The Ritual Efficacy of Modern DanceSport

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Dedicated to Armand G. Mildzikhov

ABSTRACT

DanceSport, recognized by the International Olympic Committee, is competitive 'ballroom' dancing practiced in over 73 countries throughout the world. Although DanceSport encompasses several different genres of competitive dance, this thesis concerns the 'Latin' and 'Rhythm' dances. Comprised of five slow dances of European origin, and five fast dances of Latin American origin, DanceSport is a cultural culmination rich with symbolic meaning. The author examines the political economy of Latin America at the time these dances were created, then uses this background to trace the symbolism and meaning inherent in their current form. Andre Gunda Frank and James Scott inform the political economy of her thesis while Victor Turner and Emile Durkheim inform her ritual theory. To validate her data, she uses her personal experience as a DanceSport instructor and competitor to help illustrate the efficacy of modern ritual.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis confronts a critical issue concerning the efficacy of syncretic ritual in North America today. In relegating this to the study of Anthropology, I will contextualize DanceSport within its current place and practice in society to create a basis for understanding. I will discuss the forum through which DanceSport has been perpetuated in Canada, its audience and practitioner, its symbolism and meaning for the Canadian public, and the abiding role of dance in anthropological research.

In May of 2000, I was a student in need of a summer job. I answered an ad in the newspaper calling for dance trainees at a local dance studio. Two weeks later, I signed a contract agreeing to stay on as a trainee with no pay for 3 months, at which time my employer may or may not hire me to teach dance lessons to adults. I had a 2nd and 3rd job to pay my rent, and a love of dance to sustain me throughout the summer months. Before long, I was signing a second contract, agreeing to teach dance lessons at the studio for a year following my training, or repay the studio their 3-month investment in me. Staying was not difficult, because although the hours were long and the training rigorous, experiencing the joy of dance for myself and infecting others with that joy made it all worthwhile.

Since then, the study of dance has enthralled me. What is it that makes ballroom dancing, specifically, so addictive? Addictive is indeed the only way I can describe it, because when I was first danced around the floor by a senior instructor who could make me move without me having the slightest idea of my part – my brain had lost all awareness – I was hooked for life. But my curiosity nagged at me – what was I dancing? Why was I dancing it? What did it mean for everyone else? What did it mean for those who first danced it?

Not long after my initial foray into the dance studio ethic, I set a goal to compete, opening up a whole new experience for me. Suddenly I was subject to judges' scrutiny, my marriage was beset with the strain of dance training, and everything that I thought I might have known about dancing, I didn't. It was sobering, and certainly no longer was it even a little bit fun or dreamy, as it first had been. Performing was fun, but competing? Torture. Addictive

torture. Adrenalin-rushing, mind-blanking, teeter-tottering torture. Why had I allowed it to progress this far and could I stop it? I tried to quit but could not bring myself to give up what I had started. Besides, I told myself, this is great material for an MA thesis.

My objective is to demonstrate the following. The constituent parts of DanceSport originated in a social context as efficacious ritual. This occurred in Latin America over a period of time beginning in the early 1700s by people of Native Caribbean, African, and Spanish descent. By the early to mid 1900s, the dances underwent a process of cultural dispersion and appropriation. They were redeveloped and reproduced in the West, and as a result, their ritual efficacy suffered almost to the point of complete loss. Nevertheless, by virtue of the inherited symbolic meaning in DanceSport, today its practitioners transcend the mundane through 'communitas', or 'collective effervescence', and depart in possession of a vestige of spiritual integrity. They become something other than what they were. This something else is a reflection of the positive result of inter-cultural borrowing and sharing.

In order to understand the ritual depth of DanceSport, this thesis first locates DanceSport in its original political/economic frame. This historical understanding facilitates a keener awareness of its current symbolic forms. The Latin dances of DanceSport were conceived amidst revolution and social change, and their foray into North American society was accompanied by American political and economic hegemony. An understanding of social relations at the time confers an appropriate understanding of their symbolic content, discussed in depth in later chapters. My intention is to follow DanceSport's transmission from Latin America to the North, the changes it encountered along the way, and the significance of its current form in North American society today.

Theory and Methodology

Because DanceSport occurs in a variety of performance contexts, I will map the factors which effect its expression. Victor Turner writes, "Some social events are contained in multiple frames, hierarchically arranged, frame within frame, with the ultimate 'meaning' of the event

shaped by the dominant, 'encompassing' frame. Frames, in other words, are often themselves 'framed'" (1986:140). The importance of understanding the construction in order to deconstruct and reconstruct is therefore not lost, so I will first establish the layers of process in order to determine what circumstances led to what forms. Victor Turner, Arnold van Gennep, and Richard Schechner supply parameters by which this process can be understood.

Arnold van Gennep's rites of passage involve three stages: separation, margin (limbo), and aggregation (return). The first stage involves the separation from a given role followed by the acknowledgement of no role, a marginal stage of "betwixt and between", and finally, the taking on of an entirely different role (Turner 1986:25). Similarly, Turner's social drama, comprised of the stages of breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration (Schechner 1985:14), are reflective of Richard Schechner's phases of performance, which involve the establishment of *tabula rasa*, followed by initiation or transition, reintegration, and finally public performance. I will apply these stages provided by Turner, van Gennep, and Schechner to a much larger, socio-historic scale, wherein rather than occurring as social dramas within a specific cultural time frame, these ritual processes occur cross-culturally within a globally specific time frame. The overlying phase is a three-stage process: (1) dance as art, i.e., resistance and revolution within a pre-industrial, colonial timeframe, (2) dance as 'betwixt and between', is appropriated, innovated and reinvented, and (3) dance as sport, i.e., commodification and standardization within a post-industrial, post-colonial and global timeframe. I will argue that DanceSport currently confers aspects of both marginal and mainstream; it is neither fully at stage 2 nor 3. Due to the contradictions between 2 and 3, DanceSport by its very nature is wrought with creative tension. This theme will be followed throughout the thesis, as it is central to the phenomenology of DanceSport ritual today.

The three stages mentioned above occur individually as well as socially. The rites of transition offered by van Gennep and Schechner's phases of performance can be mapped individually while Turner's social drama can be mapped on a larger socio-political scale. My methodological strategy has therefore been to present both in this thesis. On a social level, I

map the political and economic background of DanceSport's ritual roots. On an individual level, I experience these stages personally, and present my experience as phenomenological data.

