American jazz artists; see Appendices, pp. 204-206), or, most often, as somewhere in the "uncivilized" peripheries – somewhere that might be situated nebulously between the Orient, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The commercialization of marginal choreographic expression in Cuba entailed the dominance of European artistic traditions and brought in their wake an exclusivist and intolerant choreographic matrix that eschewed diversity. However, these patterns can also be observed in the case of other dances belonging to the *fandango* choreographic family, and, especially, to *flamenco* and the Andalusian and gypsy forms of song and dance from which they drew inspiration and nourishment. I address some of these forms to their commercial offshoots in Chapter Four.

The question that naturally arises from a presentation of these themes is, what were some of the responses from marginal voices within the Iberian world toward this legacy of choreographic appropriation and re-invention, both at the national and international levels? This is the question I address in this chapter. As I demonstrate, the reaction against these adverts could be hostile, showing a kind of fragility of local traditions in the face of both nationalist rhetoric and global commercial forces. Thus, this chapter and its contents constitute one example of how marginal voices could react – as it turns out, in very similar ways – to what they clearly regarded as critical aspects of the cultural, musical and choreographic present.

The poetic works of the Cuban Nicolas Guillén and of his Spanish counterpart Federico Garcia Lorca serve as paradigmatic instances of an oppositional consciousness among the intelligentsia of Spain and Latin America toward global commercial ‘Latin’ dance. Their poetry challenges the phenomenon of choreographic double-mediation and hyper-centering, divorcing liminal and national traditions from global cosmopolitan Latin dance culture.

#### Departures and Returns/*Idas y Vueltas*: Spain and Cuba

Because of Cuba’s historical importance to Spain’s fleet system, Cuba and Spain seem to have engaged in regular transcontinental exchanges. These cultural, musical, choreographic exchanges have also been accompanied by departures and returns of ideas and intellectual trends. In many respects, the *son*-inspired writings of the Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, at times referred to by the hybrid classification *poesía-son*, and the poetic and dramaturgical writings of Federico García Lorca about Spanish *flamenco*, evolved as an outgrowth of this transcontinental intimacy.

As both writers stake out a shared position against commercial forms of marginal music and dance of straddling the Atlantic, what began as a circular exchange in goods, wares, *zarzuela* troupes, immigrants, soldiers, touring musicians etc., produced something quite unexpected: a shared trans-oceanic interest in musical and choreographic marginality, and which bemoaned contemporary instances of mediation and theft of regional, ethnic and national property during the early twentieth century.

The “Havana Lectures”: *Duende* between Spain, Andalusia and Gypsydom

In his brief lifetime, the Spanish poet and playwright Federico Garcia Lorca spent two extended sojourns in the America, and was on the verge of a third when he fell a casualty of the Spanish Civil War in August 1936. In New York he divided his stay between English lessons at Columbia University and in nightly immersion in Harlem’s black bohemia and its folkways, experiences that were close to his heart and that he later chronicled in poetic verse drawing parallels between the emotional expressions of Spain’s Gypsies and those of North American blacks. After six months, Garcia Lorca sought a respite and embarked for Havana, where he delivered lectures and recitals on Hispanic culture and lore at the Instituto Hispano-Cubano in the spirit of re-establishing literary and cultural ties between former Metropole and maritime province. His lecture series encompassed miscellaneous discourses and poetic presentations on baroque lyric poetry, Spanish lullabies, and one of his perennially favorite topics, the *cante jondo* (“deep song”) - the traditional style of vocal music-making of Andalusia developed nearly a century earlier - which he came to view as the psychological core of a commercial genre of

music referred to as “*flamenco*” which was then asserting itself in the *tablaos* and *cafés cantantes* of Spain’s major urban centers.

In 1930, he traveled to Cuba where he delivered a series of lectures on *flamenco* music at Havana’s Instituto Hispano-Cubano as a part of his now legendary tour of the Americas. More than an act of cultural diplomacy, Garcia Lorca’s Havana lectures spearheaded the crystallization in Cuba and in Spain of *flamenco* and Cuban son as distinctly national musics, their international dissemination and mediation, and instantiate the complex reception of formerly marginalized musics as a global cultural production by the literary and intellectual avant-garde of Europe and the Americas.

Garcia Lorca’s lectures on *flamenco*, entitled “La Teoría y Juego del Duende” (“On the Theory and Play of *Duende*”) attend to the theme and figure of the *duende*, which in the *flamenco* universe has become an incommunicable marker of spontaneity, virtuosity, and authenticity in performance. Defining *duende* has been a persistent struggle for musicians, dancers, and flamencologists alike, and Garcia Lorca’s utterances in Havana constitute its first, albeit literary articulation and over time they have come to serve as the intellectual seedbed of all musicological accounts of *duende* that issue from contemporary *flamenco* studies. Translating as a sort of demonic spirit, *duende* might be best expressed as the undergirding zeitgeist that drives the art and performance of *flamenco*.<sup>136</sup>

*Flamenco* scholar William Washabough has characterized *duende* as an inner wellspring of transcendent creative impulse anchored in the social memory of Andalusian regional and Gitano ethnic marginalization and persecution.<sup>137</sup> What is salient here is *duende*’s inherent

---

<sup>136</sup> Webster, 12.

<sup>137</sup> Washabough, 37.

ineffability; that is, the way it avoids intellectual explanation and formulation, its identification with inner faculties (with an indwelling immaterial, demonic force) and, importantly, its association with the sphere of the socially disenfranchised - with Andalusian and Gitano points of regional and ethnic reference.

In his work *Flamenco: Passion, Politics, and Popular Culture* (1996), William Washabaugh identifies and delimits seven interpenetrating historical narratives of Andalusian and Spanish social life, each of which is motivated by distinctive political, economic, and intellectual interests and in which, he claims, *flamenco* bodies work out their politics metonymically. These include *nacionalismo*, *romanticismo*, *fatalismo*, *modernismo*, *franquismo*, *andalucismo*, and *gitanismo*. Although an empirical tracing and prioritizing of these identity politics is far beyond the scope of this chapter, Washabaugh's study nonetheless illuminates the key role played by such narratives in the *flamenco* universe. A number of contemporary authors have promulgated a regional/ethnic perspective on *flamenco*, stressing the coupling ethnic and regional ownership. For instance, Robin Totton in his book *Song of the Outcasts: An Introduction to Flamenco* (2003) describes *flamenco* music as a "mode of expression" by which provincial Andalusian musics are recreated through particular gypsy styles of musicality. This explanation is later recast as an intermarriage of the *cancionero andaluza* (Andalusian folksong tradition) with specific Gitano song modalities, such as the *palo* and *soleá*.<sup>138</sup>

The timing of the "Havana Lectures" is significant for two reasons, the second of which I'll return to later. The first has to do with the crisis of Spanish national identity that occurred in the wake of the Spanish American War which had lasted between 1898 and 1902. Spain's defeat

---

<sup>138</sup> Totton, 18.

coupled with the loss of the Cuba as its foremost maritime province came as a profound shock to Spain's national psyche. Contemporary flamencology has highlighted the primacy of *flamenco* in a post-War national symbolism and Garcia Lorca's complicity in the engineering of that symbolism.<sup>139</sup> The second point concerning the lectures has to do with the fact that they coincided with what Manuel calls the nationalization of a cluster of "musics of the non-Western world" between the early 1920s and early 1940s. Among such music and dance styles, many of which are included among the *fandango* family, Manuel identifies the *flamenco*, which was Iberia's most recent efflorescence of the *fandango* lineage.

If we look again at *flamenco* identity politics during the twentieth century, especially in the wake of Garcia Lorca's writings and his collaboration with de Falla, we see an enduring impasse of identifications and prejudices. *Flamenco* studies have made an *idée fixe* of *flamenco*'s genesis, which has been perpetually divided between nationalist, regionalist and ethno-centric narratives of ownership and inheritance. The Spanish nationalist narrative (a product of the sociopolitical circumstances of the Franco regime), exists in tension with competing regional Andalusian and ethnic Gitano orthodoxies, both of which have been revived in recent years in response to the phenomenon of *flamenco* fusion and its ever-ramifying commercial offshoots. It is precisely within this triangulation of nation, region, and ethnicity that Garcia Lorca situates *duende* and mines its meaning and classification. Antedating the formal arrival of *flamenco* studies and its canonic deadlock, the lectures seek to investigate and *flamenco*'s cultural essence at a time of what he likely regarded as a moment of artificiality and inauthenticity within Spain's music and dance community.

---

<sup>139</sup> See Washabough, 12-13

As member of what is often referred to as the “generation of ’98,” intellectuals such as Federico García Lorca and fellow music enthusiast Manuel de Falla made a primordial attempt at a national definition of *flamenco* that accentuated Andalusian gypsy disenfranchisement. As a result of their combined efforts during the early part of the twentieth century, which included among other activities a now legendary Andalusian music festival and competition, *cante jondo*, once described as a “lascivious” music, came to prominence as an emblem of transcendent Spanish character through the person of the universally marginalized gypsy.<sup>140</sup>

### The Lectures

Proceeding from the macro in the direction of the micro as it were, the cosmic and transcendent dimensions of *duende* are among the first enumerated in Garcia Lorca’s lecture:

*Todo lo que tiene sonidos negros tiene duende. Y no hay verdad mas grande. Estos sonidos son el misterio, las raices que clavan en el limo que todos conocemos pero de donde nos llega lo que es sustancial en el arte...Yo he oido decir a un viejo guitarrista: << El duende no esta en la garganta; el duende sube por dentro desde la planta hasta los pies.>> Es decir, no es cuestión de facultad, sino de verdadero estilo vivo; es decir, de sangre, de viejísima cultura, de creación en acto. <<Este poder misterioso que todos sienten y ningún filósofo explica>>es, en suma, el espíritu de la tierra...El duende...¿Donde está el*

---

<sup>140</sup> I am referring here to the famed Concurso de Cante Jondo de Granada, a festival and competition centering on *cante flamenco* which took place on the 13th and 14th of June, 1922, coinciding with the Corpus Christi processions discussed in previous chapters. The festival took place on the Plaza de los Aljibes at the Alhambra in Granada. This was the first national vocal competition and had been organized by de Falla in conjunction with García Lorca, Miguel Cerón and masters of the *cante jondo* idiom, including Antonio Chacón and Manuel Torre. Similar competitions have been organized in Cuba since the 1930s for *son*.

*duende? Por un arco vacío entra un aire mental que sopla con insistencia sobre las cabezas de los muertos, en busca de nuevos paisajes y acentos ignorados; un aire con olor de saliva de niño, de hierba machacada y velo de medusa que anuncia el constante bautizo de las cosas recién creadas./All that has dark sounds has duende. And there is no greater truth than this. Those dark sounds are the mystery, the roots that cling to the mire that we all know, that we all ignore, but from which comes the very substance of art. So then, duende is a force and not a labor, a struggle and not a thought. I heard an old master of the guitar say: The duende is not in the throat; the duende surges up, inside, from the soles of the feet...it's not a question of skill, but of a style that's truly alive; meaning, it's in the veins; meaning, it's of the most ancient culture of immediate creation. The duende...where is the duende? Through the empty archway a wind of the spirit enters, blowing insistently over the heads of the dead, in search of new landscapes and unknown accents: a wind with the odor of a child's saliva, crushed grass, and medusa's veil, announcing the endless baptism of freshly created things.*

Wresting *duende* from both its musical and cultural context, Garcia Lorca redrafts it as a universal “creative power” that may emerge and assert itself, albeit through great struggle, in any creatively expressive milieu, whether literary, painterly, musical, and even intellectual. *Duende*-inspired feats of creativity necessitate an affinity for darkness and an attraction to death on the part of the aspirant. At different moments in the lecture, he appears to advance this de-hispanicized and pan-artistic revision of *duende*, one that exists paradoxically, as the preceding

lines declare, between the collective and indiscriminate creative faculty of all human beings and a highly-select and elite ability to transubstantiate suffering into artistry.

It is on the point of death that Garcia Lorca takes measures to culturally re-appropriate *duende* and, by extension, to endorse *flamenco* as Spain's national art form:

*Todas las artes, y aún los países, tienen capacidad de duende, de ángel y de musa; y así como Alemania tiene, con excepciones, musa, y Italia tiene permanentemente ángel, España está en todos tiempos movida por el duende, como país de música y danza milenaria, donde el duende exprime limones de madrugada, y como país de muerte, como país abierto a la muerte./Every art and every country is capable of duende, angel and Muse: and just as Germany owns to the Muse, with a few exceptions, and Italy the perennial angel, Spain is, at all times, stirred by the duende, country of ancient music and dance, where the duende squeezes out those lemons of dawn, a country of death, a country open to death.*

Here García Lorca identifies in the Spanish nation, landscape and aesthetic temperament a culture defined by its proximity to death and locates *duende* at its center. In this way, Spain's *flamenco* nationalism draws from an indwelling core of *duende*, thereby likening the latter to Herder's concept of a national *volksgeist*.

Passages written in a nationalist vein are counterbalanced by those celebrating the combined Andalusian and Gitano (gypsy) legacies of *flamenco*, comprising a mosaic of psychology, mores, values, and superstitions of the Gitano subculture. These passages reveal an

interest, perhaps at the base of Garcia Lorca's musical-literary project, in accentuating the centrality of that subculture within a construction of Spanish national identity.

*Los grandes artistas del sur de España, gitanos o flamencos, ya canten, ya bailen, ya toquen, saben que no es posible ninguna emoción sin la llegada del duende.*

*Ellos engañan a la gente y pueden dar sensación de duende sin haberlo, como os engañan todos los días autores o pintores o modistas literarios sin duende; pero*

*basta fijarse un poco, y no dejarse llevar por la indiferencia, para descubrir la trampa y hacerle huir con su burdo artificio.*/The great artists of Southern Spain,

Gypsy or *flamenco*, singers, dancers, musicians, know that emotion is impossible

without the arrival of the *duende*. They might deceive people into thinking they

can communicate the sense of *duende* without possessing it, as authors, painters,

and literary fashion-makers deceive us every day, without possessing *duende*: but

we only have to attend a little, and not be full of indifference, to discover the

fraud, and chase off that clumsy artifice.

Not only does García Lorca supply the *flamenco*'s governing social actors and its region of origin, but he we are given an implied series of binaries with which to understand the nature of the world of *flamenco* music and dance. He establishes an opposition between *duende*, and, specifically, between *duende*-inspired music and dance and musical and choreographic frauds and forgeries – marginal depth and authenticity over commercial forgery. The result of these combined procedures is something of a simultaneity of identifications - a sort of asymmetrical, totemic stacking of ideology upon ideology or enfolding of ideology within ideology - a re-

conciliatory discourse which may in the end have self-affirming or self-effacing effects for each individual narrative.

While García Lorca seems to harmonize these different strata of identity, his lectures serve as a clarion call against commercialized expressions of *flamenco* from within and without. He privileges Andalusia and the gypsydom, undermining perceptions of *flamenco* as a national music and dance that served to foster Spanish supremacy over regional or ethnic dignity and tenure. The way in which he expresses this position, however, is paradoxical. Having to confront ballroomized *flamenco* abroad, of the sort danced by British dancers of the Imperial Society (i.e. *paso doble*) and the perennial exoticization of Spanish music and dance by foreigners, he insists that true artistic merit is found in *duende*, which takes precedence over ethnic, regional and other identity markers.

#### “Motivos de son”

Published in the same year as García Lorca’s lectures were being delivered to Havana audiences, the “Motivos de son” have impacted the intellectual climate in Cuba more than any other of Guillén’s works, galvanizing not only writers and critics, but also many musicians, most notably Eliseo Grenet, Emilio Grenet, Jorge González Allué, Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla, all of whom engaged musically with the “Motivos de son”. Roldán arranged the motifs for voice and eleven instruments and, within two years, García Caturla set an adapted version of one of Guillén’s *son* texts, “Tú no sabe Inglés” and “Bito Manue.” Guillén’s work revolutionized Cuban lyricism, by presenting and attempting to extol in verse the speech patterns, pronunciations and rhythmic cadences of black Cubans during the early-twentieth century.

Through his father, Guillén was exposed to Afro-Cuban music and to the mulatto culture of Camagüey during his youth. Life in these rural surroundings immersed him in the anti-imperial atmosphere of the Independence Wars and in the political views and rhetoric of the *Partido Libertad* with which he became affiliated. Guillén's early encounters, and those of his siblings, with the discriminatory racism of early-twentieth-century provincial Cuba, which bore a resemblance to that suffered by black Americans in the Southern United States, doubtless seeded shifts in his later literary endeavors from the theme of imperialism to the predicament of Cuban blacks and mulattos.<sup>141</sup> This shift occurred towards the end of the 1920s, immediately prior to his meeting with Langston Hughes, whose verses are often viewed as part and parcel of the larger Negritude movement, initiated by Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas and the Senegalese poet Léopold Senghor as a condemnation of Europe and its colonial legacy. Looking to strike a similar balance between critique of empire and critique of racial hierarchies, Guillén began to publish in the Sunday supplement *Ideales de una Raza* in the paper *Diario de la Marina*, the periodical in which "Motivos de son" first appeared and which provided the poet with the turf on which he could merge controversial formal experimentation and racial subject matter that was had already become commonplace – black poetry in its different experimental incarnations – with a rebuke of the Machado and of US neo-imperialism. In other words, Guillén was not an isolated poetic voice and political mouthpiece, but instead labored at the junction of important artistic and intellectual trends, forming bonds across artistic mediums. Other than the composers mentioned above, Guillén bonded closely with Alejo Carpentier, who published his first book, *¡Ecue-Yamba-O!*, based on the Abakuá in 1933; Lydia Cabrera, who published *Contes Nègres*

---

<sup>141</sup> Gray, Kathryn, "The Influence of Musical Folk Traditions in the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Nicolas Guillen", Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute (1997)

de Cuba (Paris, 1936) and with the painter Wilfredo Lam, whose paintings drew heavily from Afrocuban religions.

On display in Guillén's *son* collection and in his other literary works of the period is the distinctive flavor of the folklore of Havana's urban underclasses. In this period, he wrote with an eye to revitalizing Cuban literature by incorporating Afrocuban rhythms and vocal traditions, and blended them with traditional *décimas* from Spanish poetry, which were still found in the island's interior. He also took inspiration from the *rumba* complex, Afrocuban liturgical music, from the *bufo* performances which, as previously noted, made Afrocuban dance music more palatable for middle-class audiences, and from various modernist influences on poetic form and content. In Guillén's writing, *negrista* poetic impulses and revolutionary political engagement of International socialism coalesced effortlessly. In this way, Guillén was able to fashion a racially-inclusive vision of Cuban national identity rooted in Cuba's port-city and rural milieus. However, Guillén's tribute to the black fringes of Cuban polite society and to Cuban liminal culture was hardly facetious, interrogating social inequities in what to many middle-class blacks in an objectionable argot rooted in the Afrocuban demimonde.<sup>142</sup>

#### Guillén's use of Cuban popular music

Originally published in Havana's *Diario de la Marina* in 1930 as a series of several poetic figures ("Negro Bembón," "Mulata," "Sóngoro Cosongo," "Sigue," "Ay Que Tener Voluntad," "Búcate Plata," "Mi Chiquita," and "Tu No Sabe Inglés"), the "Motivos" coincided with and in a certain

---

<sup>142</sup> Kutzinski, Vera M. *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1993, 153

sense spearheaded the indigenous mainstream popularity of *son* as Cuba's national music and dance. However, the collection also overlaps with the racial and musical censorship associated with the presidency of Gerardo Machado between 1925 and 1933, at which time Afro-Cuban music, such as *rumba* and religious music and dance, was not performed, at least publicly, and instruments were confiscated, a situation that was reversed during the early years of the Revolution with the targeting and closure of the Tropicana and other cabarets. Rogelio Martínez Furé weaves a metaphor on the prohibition against Afro-Cuban percussion during this period:

Victim of confiscations and slashings by reactionary and racist authorities, the fate of the drum has been parallel to that of the black man, its creator par excellence. All the political and social vicissitudes experienced by this sector of the Cuban population have been reflected in its most characteristic instrument.<sup>143</sup>

In many cases, popular song provided an emotional catharsis, but as a surrogate, since the real and acute nature of Afro-Cuban marginalization could not be expressed publicly. For instance, in 1936, Arsenio Rodríguez (1911-71) sang, "I am Carabalí, a black African. Without liberty I cannot live."<sup>144</sup> These lyrics convey a cargo of anguish. This need to express the inexpressible and to remap Cuban history from the point of view of the urban margins and the made popular consciousness – and popular culture – elliptical. Thus, the "Motivos" serve a dual purpose and enact a kind of double performance: to address a cosmopolitan readership, and to communicate in codes with readers attuned to the range of Afro-Cuban music and dance forms

---

<sup>143</sup> *Diálogos imaginarios*. La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1979, p. 177.