Recently, Anthropologists have been urged to seek personal, experiential verification of phenomenological data, in the radical 'third wave' of participant, experiential observation. Prattis, Laughlin, Throop, and others, through the literature of Durkheim, Turner, James, etc., have identified genetically ordered mental frames by which cultural phenomena is conceptually processed and verified idiosyncratically through neural networks. Neural information processing is an individual phenomenon, understood most acutely by an individual subject to experience. In an attempt to reconcile individual experience with group phenomenology, I suggest a twofold approach in this thesis. Historicism and phenomenological hermeneutics attends to the history of DanceSport ritual related by the experiences of other people. Symbolism and personal phenomenology relates an individualistic understanding of DanceSport based on participant research. The sum of these parts purports a palpable understanding of how the extraordinary body movement of DanceSport affects the psyche of the Western self.

Structure

The structure of this thesis reflects the complexity of its subject matter. Chapter one lays the historical foundation for DanceSport's ritual creation. It describes the social milieu in which African/Latin American dances were developed and notes variations in character. Andre Gundar Frank and James Scott inform the political economy of this background while Scott further informs my reasoning for the burgeoning of artistic culture in this context. Subsequently, chapter two follows its transmission from the streets and backyards of Latin America and Southern USA to the ballrooms of Europe and North America. This chapter illustrates the appeal these dances have for North Americans and the context which characterized their inception into North American society. This precedes a necessary clarification of what exactly DanceSport is, its contemporary relation to both art and sport, and its current location in North American society.

Chapter three is a pertinent discussion of 'due process'. It confronts the problem of

ritual poverty in North America and questions the integrity of recreated DanceSport ritual. How can DanceSport hold spiritual significance if it is a ritual 'knock-off'? In this chapter, I explore the popular fascination with the body of the cultural 'other'. Through migration, industry, and the media, the 'other body' has undergone a stereotypical, exploitative portrayal as a sexualized male/female singer/dancer. I explore the ambiguity of message, as opposed to purpose, of body-as-text. This chapter peruses the importance of tacit and embedded knowledge, calling for full attendance to 'due process'. Due process provides the empathetic understanding of the meaning of the dance through reflexivity. With theoretical underpinnings provided by Ian Prattis and Sondra Horton Fraleigh, I suggest a way by which DanceSport ritual can be practiced in a North American context without compromising its integrity.

Chapter five portrays DanceSport ritual and symbolism in its current context. It is a critical investigation of DanceSport's ritual parameters. It examines incidences of efficacious as well as infelicitous ritual. An in-depth investigation of DanceSport symbolism at this point is intended to verify DanceSport's ritual efficacy as well as its creative tension. Chapter five also qualifies DanceSport within the anthropology of human movement by colluding with noted anthropologists in the field.

Chapter six is a personal account of my own experiences in DanceSport and what it has meant to me in a phenomenological sense. In conclusion, I bind the larger, socio-historic frame of DanceSport to its ritual frame. I call for an emphasis on process and transformation, and the celebration of creative change. I reiterate DanceSport's relation to its powerful ritual past, and emphasize the importance of cultural enrichment through sharing.

The following thesis is comprised of three main sections: DanceSport's ritual origins, as described in the first chapter, its subsequent bastardization in North America described in the second and third chapter, and finally, its current recapitulation with ritual efficacy. I will draw upon prototypical performances of society and dance, with my own experiences as a professional DanceSport instructor and competitor to help augment that which I have learned. Admittedly, I am a subject in this matter, as my own fascinations of dance were borne of the same cultural

climate as my fellows. However, I consider this to be in collusion with anthropology's 'third wave', being a foray into William James' 'radical empiricism' and Edith Turner's "participant observation in the fullest sense" (1993:9).

I have found the study of DanceSport in particular a meaningful endeavour because it neither fully embraces societal structure nor fully rejects it; it is yet in the process of transformation. It is on the edge of marginal and mainstream. Its boundaries are less cogent than those of well-defined socio-structural texts. It is now the time to draw attention to DanceSport because its future route may indicate the fate of other culturally rich symbolic material borrowed by the West. DanceSport's functional multiplicity portrays the contradictions of society: the dualities of mind and body, spiritual and material, social and political, individual and communal, entertainment and efficacy. These definitional segments constitute Keali'inohomoku's 'dance culture', defined as "the entire conception of the dance within larger culture" (Williams 1997:42).

By separating the parts of DanceSport, it is possible to discern the culmination that generates its whole. What has confounded dance researchers in the past is the magnitude of the whole. Dance, sport, and religion, paramount constituents of all societies, influence and are influenced by many facets of social and political life. Thus I propose a lateral shift in the study of dance. The individuals who practice and represent DanceSport have distinctive and dualistic self-schemata; they have perceptually managed to formulate DanceSport to fit the way they think and feel. This reflects directly on DanceSport by encompassing the inter-cultural appeal of dance by transcending spatio-temporal boundaries and upholding DanceSport as a symbol of cohesion and unity as well as conflict and rebellion. By examining the appeal it holds for the individual in society, as well as its overall function for the cultural enrichment of society, DanceSport's function can be distinguished from that of yoga or t'ai chi, for example, because DanceSport enduringly represents socio-political malaise as much as it represents intra-psychic and somatic harmony. As such, it adapts the individual to society, and society to the individual.

I have read that dancers have an acute awareness of the power of their bodies from the

top of their heads to the tips of their toes; I have seen that they can manipulate and contort their parts to create dynamic motion while standing still and can move but a fraction to appear to travel as fast as a sprinter seconds out of the blocks. I have experienced merely an iota of these contradictions in action, but this tiny piece of the whole has inspired me to learn so much more of this art. While acknowledging the impossibility of attaining perfection, I continue to seek it tirelessly. The lived contradictions in dance intrigue me to the point that I am consumed with harnessing the power of conflict. "Work to stand still", I am told, "relax to move". Only a society consumed with logic and reason can make me so wholly prefer discordance. While entirely illogical, my pursuit of this dream is relentless because it seems to appeal to my human potential not by instilling rules of conformity, economy, productivity, or corporate reality, but by consuming me with the spiritual potential of another time, another world, and another mind. Is this the meaning of dance?

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN OF DANCESPORT

"I do feel it is necessary to map the context, history and further use of another culture's symbols to understand the contingent factors in this sensitive area of symbolic appropriation"—I. Prattis 2001:48

1.1 Introduction

Just after the turn of the 16th century, under the auspices of the Spanish Crown, Governor Nicolas de Ovando formally implemented the *encomienda* system to govern the colonies of Central America. Needing to placate the *Conquistadors*, who demanded unlimited access to Native labour, while simultaneously needing to preserve the dwindling, tribute-paying Native population, the Crown was perplexed by two mutually distasteful experiences. The first was the fate of the Taino, the Natives of Hispaniola. When left to the devices of the 1200 colonists left there by Columbus in 1493, they became extinct. The second was the fate of the colonists. Left to the devices of the struggling Taino, they were being threatened by the revolts and uprisings of the once peaceful Native inhabitants (Keen 1996:81). The *encomienda* system was the Crown's answer to this quandary. He took labour and tribute from the Natives in exchange for 'protection'. Priests were assigned to save their souls while soldiers were assigned to keep other would-be colonizers out of Native territory (Keen 1996:82). As a form of "hideous slavery", the *encomienda* system resulted in a devastating loss of life through cruelty and neglect, which was further exacerbated by the influx of European disease at the end of the 16th century, fatally infecting the vulnerable Indigenous population (Keen 1996:82).