<sup>144</sup> Arsenio Rodríguez, "'Yo soy Carabali, negro de nación... sin la libertad no puedo vivir.'" From his composition "Bruca Manigua" (son Afro-Cubano).

that have been hidden away from public view. It is therefore impossible to read the “Motivos” without first locating Guillén and his poetic maneuvers within *afrocubanismo*’s complex and at times conflicting political pressures and goals. As Caroline Rae affirms in her essay “In Havana and Paris: The Musical Activities of Alejo Carpentier,” the musical *vanguard* of the late 1920s was less interested in showcasing formal attributes of Afro-Cuban music per se as they were in manufacturing “themes” (“*temas*”) inspired by popular Afro-Cuban rhythms and melodies.<sup>145</sup> By contrast, Guillén anchored his collection in the musical tropes and the cultural imaginary of *son* and of Afro-Cuban musicality generally and, in doing so, to drive a wedge into the dominant Spanish *décima* tradition.

ESTROFA (décima):	METRO (octosílabo):	RIMA (consonante) y ESCANSIÓN:
Déme los pies vuestra alteza,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-eza a
si puedo de tanto sol	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ol b
tocar, ¡oh rayo español!,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ol b
la majestad y grandeza.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-eza a
Con alegría y tristeza	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-eza a
hoy a vuestras plantas llego,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ego c
y mi aliento, lince y ciego,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ego c
entre asombros y desmayos,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ayos d
es águila a tantos rayos,	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ayos d
mariposa a tanto fuego	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	-ego c

¿Po qué te pone tan brabo,  
cuando te disen negro bembón,  
si tiene la boca santa,

Bembón así como ere  
tiene de to;  
Caridá te mantiene,  
te lo da to.

Búcate plata  
Búcate plata,  
porque no doy un paso má

etoy a arró con galleta na má.  
Yo bien sé cómo etá to,  
pero viejo,  
hay que comer:

---

<sup>145</sup> p.375.

Te queja todavía,  
sin pega y con harina,  
negro bembón,  
majagua de dri blanco,  
negro bembón;  
sapato de do tono,  
negro bembón...

búcate plata,  
búcate plata,  
porque no me voy a correr.  
Depué dirán que soy mala,  
y no me querrán tratar,  
pero amor con hambre, viejo,  
¡qué va!

Figure. Juxtaposition of the Peninsular *décima* verses with the theme or *tema* section of two of the “Motivos”.

Afrocuban music, like many musics of the black diaspora, uses the alternation of chorus and refrain, which in combination with other musical other characteristics, would have triggered in readers a sensation of listening (or dancing) along with a recording. Such a combination of poetry with *son* functions in much the same way as experiments by Langston Hughes in combining poetry with blues to invoke the “feel” or “swing” of the target genre. Steven Tracy highlights the way in which Hughes made use of blues stanzas in order to “merge African American oral and written traditions” and to “exploit the conventions, techniques, and goals of both to achieve a poetry that is intellectually stimulating, socio-politically responsible, and aesthetically pleasing both as folk poetry and literature.”<sup>146</sup> Hughes’s blues stanzas implied, in anticipation of the aesthetic priorities of the Black Arts Movement, a desire to unify the musical, oral, and written modalities of Afro-American communication and performance within a single all-encompassing idiom.

---

<sup>146</sup> Tracy, 2.

Figure. The blues verse in "The Weary Blues:"

I got de weary blues  
 And I can't be satisfied.  
 Got de weary blues  
 And can't be satisfied.  
 I ain't happy no mo'  
 And I wish that I had died.

is very close to the "Texas Worried Blues" recorded by songster Henry Thomas in 1928:

The worried blues  
 God, I'm feelin' bad.  
 I've got the worried blues  
 God, I'm feelin' bad.  
 I've got the worried blues  
 God, I'm feelin' bad.

Dynamics of Call and Response:

Like Hughes, Guillén employed the structures, rhythms, themes and words of Cuban popular music, relying on the repetitive, antiphonal patterns that could be found in the *son* even in its earliest incarnations. This blueprint can be found in the "Son de la Ma Teodora," which contains a strophic section followed by a short refrain or *montuno* section.

Don-dees-tá La Má Teo-do-ra? Ra -  
 -jan-do la le-ña es-tá ¿Con su pa-lo y su ban-  
 -do-la? Ra - jan-do la le-ña es-tá ¿Don-dees  
 -lá que no la ve-o? Ra - jan-do la le-ña es-  
 -lá - Ra - jan-do la le-ña es-tá Ra -  
 -jan-do la le-ña es-tá Ra - jan-do la le-ña es-  
 -lá Ra - jan-do la le-ña es-tá.

EL SON DE LA MA TEODORA

Letras:

¿Dónde está la Má Teodora?  
 Rajando la leña está.  
 Con su palo y su bandola  
 Rajando la leña está.

Figure. "Son de la Ma Teodora", score and lyrics

The unisectional form has come to be known as "son montuno," whereas a short-cycle section, which was repetitive and appended to a strophic form, as in "Ma Teodora," is called a "montuno." One of Guillén's motifs entitled "Sigue" follows the unisectional *son-montuno* format typical of primordial *son* performance:

Camina, caminante,  
 sigue;  
 camina y no te pare,  
 sigue.  
 Cuando pase po su casa  
 no le diga que me bite:  
 camina, caminante,  
 sigue.  
 Sigue y no te pare,  
 sigue:  
 no la mire si te llama,  
 sigue;  
 Acuérdate que ella e mala,  
 sigue.

Figure. "Sigue"

In his essay on the rhythmic, generic and symbolic facets of *son*, James Robbins notes the vast lexicon that Cuban musicians employ to distinguish between verse and refrain sections and the kinds of musical procedures that transpire within them, which include the following:

- *gu'a, guajeo* (improvised text and sometimes improvised melody sung by the *primero*) *coro* (a refrain sung by the chorus)
- *estribillo, mambo* (an arranged instrumental section, which may be based on the harmonic/rhythmic cycle of the montuno or may interrupt it)
- *yambu'* (like mambo)
- *opcional* (an arranged instrumental section usually interrupting or changing the harmonic/rhythmic cycle of the montuno)
- *descargas* (improvised solos by instrumentalists; including a solo by the *bongosero* or the player of the *tumbadoras*).

Robbins is also careful to note that this kind of terminology does not apply for the strophic or multi-strain first section, which, he notes, often went unidentified, highlighting Carpentier's general cleavage between "largo" and "montuno" and indicating that the former has apparently fallen out of use.<sup>147</sup> The poems "Negro Bombón" and "Búcate Plata," for instance, both follow this axiomatic formula of verse and refrain:

¿Po qué te pone tan brabo,  
cuando te disen negro bombón,  
si tiene la boca santa,

Búcate plata  
Búcate plata,  
porque no doy un paso má

Bombón así como ere  
tiene de to;  
Caridá te mantiene,  
te lo da to.

etoy a arró con galleta na má.  
Yo bien sé cómo etá to,  
pero viejo,  
hay que comer:

-----  
Te queja todavía,  
sin pega y con harina,  
negro bombón,  
majagua de dri blanco,  
negro bombón;  
sapato de do tono,  
negro bombón...

búcate plata,  
búcate plata,  
porque no me voy a correr.  
Depué dirán que soy mala,  
y no me querrán tratar,  
pero amor con hambre, viejo,  
¡qué va!

Bombón así como ere,  
  
tiene de to;

Con tanto zapato nuevo,  
  
¡qué va!  
Con tanto reló, compadre, ¡qué va!

Caridá te mantiene,  
te lo dá to.

¡qué va!  
Con tanto lujo, mi negro, ¡qué va!  
¡qué va!

Figure. "Negro Bombón" and "Búcate Plata"

<sup>147</sup> Robbins, 190. The above shows Robbins's own use of terminology and musical vocabulary almost word for word to avoid confusion.

Occasionally, *sones* often include a third episode referred to as a *soneo* which, like the introductory *diana* section of the *rumba*, contains an African-sounding interchange between a lead singer and a *coro*. According to Gray, *soneo* lyrics were improvised and involved skillfully interjecting double-entendres around such topics as someone's lack of intelligence, a woman's fidelity, a daughter's virginity, or about a person's clothes or his attractiveness, and, in this way, they are consistent with other *guajiro* vocal duels or *controversias*.<sup>148</sup> Such a *soneo*-like section is hinted at in the poem "Mulata," acting as a kind of outro chorus:

Ya yo me enteré, mulata,  
mulata, y sé que dice  
que yo tengo la narice  
como nudo de corbata.

Y fíjate bien que tú  
no ere tan adelantá,  
porque tu boca e bien grande,  
y tu pasa, colorá

Tanto tren con tu cuerpo  
tanto tren;  
tanto tren con tu boca,  
tanto tren;  
tanto tren con tu sojo,  
tanto tren.

**Si tú supiera, mulata  
la verdá;  
¡que yo con mi negra tengo, ←SONEO  
y no te quiero pa na!**

**Figure. "Mulata"**

Beyond the feature of call-and-response, referred to by a variety of terms, *sones* tend to share the following basic and adjustable characteristics as identified by Robbins:

---

<sup>148</sup> Gray, *Ibid.*

1) The rhythmic *matriz*.

*Son* gives the impression of a rhythmic pattern produced by the composite rhythms of all the parts. In a similar way, the “Motivos” create the distinct impression of rhythmic events, or patterns, which combine to create an atmosphere evocative of Afrocuban and of popular Cuban musicality. Robbins explains the rhythmic *matriz* of *son* as, "taka taka taka gun," or as "six eighths and a quarter note" ("seis negras y una corchea"). However, the feel or swing of *son* originates in its clave pattern, which imparts to the music its feel.

3-2 son clave in two measures of 2/2



2-3 son clave in two measures of 2/2

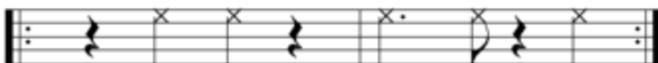


Figure. The Son clave, which if played as 2-3 creates the feeling of a strong 8<sup>th</sup> beat.

While it is very difficult to harness poetically the strong eighth beat of the *son* clave and *tumbao*, it is clear that Guillén was interested in capturing certain percussive cells or “celulas rítmicas” – or at the least, to create a visual impression of these fragments on the page – in order to meld the concept of percussion performance with the written word. However, it is also possible that Guillén was interested in imitating the tonal language of the drum in Yoruba culture. The poem “Sóngoro Cosongo” (below) resembles a Yoruba praise poem, whereby the devotee extolls, through percussion, certain attributes of a deity on the batá drums. Moreover, the poet employs onomatopoeia in order to reproduce the sound of percussion instruments., a

technique which, according to Gray, evokes the texture of an African word but that has no meaning in and of itself, and that is ubiquitous in *negrista* poetry on the island<sup>149</sup>:

Sóngoro, cosongo,  
songo be;  
sóngoro, cosongo  
de mamey;  
sóngoro, la negra  
baila bien;  
sóngoro de uno,  
sóngoro de tré.

Aé,  
vengan a ver  
aé, vamo pa ver  
¡Vengan, sóngoro cosongo,  
sóngoro cosongo  
de mamey!

**Figure. “Sóngoro Cosongo”**

## 2) A capacity for hybridization

In the poem above, Guillén’s Africanisms also evoke the intro section (*diana*) of *rumba*, in which the lead singer sets the key with a series of scat-like vocalizations followed by the call-and-response (*montuno*) section. This generic hybridity – the tendency to form a complex of appended genres, is in itself one of the defining characteristics of *son*. Robbins notes that in Santiago, musicians describe *son*, *changui* and *guaracha* as closely related, forming a complex of genres, distinguished by tempo, text, and characteristic bass lines.<sup>150</sup> This *son* complex also

---

<sup>149</sup> Gray, *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Robbins, 190

includes hybrids such as *bolero-son*, *son-guaguancó*, and numerous other Cuban types. To play *son* or *a lo sonero* is thus best understood as a ‘way of playing, to be applied to the repertoire of other genres’ and which, in the presence of the *matriz* and other rhythmic features, absorbs other *montuno*-based songs into this larger hybrid *son* complex.<sup>151</sup> The reference to praise poems and to *rumba* would certainly have carried a strong affective charge for Cuban readers familiar with its repertoire and would likely have established the political nature of the poems, given that *rumba* itself is known as a vehicle for societal critique. Readers might also have associated Guillén’s use of *rumba* with the *abakuá* fraternities and, by extension, with the anticolonial conflicts of the late-nineteenth century. The poem would also have been seen as a counter to the typical blackface exchanges that characterized *bufo* performances, which made use of Afro-Cuban *bozal* dialect, but in a way that was unabashedly demeaning. Guillén’s poem “Mulata” resembles a *guaracha* and provides another instance of generic hybridity. And although the cultural-musical reference point is Hispanic or *guajiro* – white Cuban – the theatrical setting in which *guarachas* were performed was also a space for allegory, critique, and, in that sense, for addressing taboos, such as the theme of racial conflict. I discuss the theatrical logic of the *mulata* in the following section.

Vis-à-vis *son*’s generic hybridity, the collection comes full circle from *décimas* to political urban *rumbas*, to *guarachas* of the *teatro bufó* to contemporary urban *sones*. Guillén’s distinctive style emanated from Afro-Cuban culture and especially the sort that was popular in Havana during the early-twentieth century. The use (and contest between) gendered and racial voices evokes the comic theater, the use of frequent Africanisms and vocalized “nonsense” syllables recalls the *diana* of Afro-Cuban *rumbas*, and the rhythmic structure of the poems

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid

themselves fits comfortably into the new musical conventions of *son*, with its *contratiempo* swing, a rhythmic novelty that Guillén deemed compelling enough to match the blues- and *flamenco*-based verses of his peers.

### The Logic of Race, Authenticity and Nationalism

Guillén adopts *teatro bufo* dialogue in order bring to the fore the issues of white Hispanic supremacy and black inferiority. This is especially evident in the earlier poem “Negro Bembón,” in which he wields the black male – mulatto female dialogic format in a veiled revision of the famed *rumba yambú* “Ave Maria Morena” – a compositional touchstone of the Cult of the Virgen de la Caridad de Cobre - whose *refrán* proclaims her inherent beauty and value in the face of her racial impurity (“Ave Maria Morena/Cuanto tiene cuanto vale”). In like manner, the interlocutor of Guillén’s composition, presumably a dark-skinned female (though it seems we may also interpret this female voice to be that of the poet himself), chastises her black male partner for complaining that people mock him for his large lips, suggesting that the Virgin provides him with everything he needs (“Po que te pone tan bravo/cuando te dicen negro bembón/Si tiene la boca santa/negro bembón/Bembón así como eres/tiene de tó/Caridad te mantiene/te lo da tó”: lines 1-8).

In the same poem, Guillén references the proverbial aspiration of mulatto females to “whiten” their blood through marriage with Hispanic males as a form of personal and familial advancement. However, this reference also has musical connotations, again recalling the lines of Fernando Ortiz about the whitening and ‘ascent’ of popular musical forms. This recalls contemporary events, i.e., the rise of commercial rhumba in relation to the *rumba* complex. In this way, Guillén suggests a linkage of social to musical examples of whitening or

*blanqueamiento*. Here the poet converts admonishment into eulogy, tendering a kind of scriptural rhetoric of the Beatitudes that equates the undesirability of black physiognomy with “meekness”. When recast in combination with the popular *yambú* refrain, the Catholic rhetorical paradox of spiritual wealth in material poverty assumes nationalist contours. The black male is elevated in what would have been a readily identifiable discourse of racial recovery propagated through urban *rumba* lyrics.

The succeeding poem “Mulata” advances these objectives, seeking at once to ennoble blackness and to cast legacies of whitening and its musical and choreographic reflection in a problematic light. The *mulata* has long symbolized sexual enticement in Cuba, and like her Brazilian counterpart in the national iconography of *samba*, sexual fascination with a stereotypically sensual *mulata* lost some of its earlier forbidden quality and came to constitute a legitimate passion tied to national vitality.<sup>152</sup> Recurrent references to the generic mulatto or black female (the *mulata* or *morena*) in popular song was to acknowledge her conflation with a conception of national identity. Like that of other iconic marginal female archetypes associated with national musics of the greater Americas, the myth of the *mulata* is paradoxical. She is both virginal and promiscuous – a bastion of Havana’s dark-skinned and racially mixed citizens and a figure of racial betrayal – a capricious woman whose vertical aspirations threaten and destabilize the very cultural authenticity and integrity she is made to embody.

In the poem “Mulata,” Guillén capitalizes on the figure’s schizophrenic depiction in comic theater performances of the age. Whereas in the previous instance the poet appears to reassign to the black male the *mulata*’s religious endowments of purity and dignity in a racial

---

<sup>152</sup> McCann, “Noel Rosa’s Nationalist Logic,” *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 8. McCann’s analysis of the relationship between male and female samba archetypes was a primary aid in considering the nationalist logic of the “Motivos.”

and gender reversal of the popular lyric, here Guillén exploits the negative aspects of the *mulata*'s theatrical, literary and popular-cultural typecasting. In contrast to the format of "Negro Bembón," a black male speaker spurns a *mulata* for believing herself to be "*adelantá*," or racially superior, either to the speaker himself or to women of darker-skin in general. Again, the interlocutor brings racist discourses regarding black physical traits into view, returning insults directed at his "nose the size of the knot of a tie" (line 3) with a counterattack on the *mulata*'s "big mouth" ("poqqe tu boca é bien grande/y tu pasa, colorá": lines 7&8).

The use of verb "pasar" ("to pass") is ambiguous and is most likely a censure of the *mulata*'s proclivity for playing roles in order to "pass" as a lighter-skinned female or otherwise to "pass herself off" to males, a statement that divulges her fundamental racial (and national) infidelity. Guillén employs the character here as a representative of Afrocuban and Cuban music and dance and its idiosyncratic allure. Thus, her sexual transgressions with bourgeois white males (who may be foreigners) represent a source of anxiety for Cuba's black underclasses, and, by extension, for Cuba as a whole. By passing her body over to elite white males, she symbolically sells out the musical authenticity of which she is a metonym, thereby commodifying Afrocuban music and removing it from the province of its racial owners. The six – line antiphonal *montuno* that ensues contemplates her use of sexual artifice both to attract and elude the attention of the narrator ("Tanto tren con tu cueppo, /tanto tren;/tanto tren con tu boca, /tanto tren;/tanto tren con tu sojo, /tanto tren": lines 9 – 15). Her reified body, and the specific anatomy of her mouth and eyes ("tu sojo," an elision of "tus ojos") is shown as a danger to black culture and consequently is to be evaded. The poem's final strophe ends with a re-affirmation of the beauty and dignity of blackness as the speaker declares his preference for his trustworthy

black female partner over the charms of the *mulata* (“Si tú supiera, mulata, /la veddá;/ique yo con mi negra tengo, /y no te quiero pa na!”: lines 16-20).

Thus, the two poems “Negro Bembón” and “Mulata” enact two sides of *afrocubanista* nationalist logic. While one poem seeks to encourage the mulatto male to take pride in his black appearance, extolling the black musical traits underlying Cuban musicality, the second poem admonishes and attacks the *mulata*, who captivates white and foreign males through inherently deceptive sexual attraction and artifice. By implication, mulatto music and dance have been shown to whiten, acquiescing to commercial forces and betraying their marginal roots.<sup>153</sup> Guillén unmaskes and makes public the blackness hidden in mulatto identity, traits which were regarded as retrograde and even criminalized under the Machadato. In so doing, he demonstrates a preference for *rumba* over *son* – for the black music and dance culture of the urban margins over the Eurocentric notions of national music upheld by the likes of Eduardo Sánchez de Fuentes. Cuban *rumberos*, who practiced their art in private, almost certainly ascribed to the ethos of ports, but they were not necessarily interested in imbuing its cultural issuances with a national identity that subsumed them and rendered them as goods for export.

The poem “Mulata” bifurcates, speaking at once with the colonial past and with the neo-colonial present. On the one hand, this kind of re-staging of the encounter between the black male and female as stock figures is a re-appropriation of the comic theatrical tradition, through which Guillén uses parodic dialogues as a vehicle for sober discussion of the racially polarized present. During the 1930s, many Cuban actresses were obliged to enact the characteristics of the gendered stock types of the *bufo* theater in Mexican *rumbera mulata* cinema, which arose as a

---

<sup>153</sup> This, again, is one of McCann’s foundational arguments about the lyrical construction of the relationship between the *malandro sambista* and the *mulata*.

sub-genre of the metropolitan Rhumba Craze, fading away by the mid-1940s. Selier comments on their portrayal:

Mexican *rumberas* hold a predominant space in international Latin American memorabilia. Mexican producers searched for a way to create profitable low-budget blockbusters to compete with Hollywood musicals. To this end, they refurbished successful formulas and characters of Cuban minstrel theater that had been acclaimed since the late nineteenth century in cities like Mexico City and San Juan, Puerto Rico. The existence of this international audience eased the re-signification of Cuban tropes in celluloid.<sup>154</sup>

The transformation of the archetypal Cuban female into the white, blonde dancer “domesticates” and “whitens” the *rumba* tradition for middle-class viewers.<sup>155</sup> She alters it so that it will appear more familiar and less threatening. Guillén seeks to turn this procedure on its head, foregrounding the blackness behind the *mulata*’s whitened masquerade.