Although the *encomienda* system underwent a flurry of semi-reforms, mainly instigated by Native revolts and embittered missionaries, its revised versions, as symptomatic as the original, nevertheless furthered the toll of loss and oppression. Rather than placate the existing workers, the *encomenderos* paid slave traders to deliver kidnapped African tribesmen to work on the sugar cane plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean islands. By the late 1700s, approximately 9.5 million Africans had been uprooted from their homelands, disjoined from kinship and birth affiliations, and forced to work for strangers in a foreign land (Keen 1996:116, Dos Santos 1996).

According to Keen, the Indigenes proactively resisted the usurpation of their land and

people. By the 1600s, not only had the Natives been granted communal segments of their original territory, but some semblance of their hierarchical, inherited nobility system had also been reestablished. The Native nobility members became middlemen, or governors, who served the interest of the Spanish Crown by tax collecting and peace-keeping. Often they alienated relations further by mirroring the exploitative actions of their captors – many of them became wealthy landowners, forcing their people to work off debts falsely accrued (Frank 1981, Dos Santos 1996). To some extent, the organization of the Native towns as having been molded after the Spanish model of the *peninsular* provided a substantial infrastructure upon which the Hispanization of Native cultures was built. In this manner, a familiarity with Spanish law, religion, and finance supplied the Indigenes with the knowledge by which they could come to understand, if not fight, the Spanish system, but to recognize the Spanish system of control was to undermine their own, and this knowledge only reaffirmed their powerlessness. Keen writes of the Native population:

'In response to the aggressions and injustices inflicted on it by the white world, the [Indigenous] community drew into itself and fought stubbornly not only to preserve its land but its cultural identity, speech, social organization, and traditional dances and songs' (Keen 1996:115).

To divide interests, the Spanish *encomenderos* vigilantly sequestered the Indigenous population away from that of the African. Although they shared similar experiences of violence and oppression, and created the *Zambú* class through intermarriage, the African and Indigenous American developed very separate identities as a result. While the Africans had been physically removed from their native land and culture, no large-scale attempts to repatriate or engender African nationalism were articulated until Marcus Garvey's plans to colonize Liberia reached an audience of 8 million by 1923. Prior to Garvey and the 'Back to Africa' movements of the '60s and '70s, the previously enslaved Africans of the Spanish colonies had been for the most part thoroughly denied the right to practice any of their cultural traditions. Keen writes:

'Brought from Africa by force and violence, cut off from their kindred and peoples, the uprooted slaves were subjected in their new environment to severe deculturation.... For reasons of security, slaveowners preferred to purchase slaves of diverse tribal origins, language, and religious beliefs and deliberately promoted

tribal disunity among them...' (Keen 1996:116-117).

Drums and 'native style' dancing was immediately banned on most plantations, in the Southern US as well as in the Caribbean and South America (Jonas 1992:164). Under Philip II, the Spanish Inquisition in the colonies inflicted strict literary and artistic censorship, which remained unbroken until its tentative lift began in the eighteenth century. Aside from the obvious means of repressing group solidarity, dance expression was also stifled due to its effect on the deprived *encomenderos* whose loneliness as plantation overseers and foremen compromised their devotion to the teachings of the church. For the incoming Dutch, French and British colonizers whose previous experience had ill-prepared them for the exotic manners of the female plantation workers, 'resistance was futile'. Jonas writes:

'The issue was control. Christian worship was a communal function whose goal was salvation. The hierarchy wanted to be sure that nothing heard or seen on consecrated ground would distract the congregation; and art and music were inherently more controllable than dance.... But the dancing body was unpredictable, suspect in its individuality, notoriously prey to temptation and corruption; wild dancing, seen as a vestige of pagan customs, was explicitly associated with the Devil...' (Jonas 1992:44).

Not until after 1808 were plantation workers permitted to dance socially together (Jonas 1992:164, Hanna 1979:191,192). It was at this time that the cultural fusion of diverse tribes and peoples melded to create the precursors to Latin DanceSport. The following section discusses this creative merging followed by the socio-political conflict which sustained it.

1.2 The Development of Latin American Dance Culture

The essential creation of the eight¹ Latin American dances which are today part of DanceSport² occurred under similar socio-political pressure but nevertheless differed over time and space. This section discusses these differences but first acknowledges their similarities.

By the mid to late nineteenth century, Chinese and Indian indentured servants had been

¹ Two of these eight, the Jive and Swing, originated in the United States but are considered of the same genre as the original six.

² These eight dances, some of which are separated into 'Latin' or 'Rhythm' divisions of DanceSport, include the Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble, Bolero, Cha Cha, Mambo, Jive and Swing.

introduced to the plantation economy in the Caribbean islands and elsewhere. Their cultural influence crossed boundaries that the allocation of space by overseers could not. In Brazil, for example, the religious context of dancing was associated with spirit possession by the Africans, fertility rites by the Portuguese of the Iberian peninsula and Lisbon, and the crowning of Kings and Queens in Angola and the Congo (Jonas 1992:185). What began as a mock coronation and the flaunting of obscene bodily gestures as a means of rebellion against the Catholic church eventually developed into an extravagant, highly stylized Brazilian nationalist art form. The Samba, derived from the *congadas* of the Congo, the *entrudo* tradition, as well as that of the Bahia, was originally a form of active resistance by the subordinate class against Catholic authority (Hanna 1979). As such, it played a vital cohesive role for its creators. Delgado and Munoz make note of the richly symbolic dances created at this time:

'The diasporic dancing body becomes the vehicle for the articulation of culture under siege. Dance literally re-members cultural practices repressed over centuries of conflict.... For subalterns, who lack cultural and historical capital, this 'memory of difference' (and the sense of dislocation/relocation which underlies diasporic cultures) sustains the trace of subaltern cultural products even if only in the hermeneutic circle of marginal interpreters at the edges of 'mainstreamed' forms' (Delgado and Munoz 1997:17).