The task of affirming Cuban self-definition (“*cubanía*”) in the face of Spanish colonialism and contemporary U.S. economic dominance are dealt with in the final poem, “Tu No Sabe Inglés,” which parodies a romantic exchange on a U.S. ballroom dance floor between Vito Manué, presumably a Cuban male dance instructor, and his American female student whose advances he is forced to evade because he is unable to speak to her in adequate English. The poem’s concluding lines, uttered by a third Cuban interlocutor, cautions him “not to fall in love

---

<sup>154</sup> Selier, 92.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid

again if you can't speak English": "*No te namore más nunca/ Vito Manué/si no sabe ingle;/si no sabe ingle*" (lines 12-15). Here the concept of heterosexual romance and of "knowing English" are mobilized in a kind of erotics of the Latin ballroom, where tribute to Cuban cultural integrity and authenticity – of street *rumba* over international ballroom "rhumba" – is thwarted by the conditions of socio-economic dominance.

### Conclusion

In terms of its thematic contours, Guillén was making common cause with García Lorca (and also with the black American poet Langston Hughes, whose experiments with blues poetry highlighted the importance of black idioms unfamiliar to white Americans and which lay at the root of the popular jazz bands with which mainstream whites had become infatuated). He solidified these transnational ties in 1937 by traveling to Spain as a delegate to the Second International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture, proclaiming on some level his identification with the plight of the disenfranchised beyond his native Cuba, a theme reflected and expanded upon in his later *Elegías* (1958). Upon his return to Cuba in 1959, he found himself at the forefront of the post-revolutionary policy-making, creating and heading the Union of Writers and Artist of Cuba and influencing the intellectual parameters of the Ministry of Culture and of its ensuing folkloric program. In encouraging revolt against the cultural and artistic status quo, Guillén yoked Afro-Cubanist concerns with mulatto nationhood to International Socialism, thereby weaving for Cuba's black and mulatto underclasses a cosmopolitan interconnectedness rooted in Havana's port-city cultural imaginary – its bars, personalities and

forms of song and dance. Guillen's "Motivos" shaped, unbeknownst to him, a seminal vision of Cuban culture on which to ground social and political change, including the closure of Havana's casinos, sports and leisure clubs, and cabarets like the Tropicana, and other spaces that were allocated to elite and commercial forms of music and social dance.

The experience of everyday life and its socio-historical and contemporary political underpinnings are constants in the work of for both poets. From slavery and gypsy persecution, to the ballrooms of the North, to the transnational community of writers, politicians and activists to the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and the consolidation of Andalusian separatism, Guillén and García Lorca delineate a literary alliance where everything, including music and social dance, is charged with revolt. Like many other politically-motivated voices of the 1930s, García Lorca and Guillén suggested new artistic pathways while planting the seeds of contemporary post-colonialism and post-imperialism. These works thus form keystones in the literary theorization of these different but interlinked movements.

## APPENDICES

## 1. MINI-DOC. LOS FUNDADORES DEL CASINO.

Interview with the Fundadores de Casino about the early dance culture of contemporary son and casino in Havana's Social Clubs during the 1940's and 1950's, conducted in June 2014 of 2013 along with Nican and Zenan Robinson of Trigon Productions:



2. SAMPLE INTERVIEW WITH JULIÁN SOLAS DIAZ, CONDUCTED BY CO-PRODUCERS NICAN AND ZENAN ROBINSON. My TRANSLATION AS TRANSCRIPTION FROM SOUND RECORDING.

My name is Julian Solas Dias. I began dancing *casino* and other dances when I was a young boy, at about 4 or 5, as I explained in the last segment.

In school, I was required to do the artistic parts. Many people were entertained because I was a talented boy when it came to dancing, that is, I did many incredible things.

When I turned 15 or 16, which is when I became more serious about Casino. As I explained, the different social circles of workers that existed in Cuba, with their own traditional orchestras some of which still exist...And so it was until the 70's, around '78 and '79. At that time, there were couples who were dancing Casino, because the previous generation was studying in university and others worked (at other things). And in Cuba there was a program to revive Casino dancing, called "Para Bailar".

In that program, there were several great dancers. Among them, one danced in the modern style, whose last name was Santo. They were the ones who created the new style, which is the style of casino danced today. Almost all Cuban youth - and perhaps around the world - now dance what is called "Estilo Santo." This style is marked by a lot of footwork, and using a lot of *rumba* and Columbia styling in the legs.

And I was one of those who contributed to Casino, because in that era there were very poor figures. One typically used [such moves as] "por debajo del brazo," "el doble," "paseala," "cásate," and they were poor figures and I had the opportunity to create some figures that were more entertaining and that are still used...

Figures which were very complicated at that time, but today people execute them very easily.

And those are the developments that paved the way to casino as it is danced today. The traditional style of the *fundadores* isn't danced any more. Whenever I dance with people today, my style changes, that is, I adjust to the way they dance. And when I dance alone, I dance the contemporary style which is "estilo santo".

Then many great couples surfaced who are no longer talked about today and whose whereabouts are unknown, like Nieve y Alfredo, like the Santo siblings...

They were strong couples. Rebeca is still remembered as a great Cuban artist. Santo, who was the first dancer of Buena Vista Social Club. But nobody remembers who Nieve and Alfredo were, or the Santo siblings...whether or not they are still dancing or not.

And these days I am dancing in the *rueda* of the *fundadores*, which is a tremendous honor. Even though much younger than they are, they've accepted me and allowed me to dance in the *rueda* of the *fundadores*.

End of segment...

### 3. AN INTERVIEW WITH ESTEBAN “CHA CHA” BACALLAO ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF *RUMBA* MATANCERA IN TURN-OF-THE –CENTURY MATANZAS

In June 2005, I interviewed veteran member of the Muñequitos de Matanzas Esteban “Cha-Cha” Bacallao, about his career as both a local rumbero of Matanzas and as a national icon. We also discussed the importance of the Matanzas style of *rumba*.

#### **How were you exposed to *rumba*?**

We learned *rumba* from parties, the way it is learned in Matancero neighborhoods: from our parents and our friends. *Rumba* is not an academic rhythm for us, so we don’t go to an academy or school to learn. We learn it through generational transmission—grandparents to parents, parents to children, those children to their children. Parties (*rumbones*) held on the docks on Fridays were where we convened every week. These galas express the spirit of our local barrio. When the *rumba* was transplanted from Matanzas to Habana when I was a kid, they changed the rhythm, which also changed dance. It became more frenzied...faster...there was more percussion. Our Matanzas style is more subdued...more campesino, even.

#### **Why do Matanceros approach the *rumba* in this way?**

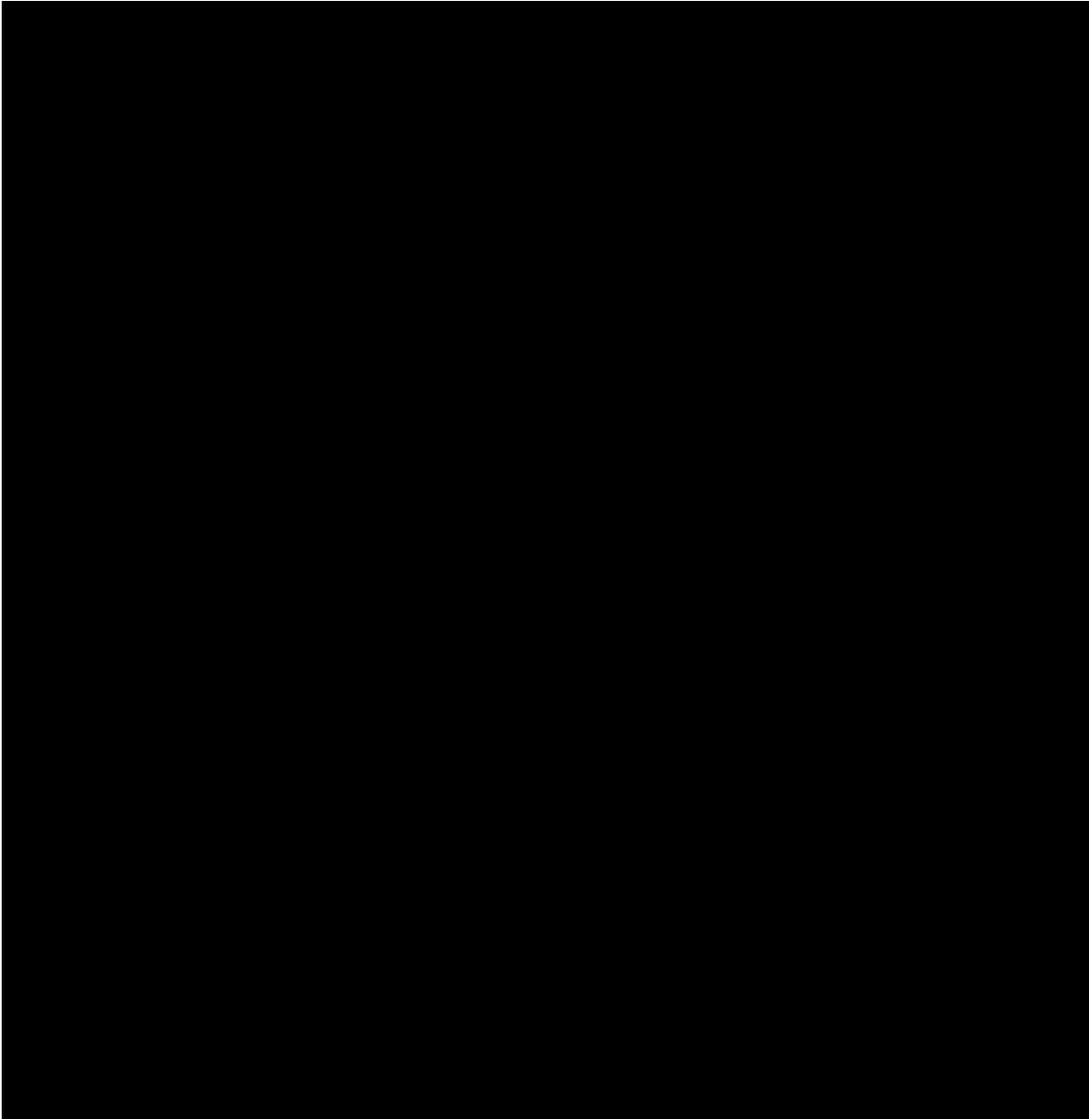
*Rumba* began as a rhythm in these areas around the river (the Almendares). Eventually, *rumba* took root in all the neighborhoods on the wharves. When I was a kid, we enjoyed singing. Our *rumba* was more centered on the lyrics, which were melancholic. They chronicled an experience that we knew from our parents. My mother had herself been a slave. The character and content of the lyrics shaped the dance.

These lyrics were the foundation of the Matanzas style, and we transmitted these lyrics to Cubans from our own regional songbook. Since those days, sixty years ago or more, and probably forever in the future, *matanceros* will interpret *rumba* in this way. I play every week with the city's up-and-coming percussionists. I play the tumbador. These young players and dancers keep up the style we introduced, because it has solidified into an identity for us. We defend it, we preserve it, and we promote it. They travel to Havana for the *rumbas* held at the Callejon de Hamel all the time, to remind Habaneros where this genre comes from and the depth of our song.

**What do you see as the future of *rumba* in the capital? Do you see it retaining its own regional identity over time?**

Havana is different. Matanzas may be the cradle of the *rumba*, but Havana is constantly receiving visitors. The *rumba* finds its way into every other genre of music there into one distinct, and it may be that very quality of *rumba* habanera that distinguishes it from our own. *Rumba* in Havana blends in...you could even say it is a "visitor" in every other musical and choreographic form. By contrast, *rumba* for us is a window onto the past. It is remote and it is deeply rooted in us. There is no separating Matanzas from its *rumbas*.

3. Mini doc entitled “Quest for Cuba,” documenting Ahmir “Quest Love’s” guided tour of Havana’s music and dance scene and his concert at the Fabrica de Arte Cubano. Emphasis is placed on Havana’s contemporary urban music and dance scene, most notably hip-hop and electronic music, and the movement in recent years away from traditional forms in the capital. My thanks to Ahmir’s team, including Jauretsi Saizarbitoria and Dawn White, and to Cuban record producer Edgar Gozález:



4. Below are two versions of the lyrics of "El Manisero," composed by Moises Simon (1889–1945), which was first sung and recorded by Rita Montaner in 1927 or 1928 for Columbia Records. This was the inaugural recording of the “rhumba craze.” Its Cuban lyrics were written in a way evocative of street vendors' cries, a *pregón* set to a *son* rhythm. On the record label, however, it was called a *rhumba-fox trot*, not only the wrong genre, but misspelled as well. After this, the term rhumba fell into general use as a general label for Cuban music, much like the related term salsa in the contemporary Latin music and dance scene. As it made its way abroad, "The Peanut Vendor" was recorded by several artists, including by Stan Kenton in 1947. Other popular versions are those performed and recorded by Louis Armstrong and later by Anita O' Day.

#### El manisero

Maní...

Maní...

Si te quieres por el pico divertir  
cómete un cucuruchito de maní

Qué calentito y rico está  
ya no se puede pedir más...

Ay caserita, no me dejes ir  
porque después te vas a arrepentir  
y va a ser muy tarde ya...

Manisero se va...

Manisero se va...

Caserita no te acuestes a dormir  
sin comerte un cucurucho de maní

Cuando la calle sola está  
casera de mi corazón...

El manisero entona su *pregón*  
y si la niña escucha su cantar  
llama desde su balcón:

Dame de tu maní...  
 Dame de tu maní...  
 Que esta noche no voy a poder dormir  
 sin comerme un cucurucho de maní  
 Me voy...  
 Me voy...

### **The Peanut Vendor**

{Peanut do bop do bop  
 Peanut do bop do bop}  
 In Cuba each merry maid  
 wakes up with this serenade  
 Peanuts {they're nice and hot}  
 Peanuts {he sells a lot} peanuts  
 If you haven't got bananas don't be blue  
 Peanuts in a little bag are calling you  
 Don't waste them {no tummy ache}  
 You'll taste them {when you're awake}  
 For at the very break of day  
 The peanut vendor's on his way  
 At dawning the whistle blows  
 {through every city, town and country lane  
 you hear him sing his plaintive little strain}  
 And as he goes by to you he'll say  
 {Big jumbos} big jumbo ones  
 {Come buy those} peanuts roasted today  
 {Come buy those freshly roasted today}  
 If you're looking for a moral to this song  
 50 million little monkeys can't be wrong  
 {Peanuts do bop do bop  
 Peanuts do bop do bop  
 Peanuts do bop do bop}  
 {In Cuba his smiling face  
 is welcome most anyplace  
 Peanuts they hear him cry  
 Peanuts they all reply  
 If you're looking for an early morning treat  
 Get some double jointed peanuts good to eat}  
 For breakfast {or dinnertime}  
 For supper {most anytime}  
 The merry twinkle in his eye  
 He's got a way that makes you buy

{Each morning} that whistle blows  
 {Are you more than I sell}  
 If an apple keeps the doctor from your door  
 Peanuts ought to keep him from you even more  
 {Peanuts} we'll meet again  
 This street again  
 You'll eat again  
 You Peanut Man, that peanut man's gone  
 {Peanut, peanut, peanut}

---

### 5. Son & Casino – A short inventory of basic figures and patterns

Caminalo (Vuelta + Sigue Caminando)

Hook Spin (hands up on 3)

Festival de Palmadas

Casino:

\*Guapea (non-linear) - Concepts: Grounded initial step, walking forward

All Basics (Exhibela, Dile que No, Enchufla, Vacilala, Paseala) from Guapea - Introduce & reinforce grounded & forward walking steps with sharp pivots on4 & on8 (no back rocks) especially in Exhibela, Dile que No, Enchufla, & Paseala. Reinforce momentum of Vacilala - Proper leading technique for leaders: Guided pull so follower walks on1, when the leader tosses/releases the hand (by3), the follower's positioning on3, and the size of the follower's steps on5 (small step), on6 (large step), on7 (large step), on8 (pivot).

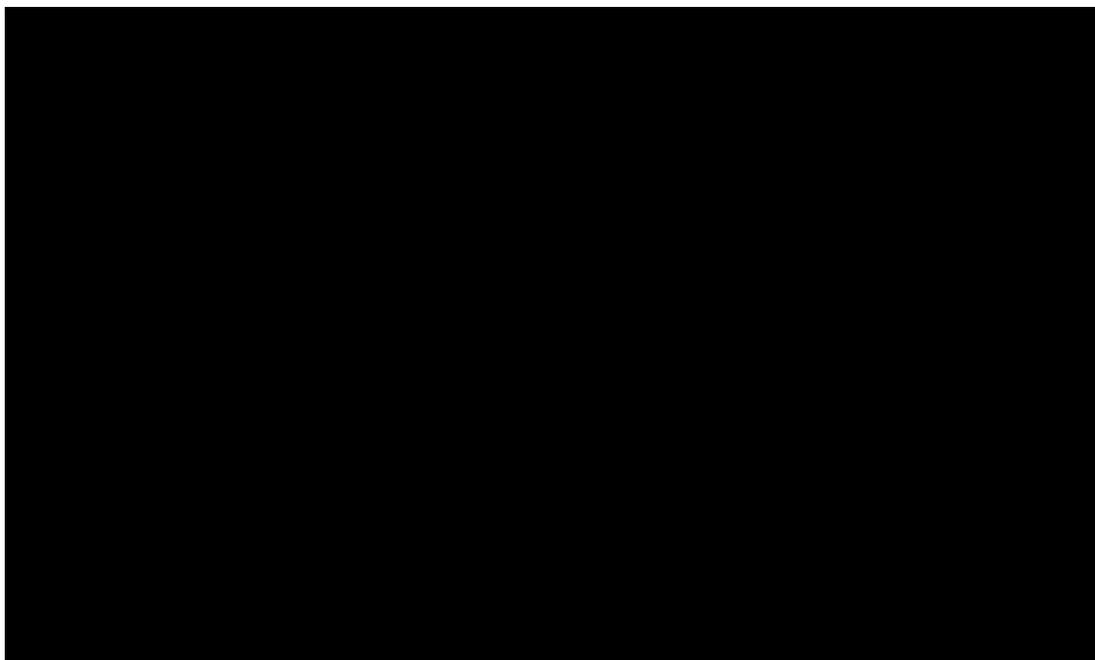
Siete, Vacilala, Medio Sombrero, Paseala (+Kentucky)

Rueda:

Camina Tiempo Espana - Un Tarro \*(con La Mano + Despelote), Dame (con 1) (con 2) (2 con 2)  
Enchufla (Doble), Pa'Ti, Pa'Mi, Adios (con la Hermana), Pelota de 2, 4, Loca, \*Festival de  
Palmadas, Vacilala, Siete, Siete + Vacilala, Medio Sombrero, \*Sombrero, Paseala (from Guapea)  
\*(from Dame), \*Un Fly, \*Echeverria, \*Yogur

---

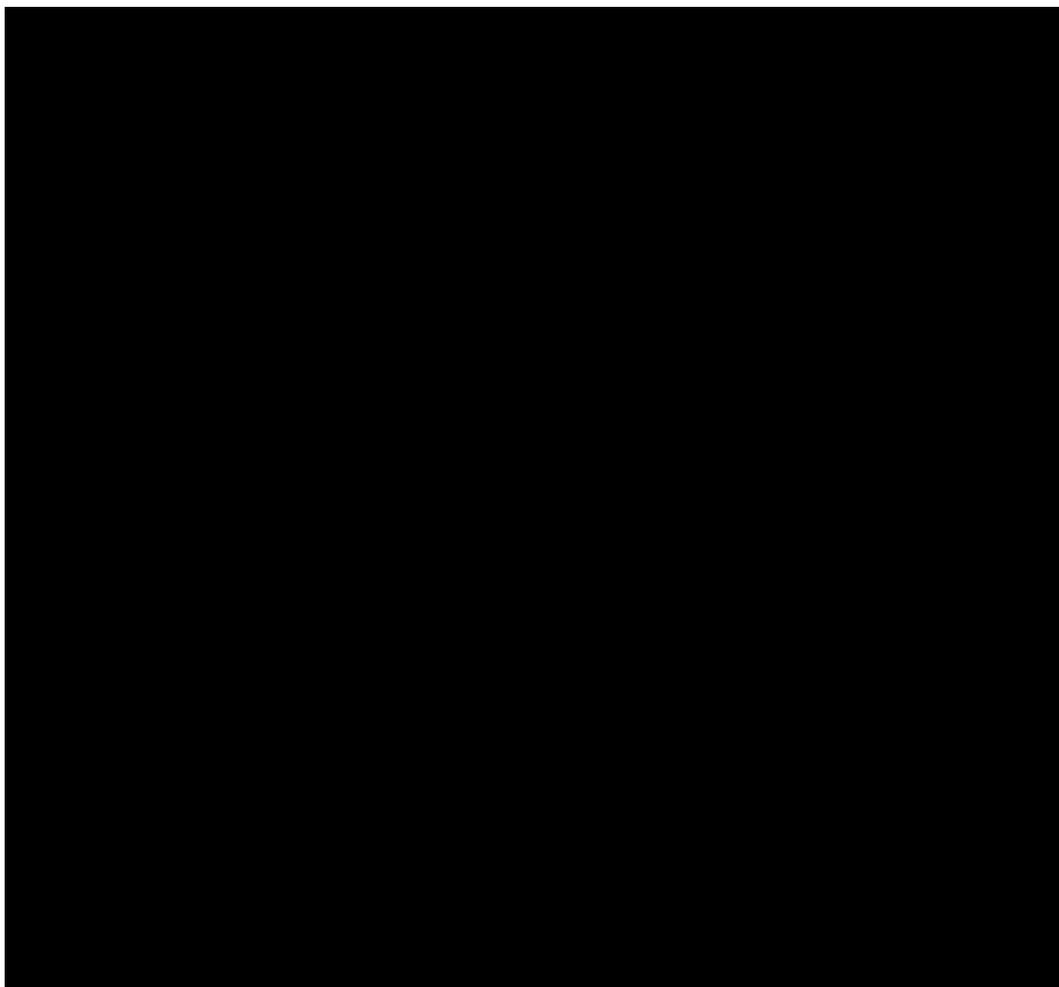
8. Dance Study in Santiago de Cuba June-July 2014, 2015 – The following videos were taken over a two-year period in Santiago de Cuba with Yanek Revilla, Karelia Despaigne and the dancers of their group Sabor DKY. They are anchors of the Santiago dance landscape, and masters a variety of dances.