In the Caribbean and South America, "the African drum had never been suppressed" (Jonas 1992:183). While the Samba arose from the national fusion of Portuguese and African traditions as a rebellion against the Catholic church, the Rumba emerged from the Afro-Caribbean slaves, as a rebellion against their owners (Febres 1997:186, Firmat 1997:246, Desmond 1997:41, Delgado and Munoz 1997:11, 15). The Bolero, Mambo, and Salsa were also borne in Cuba, and developed further in *el barrio* (the quarter) of South Bronx, in 'Nueva Yor' (Febres 1997:182-183, Puleo 1997:230). The Tango and Paso Doble began as rural announcements of solidarity united respectively in Argentina and France (Desmond 1997:39, Delgado and Munoz 1997:26). The Swing and Jive were begun by the Afro-American slaves on the plantations "as a respite from the grueling labour of slavery that diverted those enslaved from rebellion" (Hazzard-Gordon quoted in Delgado and Munoz 1997:15). Each of these dances began in marginal society, or influenced the creative burgeoning of another dance amongst

marginalists. Although the social conflict which inspired these dances unites them conceptually, time and space separates them and distinguishes them according to expression.

The nature and direction of resistance both differed and overlapped between the lower class communities of Latin America and the United States. The voices of the downtrodden, denied expression in legal and political forums, were directed inward, and took form artistically, in dancing, painting and composing. The original social dances, predecessors to the Paso Doble, Rumba, Cha Cha, Mambo, and Jive, were all created by social outcasts, slaves, impoverished thieves, and rural peasants (Williams 1997, Delgado & Munoz 1997, Munoz 1997, Desmond 1997, Firmat 1997, Febres 1997, Martin 1998). While in all these instances, the dances can be described as 'anti-structural', and liminal – i.e., serving a ritual function outside the boundaries of structure – they differed. Delgado and Munoz make note of this variation:

'Writing of the institution of slavery in the United States, abolitionist and emancipated slave Frederick Douglass maintained that dancing allowed a respite from the grueling labor of slavery that diverted those enslaved from rebellion.... Hazzard-Gordon draws from the Caribbean context to construe dance as a kind of prelude to or rehearsal for revolt' (1997:15).

For Douglass, writing of the US, dancing was an expressive vent, a place away from the exhaustion and scrutiny of the white world. As 'no-place', it embodies what Jill Dolan refers to as "utopian performativity", described in concordance with Turner's "flash of lucid mutual understanding, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved..." (Dolan 2001:473). By transcending the boundaries of class and colour, dancing in this context was lively, vivacious, and highly performative. In some cases, plantation owners and fellow field hands would participate as audience, donating prizes for the best dancers, which eventually led to the formation of the 'blackface minstrel show', "the first indigenous American musical theatre" in the 1840s-50s (Jonas 1992:164,171, Hanna 1979:193).

Of Latin America, conversely, Hazzard-Gordon writes that because leisure-time dancing was a prohibited, punishable activity, those who danced did so in "outright revolt", experiencing heightened emotion akin to that incurred by war dances of the past (Delgado and Munoz 1997:15). In Brazil, for example, the African slaves created the *capoeira*, a martial art/dance

form rooted in Congo/Angolan kicking games (Browning in Delgado and Munoz 1997:67). Disguising it as a dance by practicing to music and adding choreographic elements to fool overseers from detecting its true function, practitioners fought *capoeira*-style, incorporating it into notions of identity, defense, "self-affirmation", status-marking and displays of strength (Budd 2001:13, Delgado and Munoz 1997:67, Hanna 1979:198). Similar traditional arts have been preserved in the Caribbean islands, and throughout Latin America, indicating continuous vicissitude and adaptation. Such change is less marked in US counterpart communities, thus differentiating one dance tradition from the other.

The reason for this variance in forms cannot be attributed to a single factor. Political and religious ideology united the American people while economic expansion ensured their 'progress'. The American political system was upheld by the economic development of capitalism (Dos Santos 1996). Imperialist notions were justified through subordination based on intellect and skin colour. Notions of 'barbarism' and 'backwardness' were believed to keep the Latin/o/African people under the control of the more 'civilized', organized, 'Americans' (Frank 1981, Dos Santos 1996). By identifying outsiders as pitiable, internal solidarity was ensured. Religious dogma and Puritanism wrought more intense forms of class repression, fueling the fire of ideological justification for domination. Christianity was a further safeguard against upheaval. Solidity under these guises maintained order in the US. This order was reflected by less aggressive artistic production.

The process of industrialization secured the financial position of the American imperialists. For example, trade relations convened between the US and Latin America failed to secure like financial security for the latter. Socio-political instability marked for the Latin Americans a perpetual state of political oppression and class subordination (Dos Santos 1996:167, Frank 1981:1-60). During this frustrating period of knowing the ideals of freedom but being unable to actualize them, resistance took on an enduring artistic role. Keen writes:

'...the dramatic contrasts of Latin American life – the extremes of wealth and poverty, the barbarous dictatorships, the rich variety of regional types, the still untamed nature – have stimulated the creative imagination of Latin American[s]...

to an extent that has not occurred in happier countries' (1996:576,577).

Because continuous economic stagnation in Latin America perpetuated aggressive resistance, revolution was a glorified and expected manner by which to enact change. As a result, continual states of conflict and change characterized life. The drive for a bourgeois revolution in the early 1900s developed into nationalization imperatives by the mid '30s.

The US had meanwhile developed a well-funded infrastructure apparent particularly post-world war, in the 'roaring '20s' and later in the '30s and '40s (Frank 1981). This played a fundamental role in how the 'mobility' of artistic development differed cross-culturally. The neocolonialism which had replaced Spain and Portugal's control with that of Great Britain and later the United States had effectively secured financial dependency from the Latin American nations on the emerging force of the United States (Frank 1981). By being fiercely protective of the status quo, Latin American elites chose dependency through export production (monocropping), and foreign investment rather than pursue the reforms required to spur internal production and capital formation, such as agrarian reform and the emergence of a middle class (Keen 1996:216, LaFeber 1994:588, Frank 1981, Dos Santos 1996:158).

Thus, discontent raged as poverty and class distinction prevailed in Latin America throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Socialist and Communist forces rose in the '40s and '50s eager to follow the Russian example. The struggles of the 1950s "culminated in revolutions in Bolivia (1952), Ecuador (1954), Venezuela (1958), and Cuba (1958-1959)" (Dos Santos 1996:161). Dos Santos writes, "all of these revolutionary processes faced bloody opposition... especially from the United States government" (Dos Santos 1996:161). Marked by these contrary experiences of economic and political in/stability, African American and Afro-Caribbean/Latin/o artistic development is based on different expressions of social conflict.

Amidst this context of change and discontent, dancing served a ritual purpose.

Durkheim writes:

'Under the influence of some great collective shock in certain historical periods, social interactions become much more frequent and active. Individuals seek each other out and come together more. The result is the general effervescence that is

characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs. The result of that heightened activity is a general stimulation of individual energies. *People live differently and more intensely than in normal times.* The changes are not simply of nuance and degree; man himself becomes something other than what he was' (Durkheim 1995:212-213 emphasis mine).