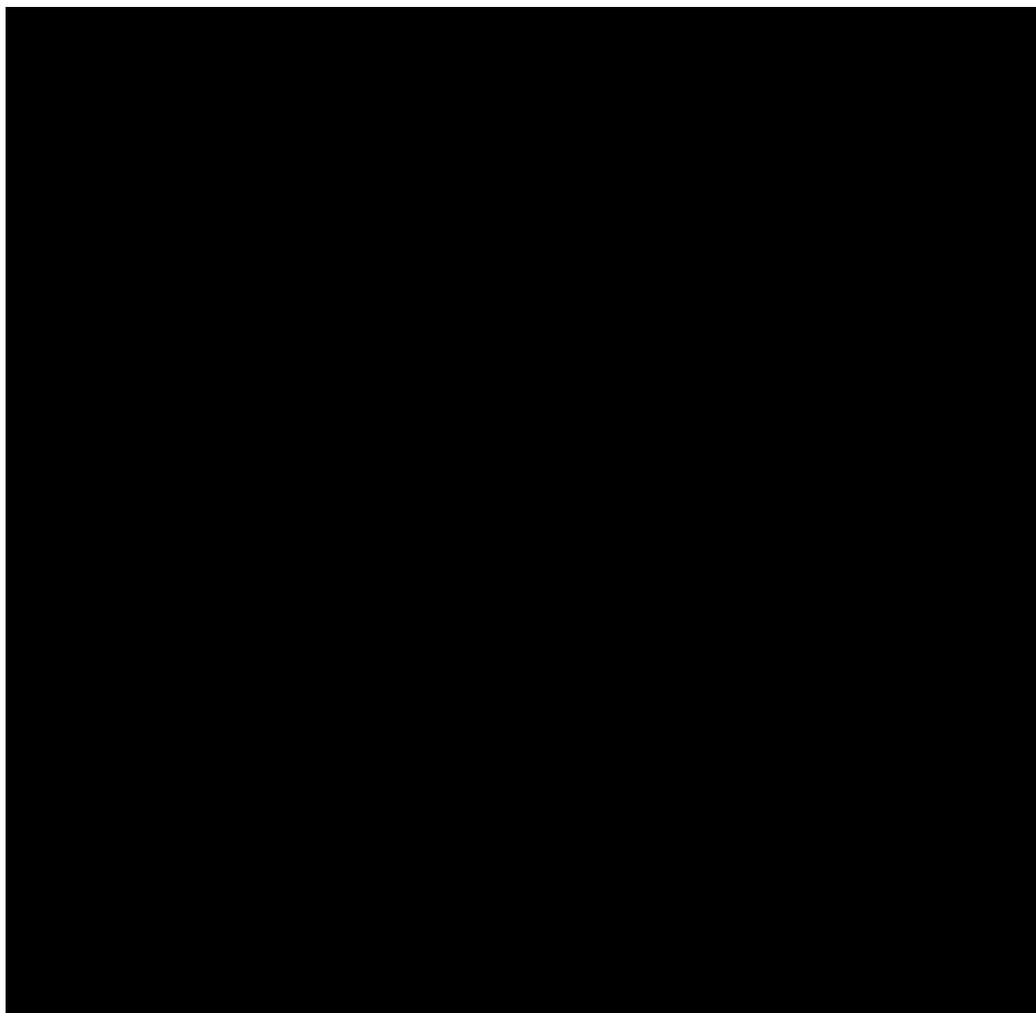
*Son Santiaguero Performance.*



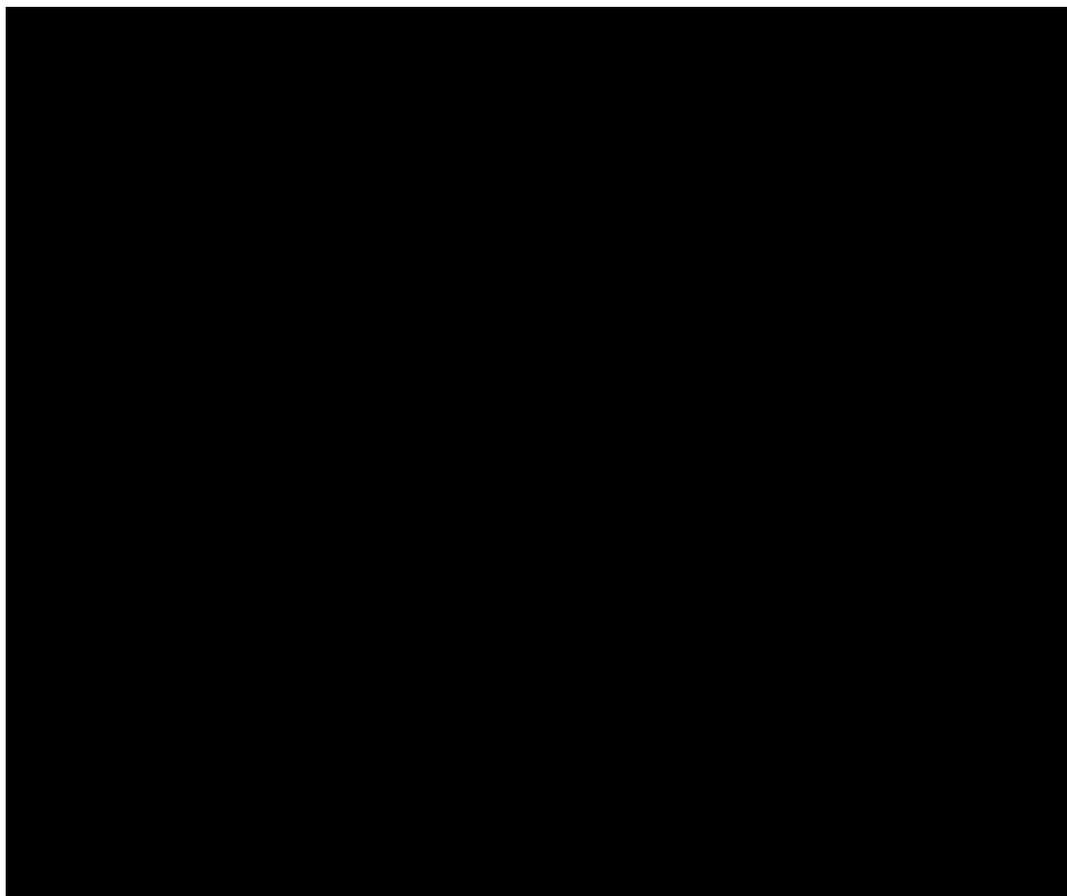
*Son* lesson. Introduction to contemporary son or “son moderno”



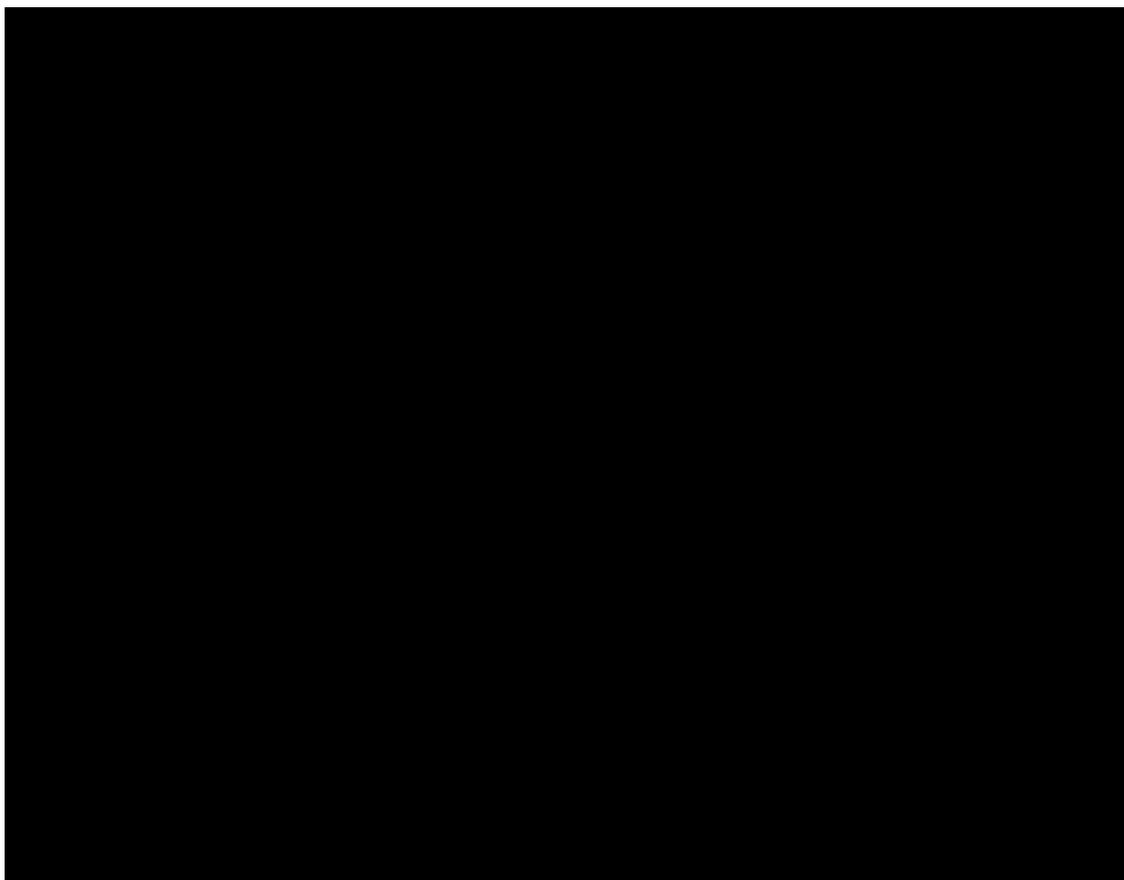
Contemporary *casino* footwork, blending Afrocuban with other styles of dance. These solo patterns, called “suelta,” are highly popular in Cuban contemporary casino and are especially elaborate in Oriente province as a result of Revilla’s innovations. They may be performed in lines of dancers or can be used as improvisational “fillers” while separated in couple dancing.



Additional *suelta* patterns, danced by Revilla, Despaigne and Ernesto Ferreiro “Pucho” Escalona



*Guaguancó* lesson. Revilla demonstrates a series of movements. Students form lines and execute the patterns in unison as they advance toward the front of the room. This has become the standard methodology for *rumba* instruction in most folklore workshops, in Cuba and abroad.



In this clip, Revilla and Despaigne caricature New York “On 2” style salsa dancing. A ballroom dance, this type of dancing developed in the 1970’s in New York and New Jersey as the result of the arrival of Cuban immigrants fleeing the revolution. Many Cubans deride this style because it is danced on song timing, but shares none of its signature movements and projects hardly any trace of its Cuban santiaguero underpinnings.

## WORKS CITED

- Acosta, Leonardo. "The Rumba, the Guaguancó, and Tio Tom." In *Essays on Cuban Music: North American and Cuban Perspectives*, edited by Peter Manuel. New York: University Press of America, 1991.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1991.
- De Andrade, Mario. *Ensaio Sobre a Musica Brasileira*, 3d ed. Sao Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1972, 24-25.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: La Frontera, The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books, 1987.
- Bacallao, Esteban. Personal interview. June 20, 2004.
- Balbuena, Barbara. *El casino y la salsa en Cuba*. Letras Cubanas, 2004.
- Bhaba, Homi K. *The Location of Culture* (2nd ed.), London, Routledge 2004.
- Branstetter, Gabrielle. *of Dance: Body, Image, and Space in the Historical Avant-Gardes*. London: Oxford University Press, 2015 *Poetics*
- José de Bermejo y Carballa. *Glorias Religiosas de Sevilla: Noticia Histórico-Descriptiva De Todas Las Cofradías De Penitencia, Sangre y Luz, Fundadas En Esta Ciudad*. Sevilla: Salvador, 1882.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "A History of the Tango," in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Elliot Weinberger, trans. Elliot Weinberger, Esther Allen, and Suzanne Jill Levine. New York: Penguin, 1999.
- Carpentier, Alejo. *Música en Cuba*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946.
- Céspedes del Castillo, Guillermo. *América Hispanica: 1492-1898*, Fundación Jorge Juan Marcial Pons Historia, 2009. (see figures 4-7, chapter one).
- Chasteen, John Charles. "The Prehistory of Samba: Carnival Dancing in Rio de Janeiro (1840-1917)," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Feb., 1996).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *National rhythms, African roots*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- Chvaicer, Maya Talmon. "The Criminalization of Capoeira in Nineteenth-Century Brazil." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82.3 (2002) 525-547, Duke University Press.
- Colley, Linda. *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850*, 2004
- Despaigne, Karelia and Yanek Revilla. Personal interviews. March 2013-2016.

Gregory T. Cushman. "¿De qué color es el oro? Race, Environment, and the History of Cuban National Music, 1898-1958" ( *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Autumn - Winter... Published by: University of Texas Press), 164-194.

Daniel, Yvonne Payne. *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Changing Values in Cuban *Rumba*: A Lower Class Dance Appropriated by the Revolution," *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Autumn, 1991)

Feldman, Heidi Carolyn. "The Black Pacific: Cuban and Brazilian Echoes in the Afro-Peruvian Revival," in "Vol. 49, No.2," special issue, *Ethnomusicology* (Spring/Summer 2005): 206-7, JSTOR.

Fernandez, Gerardo and Fernando Juarez eds. *Estabilidad y Conflicto en la Fiesta del Corpus Christi*. La Mancha: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla, 2002.

De la Fuente, Alejandro. *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Fisher, John R. *The Economic Aspects of Spanish Imperialism in the America, 1492-1810*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997.

García Lorca. *La teoría y juego del duende*. 1930. (Spanish version retrieved from Biblioteca Virtual Universal, <http://biblioteca.org.ar/libros/1888.pdf>. English version, "Theory and Play of Duende" A.S. Kline Trans. 2007.

García, Maria de la Carmen Mena. *Sevilla y los flotas de Índias, "La Gran Armada del Castillo del Oro*. Seville: 1998.

Gray, Kathryn, "The Influence of Musical Folk Traditions in the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Nicolas Guillen", Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute (1997)

Guillén, Nicolás. *Sóngoro Cosongo*. Havana: 1931. Buenos Aires: Edición Losada, 1951.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Motivos de son*. 1930. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lozada, 1952.

Hanna, Judith Lynne. *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Imison, Paul. "How Veracruz Became the Most Dangerous State in Mexico for Journalists." *Vice News*, August 17, 2015

Keyder, Çağlar, Y. Eyüp Özveren and Donald Quataert, Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire: Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* Vol. 16, No. 4, Port-Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean 1800-1914 (Fall, 1993), 520.

Kuss, Malena Ed. *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean: An Encyclopedic History*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Lepore, Amadeo. "The Port of Cádiz between the Modern and Contemporary Ages (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)," *Seconda Università di Napoli*, January 4, 2012.

Leymarie, Isabel. *Cuban Fire: The Story of Salsa and Latin Jazz*. Continuum, 2002.

Linares, María Teresa. *La música y el pueblo*. Havana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1981.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Sobre nuestra tradición musical", *Ensayos de musica latinoamericana: selección del boletín de musica de la Casa de las Americas*, La Habana: Casa de las Americas, 1982

Kutzinski, Vera M. *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1993.

Manuel, Peter. *Essays on Cuban Music: North American and Cuban Perspectives*. University Press of America (Lanham, MD), 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. The "Guajira" between Cuba and Spain: A Study in Continuity and Change *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Autumn - Winter, 2004), University of Texas Press, pp. 137-162

\_\_\_\_\_. *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Martinez Furé, Rogelio. *Diálogos imaginarios*. La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1979.

Matos Guerra, Gregório, "Preceito 1," *Obras poeticas de Gregorio de Mattos Guerra: precedidas de vida do poeta*, Volume 1. Manuel Perieira Rebello Ed. Rio de Janeiro, 1882.

McCann, Bryan "Noel Rosa's Nationalist Logic." *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Summer, 2001), University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 1-16.

McNeil, John Robert. *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

McGrath, Aoife. *Dance Theatre in Ireland: Revolutionary Moves*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013.

Mendoza, Zoila S. *Shaping Society Through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes, Volume 1*. University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Miller, Ivor. "A Secret Society Goes Public: The Relationship between Abakuá and Cuban Popular Culture" *African Studies Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1, Special Issue on the Diaspora (Apr., 2000), pp. 1-202]

Miller, Tom. *Cuba: True Stories*. San Francisco: Traveler's Tales, 2004.

Moore, Robin. *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Commercial *Rumba*: Afrocuban Arts as International Popular Culture." *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Autumn - Winter, 1995), pp. 165-198

\_\_\_\_\_. "Poetic, Visual, and Symphonic Interpretations of the Cuban *Rumba*: Toward a Model of Integrative Studies, *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry*, Vol. 4 (1998), pp. 93-112, Center for Black Music Research - Columbia College Chicago

José Luis Navarro García, *Cantes y Bailes de Granada*, Arguval: 1993

Orovio, Helio. *Diccionario de la música popular cubana*, Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1981.

Ortiz, Fernando, *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995

\_\_\_\_\_. *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba*. Havana: Editora Universitaria, 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. 1940. (Barcelona, Editorial Ariel [1973])

Perez, Louis. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Perez Sarduy, Pedro and Jean Stubbs. *Afrocuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics and Culture*. Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1993.

Pellarolo, Sirena. "Queering Tango: Glitches in the Hetero-National Matrix of a Liminal Cultural Production," *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 3, Feminism and Theatre, Redux (Oct., 2008), pp. 409-431.

Peña, Miguel Cabrera. "José Martí and the Future of Blacks." Reflections on the Race Problem in Cuba. ISAS.

Perna, Vincenzo. *Timba: The Sound of the Cuban Crisis*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2005.

Pittman, Anne M, Marlys S. Waller, Cathy L. Dark. *Dance a While: A Handbook for Folk, Square, Contra, and Social Dance*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2009

Rae, Caroline. "In Havana and Paris: The Musical Activities of Alejo Carpentier." *Music and Letters* (2008) 89 (3): 373-395.

Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia UP, 1996.

Robbins, James. "The Cuban "Son" as Form, Genre, and Symbol"  
*Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn - Winter, 1990), pp. 115-317.

Schurz, Lyle W. *The Manila Galleon, 1565–1815*. New York, 1959.

Selier, Yesenia Fernández. "The Making of the *Rumba* Body: René Rivero and the Rhumba Craze." *Cuba Global*, July 2013.

Subirats, Eduardo. *El Continente Vacío*, Anaya & Mario Muchnik, 1996.

Taylor, Julie. "Tango: Theme of Class and Nation." *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May, 1976), pp. 273-291. (Published by: University of Illinois Press on behalf of Society for Ethnomusicology)

Tinhorão, *Fado: Dança do Brasil, Cantar de Lisboa*, Lisbon: Caminho da Música, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Temas e Questões*. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Música popular de índios, negros e mestiços*, Petrópolis, 1972.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Os Negros em Portugal: uma presença silenciosa*, Caminho, 1988.

Totton, Robin. *Songs of the Outcasts*. Portland: Amadeus Press, 2003.

- Tracy, Stephen. *Langston Hughes and Blues*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: PAJ, 1982.
- Very, Francis G. "A Note on the Isle of Chacona and a Corpus Christi Dance." *Western Folklore*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Jul., 1959), pp. 239-244.
- Walton, Timothy R.: *The Spanish Treasure Fleets*. Sarasota: Pineapple Press Inc, 2002
- Washabough, William. *Passion, Politics and Popular Culture*. Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1996.
- Webster, Jason. *Duende: A Journey into the Heart of Flamenco*. New York: Broadway, 2003.
- White, Christopher M. *A Global History of the Developing World*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014.
- Whitten, Norman E. and Arlene Torres eds. *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean - Volume 1 Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations: Central America and Northern and Western South America*. Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Wulf, Helena. *Dancing at the Crossroads: Memory and Mobility in Ireland*. Oxford: Bergahn, 2007.
- Zimming, Rishona. *Social Dance and the Modernist Imagination in Interwar Britain*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2013.