The following section qualifies DanceSport's ritual origins by placing them as social creations formed under the duress of intense socio-political malaise (Turner 1974, 1979, Durkheim 1995). Durkheim describes people living under such strain as having 'difference' and 'intensity'. His original words were "*On vit plus et autrement*" (1995:213). For DanceSport ritual to hold efficacy in today's society, the original forms must have been extraordinary, and imbued with ritual depth. Borrowing from E.B. Tylor, I would use his term "cultural survivals" to describe these dance rituals. While Tylor used the term in reference to those persistent, habitual traditions that had no apparent purpose in society but yet were practiced, I use the term for those enduring ritual traditions that are rife with purpose. If in this Latin American context, the dances created did not have a lasting ritual effect, they would not be practiced to this day in any context. The following section proves DanceSport ritual efficacy in its artistic form while taking into account the political and social tides which embedded them into the hearts and minds of the people.

1.3 'Real' Ritual and 'Real' Politics

Richard Schechner's entertainment vs. efficacy continuum-model³ provides a useful basis upon which Latin American dance genres can be viewed according to ritual efficacy. Most performative contexts fall into the midst of the two extremes of efficacy and entertainment (Averbuch 1996:3, Schechner 1988:20). Such performative variation can also be explained through the understanding of class relations as per intrastructural conflict resolution. Schechner's model provides a useful base for this understanding, but more is required. To elucidate Schechner's model as per Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean and Latin/o subcultural genres of resistance, I will incorporate what James C. Scott⁴ offers as a historical-political perspective of

³ See Appendix 1

⁴ See Appendix 2

resistance to add to Schechner's continuum model. It will also form the basis for the contemporary understanding of domination and resistance from the point of view of the subordinate class.

According to Schechner's model, when ritual is entertaining, it lacks efficacy. A further distinction is noted by Ronald Grimes, who reminds us that social drama (efficacy) is the 'grandparent' while stage drama (entertainment) is the 'child' (Grimes 1990:175, Turner 1979:97). He writes, "Social drama is the basis of social and judiciary processes, which, in turn, become the bases of cultural performances" (Grimes 1990:175). Thus social drama in the extreme is inevitably linked to cultural performance in its nullification of the extreme.

The previous section showed that in the United States, direct, armed resistance was rarely instigated on a large scale by the subordinate against the dominant class, whereas direct aggression in Latin America, instigated by the subordinate class, frequently occurred, particularly in the pre-Independence era of the 16th and 17th centuries. It is for this reason that Hazzard-Gordon refers to Latin/o forms of resistance as preparatory for outright revolt and Douglass refers to Afro-American forms of resistance as redirected, safe and escapist forms of aggression, traditions which abide in the American sport and theatre industries to this day. US performative contexts tend to be more entertaining and less aggressive (the 'child'), while Latin American performances tend towards the more efficacious, and aggressive (the 'grandparent').

Scott questions the validity of the safety-valve theory of aggression. Interestingly, Scott does not limit resistance to forms of either 'active' or 'passive' because they presuppose an overlying dominant entity that continuously inflicts control over a subordinate class. Although the dominant class enacts 'ritual subordination' through material, status, and ideological domination, as Scott writes, "it is impossible to separate veiled symbolic resistance to the ideas of domination from the practical struggles to thwart or mitigate exploitation" (Scott 1997:315). He writes:

'...any argument which assumes that disguised ideological dissent or aggression operates as a safety-valve to weaken 'real' resistance ignores the paramount fact that such ideological dissent is virtually always expressed in practices that aim at an unobtrusive renegotiation of power relations' (Scott 1997:317).

Thus, the 'hidden transcript' may be separate from the political realm, but this separation, rather than limiting its power, furthers its power by being clandestine, secretive, and reinforced by the peer pressure of fellow members. This, Scott refers to as 'infrapolitics'. Rather than operating within the elitist-created boundaries of the law, infrapolitics supercedes the law by being innately 'underhanded', and subject to elitist behavioural standards. Under such standards, 'insubordinates' are believed to perpetrate immorality, deceitfulness, deviance, and thievery. According to Scott, pilfering, thieving, and sabotage is actually "taking back the product of one's labour" (Scott 1997:315). Not to be underestimated, the power of the subordinate class constantly challenges that of the dominant, in a 'testing ground': "It is in this 'no-man's-land' of feints, small attacks, probings to find weaknesses, and not in the rare frontal assault, that the ordinary battlefield lies" (Scott 1997:318).

Scott's infrapolitics, "forms of low-profile, disguised, undeclared resistance" apply to Schechner's model on the left of the continuum, as efficacious ritual. Scott's "practices of [material, status, and ideological] domination" apply under Schechner's theatre entertainment, on the right. In the centre, I would place "forms of public declared resistance", in that both sides meet half way to wage physical (initiated traditionally by the subordinate class), and legal (initiated traditionally by the dominant class) battles. In this sense, class conflict is waged by two equally powerful fronts, even though their respective definitions of power differ both cognitively and affectively.

As concurrent with ritual efficacy, the hidden transcript of infrapolitics has intrinsic meaning systems that are encoded through the mythology of member dialogue. Ritual enactment is thus protected from appropriation by virtue of its encoded nature, which cannot be decoded by non-members without a personal, empathetic and phenomenological experience of shared systems of oppression, or a mutually 'shared space'. Scott writes:

'The strategic imperatives of infrapolitics make it not simply different in degree from the open politics of modern democracies; they impose a fundamentally different logic of political action. No public claims are made, no open symbolic lines are drawn. All political action takes forms that are designed to obscure their intentions or to take cover behind an apparent meaning.... Precisely because such political action is studiously designed to be anonymous or to disclaim its purpose, infrapolitics requires more than a little interpretation. Things are not exactly as they seem.... The logic of infrapolitics is to leave few traces in the wake of its passage. By covering its tracks it not only minimizes the risks its practitioners run but also eliminates much of the documentary evidence that might convince social scientists and historians that *real politics* was taking place' (1997:323-325 emphasis mine).

Real politics and real ritual accompanied the creation of DanceSport. While these events were protected by virtue of their historical time and space, in liminality, they continued to evolve with circumstance. The next phase in their development occurred as they crossed national boundaries via emigration and industrialization. Microcosms of dance expression would manifest themselves in the interstices of the American cities.

Thus far I have discussed the socio-political context in which the Latin dances were borne and how they have functioned to express the discontent, identity and solidarity of the subordinate class. At this stage in their history, they were ritually efficacious and most were protected as such through secrecy and disguise. Characteristic dissimilarities were evidenced by their mutual yet exclusive development in Central America vs. the Southern US, indicating various levels of efficacy. At this stage, dance was art.

The following chapter examines the cultural dissemination of these dances throughout Europe and North America. Through the process of 'upward mobility', these social dances underwent significant change, thus justifying the term "ballroom" when describing the new dance context. Their performance context further determines the level of cognizant understanding had by dance proprietors and participants alike by examining their wider socio-political functions. The

question that ultimately arises is how DanceSport arose from this ballroom milieu, and what this culmination of 'social' and 'ballroom' dancing has come to represent in North American society today.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM BALLROOM DANCING TO DANCESPORT

2.1 Introduction

In the mid to late 1600s, Louis XIV made it the directive of his court to dance, so they consumed themselves with dancing. Previously, social and folk dancing was popular and widely practiced, but was looked down upon by the propriety of the church and upper class. Louis XIV thus facilitated the inception of ballroom dancing into high society by deriding the moral outrage of the church. He also turned dancing into a science by the hours he would spend practicing technique, training his body to transcend physical boundaries. Ballet was the manifestation of this strict physical regimen, today being relegated exclusively to 'high culture', the realm of the *flaneur*, who can "consume and spectate", in what commercialists would consider "a highly desirable type of affluent social activity" (McKinnie 2001:267).

Ballroom dancing, conversely, although requiring practice and knowledge and similarly developing comparably in science and regimentation, had not been relegated to 'high culture' in North America. Unlike ballet, at the turn of the 20th century, ballroom dancing was a social pastime. It was relegated to the realm of social leisure, comprising the 'who's who' of societal gatherings and grand balls. The dances performed were those begun in marginal European society and did not yet include Latin American versions.

When Latin American DanceSport dances were 'discovered' by this social ballroom genre, they were denigrated for their lack of propriety. They were subsequently modified according to ballroom standards and re-taught. The reproduced versions could no longer be termed *social* dances, after their origins. They had joined the *ballroom* dance genre. This chapter explores the assimilation of Latin American social dances into North America and the accompanying variations and misunderstandings resulting from this process.

Because DanceSport in these stages was in transition, its performance context was

unpredictable and varied. It was 'betwixt and between' society at large because of its practice in social milieus other than that of its original. It was assimilated into North American society haphazardly; it crossed structural boundaries unchecked. It was not yet in its current form, but nor was it original. As such, it was contradictory and it remains so to this day. Today it is characterized by marked creative tension – at times struggling to adhere to its ritual past and at times struggling to seek mainstream Olympic status. This chapter seeks out the multiple contexts of DanceSport beginning with its early transmission into North American society and ending with its proximity to mainstream. The significance of this struggle is that while DanceSport enthusiasts seek mainstream in pursuit of higher social status, its controversial nature continues to hold it apart from status and structure. At times it represents both and at others, neither. It can reaffirm social structure and in the same moment reject it entirely. As a result, this chapter will represent DanceSport as two parts of the same whole. In its broader socio-political form, it embodies the 'betwixt and between' of society at large.

2:2 The Ballroom Dance Trend

The "ballroom dance craze" in North America lasted from approximately 1890 to 1914 (Warner 1995:62). The European dances – the hesitation waltz, the minuet, the mazurka – made their way to New France and later to New England with the Europeans 'of consequence', who could afford to spend time planning and preparing to host 60-400 guests at dinner parties (Warner 1995:32). Vernon and Irene Castle, he a British, "elegant" dancer and she his fashionable, American wife, were well-known dance enthusiasts who made their living teaching and performing the latest ballroom dances. They "made these modern dances palatable for upper-class society" by establishing "rules for dancing the new ragtime dances that upheld the virtues of good taste, and their example was enthusiastically followed" (Warner 1995:64).

Desmond writes:

'The husband and wife duo became well-known among the middle and upper classes through their exhibition ballroom dancing and their popular movies... Irene Castle set the standard for fashion and hairstyle.... Performing in elegant dance

clubs and running their own dance school in New York City, they built their reputations on popularizing... social dances that originated in the lower classes.... They 'toned down,' 'tamed,' and 'whitened' [the dances by making them] more upright, taking the bend out of the legs and bringing the buttocks and chest into vertical alignment.... White patrons paid white teachers to learn white versions of black dances' (Desmond 1997:40).

Ragtime music, once exclusive to African-American piano-players in the Southern US, was borrowed and sensationalized by composer Scott Joplin around 1912, and furthered the ballroom dance appeal: "The carefree, upbeat nature of its rhythms became popular with the youth of the early twentieth century, who were searching for ways to distinguish themselves from the tired conventions of their Victorian forebears" (Warner 1995:64). This ballroom dance craze inspired entrepreneurial investors to open countless dance studios by the middle of the twentieth century. Arthur Murray, born in East Harlem in 1895, began teaching ballroom dancing under Vernon and Irene Castle. By 1924, "he not only gave lessons, but ran a profitable mail-order business in dancing instructions, using floor diagrams that he devised. By the 1960s, he had franchised more than three hundred Arthur Murray studios" (Jonas 1998:174). Gerald Jonas writes:

'Entrepreneurs like the Castles and Murray perceived that with new dances becoming fashionable at a rapid rate, the ability to do the latest steps would become important to an ever wider circle of society. Dancing lessons eased the anxiety of thousands as they stepped out onto dance floors' (1998:175).

This popular demand for 'the latest steps' had studio proprietors constantly in search of new material. The search led them to the Latin dances, some of which had taken temporary residence in the interstices and lower rungs of American society, i.e., in *el barrio* of South Bronx and in other enclaves of youth counter-culture. By the mid-twentieth century, the Latin/o dances had reached bars and nightclubs across the world. Delgado and Munoz write:

'Modern technologies of radio and recording facilitated the dissemination of 'national rhythms' such as the tango... the expanding reach of these technologies in conjunction with waves of migration across the Americas – particularly to the US – produced the conditions for transnational soundings and hybrid musical identities' (1997:26).

By the mid-1900s the Latin dances were 'manufactured and reproduced' in mainstream USA

while the 'street versions' remained in the Latin quarter⁵.

Jane Desmond writes, "In most cases we will find that dance forms originating in lower-class or nondominant populations present a trajectory of 'upward mobility' in which the dances are 'refined,' 'polished,' and often desexualized" (1997:39). The result of this process was ballroom dancing. After having been assimilated into European society at large, the British and French steps of the hesitation waltz, the two-step, and the polka were being danced at grand balls and high society soirees in North America. After having been assimilated into American society at large, the Afro-Latin/o *people* were discovering that their Rumba, Cha Cha, Mambo, Bolero, and Salsa moves were being taught at local dance studios. Again, there is a clear variation in form. While the European 'ballroom' dances were status markers represented by their attraction to the *flaneur*, the Latin dances performed by the same people represented a break with tradition. Despite the popular appeal of the dances, North Americans were still struggling with class barriers perpetuated within social paradigms of justification for domination.

As a result of Latin dancing's notorious appeal both on and off the dance floor, scandal and misinformation ravaged the ballroom dance world in North America. The Latin dances were targeted by religious conservatives because of their 'sexual' undertones. Nonetheless, their popularity persisted. Jane Desmond writes:

'So what does it mean for an upper-middle-class Anglo suburban couple in Indiana to dance the tango, or samba, or lambada? On one level, by dancing 'Latin' or 'black' dance styles, the dominant class and/or racial group can experience a frisson of 'illicit' sexuality in a safe, socially protected and proscribed way, one that is clearly delimited in time and space. Once the dance is over, the act of sexualizing oneself through a performance of a 'hot' Latin style, of temporarily becoming or playing at being a 'hot Latin' oneself, ceases. The dance then becomes a socially sanctioned way of expressing or experiencing sexuality, especially sexuality associated with subtle, sensuous rotations of the pelvis' (Desmond 1997:48).

Women could mimic the sensuous moves of Lola 'Cha Cha' de Amor from the Copacabana or Carmen Miranda, the Portuguese 'fruit dancer' from *That Night in Rio* (1941), in the safety of the dance studio, and dance studio owners charged monopolized fees for this 'luxury'. As a result, the dance studios received a highly negative backlash from mainstream conservatives. Judith

⁵ a.k.a. Spanish Harlem, NYC or *el barrio* (the Quarter), in South Bronx, NYC

Hanna offers the following synopsis of the 'ballroom dance studio':

'the studios attract defenseless, lonely people who want primary relations with the opposite sex – affection, trust, reciprocity, and concern with mutual feelings – so badly that they are willing to use studios to buy them' (Hanna 1988:144).

Although today information technology has created a useful flow of relevant DanceSport material, a common audience remains highly effected by such bias. There has been a residual Puritan/Victorian effect left on the minds and bodies of North Americans. For example, Piedra makes note of the "hip' barrier" bias (1997:101). The North American eye catches the African/Latin/a female hip, emphasized and celebrated by the Latin/o people in many of the Latin dances. As a result, the hip is objectified by the North American, and used as a means of class distinction, fueling bias. Victor Turner has also pointed out the "festive, joyful, and playful" nature of ritual performances such as Brazilian Carnival, and laments, "Since the rise of puritanism we have been inclined, in the West, to stress the pervasively solemn and strict character of ritual" (1979:97). In other words, in the puritanist's tendency towards solemnity and rigidity, the carefree and 'anything goes' attitude of celebratory Latin/o rituals is misunderstood and prejudged.

Indications of the lasting effect had by structural conformists are manifested further in the negative image perpetuated by accompanying male ideology. Hanna writes, "[I]n the minds of the broad public, female dancing has been associated with moral laxity; male dancing has been similarly associated, especially with homosexuality" (Hanna 1988:116). The widespread popularity of Latin/o music and dancing has challenged these biases, in a struggle against 'hip' barriers. The challengers were singled out as rebels and non-conformists. Ramsay Burt believes that in the interest of retaining male domination, "it has been considered appropriate for men not to appear soft and not to appear emotionally expressive", conceptions which alienated the male audience and dancer from artistic expression (1995:22). This image had an acute effect on the dance industry. Mark Wheeler notes, "[a] stereoetypical association of dance with male homosexuality is a major factor which discourages many boys and men from taking classes in ballet, jazz, modern, and tap" (1996:25).

Why such a negative backlash? Turner explains:

'It is often believed that the lowest castes and classes in stratified societies exhibit the greatest immediacy and involuntariness of behavior. This may or may not be empirically true, but it is at any rate a persistent belief held perhaps most firmly by the occupants of positions in the middle rungs of structure on whom structural pressures to conformity are greatest, and who *secretly envy even while they openly reprobate* the behavior of those groups and classes less normatively inhibited, whether highest or lowest on the status ladder' (Turner 1974:243 emphasis mine).

The "wild" and 'unpredictable' dancing body, "suspect in its individuality, notoriously prey to temptation and corruption", which had been banned in Cuba 100 years earlier was diminutively less suspicious in North American society in the middle of the twentieth century (Jonas 1992:44). By sullyng the character of DanceSport, those competing for the status quo could deny their own craving for communitas. The issue again was control. Turner:

'There is no doubt that from the perspective of incumbents in positions of command or maintenance in structure, communitas – even when it becomes normative – represents a real danger and, indeed, that for all those, including even political leaders, who spend much of their lives in structural role playing it also represents a temptation' (Turner 1974:245).

At this stage DanceSport development was experimental in character – contradictory. It was not yet 'DanceSport' as we know it today, but nor was it 'ballroom dancing'. It was 'betwixt and between' society at large because it was neither accepted by mainstream nor fully condoned by it. Its increasing popularity eased it out of the shadows, and subjected it to the light and scrutiny of structure. Structural inception was sought by many dance enthusiasts. Dance studios facilitated this link with mainstream by creating and maintaining 'rules' of ballroom dance conformity. The logical consequence of this structural support was the formation of boundaries within the ballroom dance frame. These boundaries formed, within DanceSport, rites of passage into the DanceSport genre.

The dance studio frame attracted mid to upper class members who pursued the 'fun' and 'relaxation' of dancing as an escape from the mundane. As such, dancing for them became a hobby, a pastime which reaffirmed their social status by placing them among wealthy social peers. Simultaneously, there were those in the studio fully intending to escape from this peer pressure by "playing at being a hot Latin oneself", or allowing impulse to overpower poise in the

safe space the studio offered (Desmond 1997:48). Turner writes, "People have a real need [to doff] the insignia of status" (Turner 1974:243). For those marginalists who wanted to pursue ballroom dancing as a performative art, and be mindful of the original dance text, the dance studio was overly structured. Thus the common theme of this thesis is affirmed – a creative tension in the field of DanceSport.

The following section maps the boundaries created by the dance studio ethic. These boundaries represent mainstream forms which subvert marginal expression. The phase of Latin dance assimilation transformed social Latin dances into competitive ballroom dances. Again, variation positioned itself in the DanceSport genre. While some sought ballroom dancing in pursuit of *communitas*, others sought it in a competitive mode, seeking to better their peers in a struggle for status. Dance studios capitalized on the reputation of dancing by increasing administration and control. They encouraged competition by organizing and adjudicating events. As a result, standards were created and enforced. The dances were patented and commoditized which meant wealth and power for the studio owners. Ballroom dance was mutating into capitalist sport. "Free expression" was limited. Competitive tension was creative freedom's damper. From this genre, DanceSport emerged.

2:3 DanceSport

DanceSport's voyage to mainstream donned four key characteristics discussed in this section. They are: athleticism, competition, adjudication, and Olympic inclusion. All four indicate sport regulation, definitive of "capitalist sport" (Budd 2001:6). Capitalist sport, Budd writes, places the "ideological emphasis on aggressive individualism, competition and elitism" (2001:6).

Its identifying factors include:

"specialisation and standardization, bureaucratized and hierarchical administration, long term planning, increased reliance on science and technology, a drive for maximum productivity, a quantification of performance and above all, the alienation of both producer and consumer" (John Hargreaves in Budd 2001:6).

The following locates ballroom dancing so far described and identifies its transmutation towards

mainstream along the above parameters of capitalist sport. Because DanceSport currently embodies creative tension, we will see that the “alienation of both producer and consumer” is the crisis which saves DanceSport from complete assimilation.

While North American ballroom dance studios provided *flaneurs* with a general knowledge of couple-dancing, they also facilitated ballroom dancing’s competitive development. Clients demanded results on the competition floor, driving the teachers to increase their standards. This created a domino effect. As popularity increased, so did the need for organization and regimentation. Standards heightened, so ‘experts’ emerged to purport the ‘proper’ facilitation process and the ‘right way’ to perform dance steps. Curricula were painstakingly formulated by these experts in 500 page written manuals as well as in 2-hour-a-dance video tape demonstrations. Franchised studios copyrighted each phase of the training process for both teacher and student in dance step pattern facilitation. Professional standards for staff and studio management were meticulously transcribed. As a result, staff and students became subject to ‘ruling class’ scrutiny. Judging panels and professional coaches offered criticism at every stage. Ballroom dancing gained recognition in the field, encouraging dance professionals from jazz and ballet to lend their skills to this new athletic form.

‘Standards’ soared. Ballroom dancing became more technical, and enthusiasts dedicated themselves to a strict training regimen. Ballroom dancing therefore claimed a new, more exclusive rite of membership, which could be achieved only by the display of talent and ability that took decades to acquire. A dangerous phase of bodily abuse was launched by the athlete striving to compete⁶. Adrian Budd writes:

‘[S]porting specialization has a disfiguring and constraining effect... female gymnasts, frequently encouraged by state-sponsored coaches, who starve themselves to attain idealized weightlessness... who attempt suicide when they fail to make the grade; all express the horrors of capitalist sport’ (Budd 2001:6).

At this time, Cold War Olympic sport took athletic standards far beyond the natural parameters of

⁶ While undocumented, witnessing dancers starve off unwanted weight or at the very least seeing them stress over the slightest weight gain is well known on a practical level amongst professional competitors in today’s DanceSport.

body discipline and training to the point of state-sponsored pharmaceutical abuse of the body. Professional dancers at the time suffered similar pressure. Gelsey Kirkland, a ballerina training under George Balanchine (NYC ballet and American Ballet Theatre), recounted details of her dancing career in her autobiography *Dancing on my Grave* (1986), writing:

'He [Balanchine] halted class and approached me for a kind of physical inspection. With his knuckles, he thumped on my sternum and down my ribcage, clucking his tongue and remarking, 'must see the bones'.... He did not merely say, 'eat less'. He said repeatedly, 'Eat nothing!'" (quoted in Hanna 1988:130).

Such standards presupposed membership exclusivity, advocating elitist sentiment and class rifts. Those who fell short of the standards were scorned and disdained, pitied, and excluded from membership status. Only the 'most devoted' athlete or dancer became members of this 'imagined community' (Budd 2001:6). Members felt that they could no longer affiliate themselves with 'social ballroom dancers', who were ordinary, and learned to dance simple steps for social purposes. Due to the need for recognition, 'DanceSport' was termed thus in order to pursue a status separate from that of social or ballroom dancing. 'DanceSport' reflects derision to its ballroom association. The association inferred a lesser degree of athletic proficiency, which belittled the efforts of those who trained their bodies and their minds since pre-pubescence to achieve athletic prowess and competitive status.

As a result, a rift developed between the ballroom dance client who wished to learn how to dance for social purposes, and the ballroom dance professional who wished to master the technical skills of dance for the purpose of competition. From the same anti-structural frame, the former sought *communitas* while the latter sought mainstream status. Anti-structuralists were lured by the temptation of structure. To complicate matters, both parties shared the same space – the North American dance studio. Leslie Hall, writing for *Performing Arts and Entertainment in Canada*, herself "an amateur dance enthusiast", writes:

'Most people taking dance lessons are not competitors. They dance for many reasons – for fun, for fitness, to socialize, to listen to wonderful music, and to feel happy. Two typical responses I discovered when I spoke to dance enthusiasts were 'I come alive when I hear the music' and 'The music moves my soul to dance'" (Hall 2000:6).

Desmond, Hanna, and others believe that the North American dance studios provide commodities for consumers, not skills for athletes. Taking dance lessons in a North American dance studio is not inexpensive. Studios in North America target adults with money to spend, separating the desirable students from the non-desirables simply by quoting their price packages.⁷ Dance studios attract the *flaneur*, the ultimate consumer, a particular clientele, who as consumer and spectator, is best apt to fulfill the role of investor (McKinney 2001:267). The importance and relevance of the dance studios is that they create audience members who in turn invest in DanceSport's public image as well as DanceSport's future. As such, competitive teachers rely on the *flaneurs* to supplement their income while they train to compete⁸. These students become audience members, *connoisseurs* who stand in judgement of professional performers. The audience and performer are therefore indelibly linked in an internal power struggle.

For example, the *flaneur*, as audience member, is in a position of power to "either like you or not" (Tarsinov 1997). A professional teacher made subject to this criticism experiences a shift in the balance of power. Richard Schechner writes:

'Who has the 'right' to make evaluations: only people in a culture, only professionals who practice the art in question, only professional critics? Is there a difference between criticism and interpretation? Most artists scoff at critics but accept their praise. These same professionals welcome the criticism of fellow performers when offered in private. What is resented is the public nature of critics' opinions and the power these opinions have to advance or extinguish careers' (Schechner 1985:25).

Once competitive dancing gained a sizable following, there was a correlative increase in criticism. Various factions pursued various agendas. The judging discrepancy reflected the growing derision between rival studios, styles, and schools. Not only were competitors subject to the scrutiny of the *flaneur*, but also were they subjected to their colleagues' opinions, as well as those of the choreographers and coaches who adjudicated professional events. As a result, a hierarchy of administration asserted itself within the DanceSport frame.

⁷ Regular dance lesson rates range from CAN\$99 per hour to \$150 per hour at a franchised dance studio. These 'hours' range from 40 - 50 minutes in length. A 'package' costs from \$2,500 to \$18,000.

⁸ Proper training often requires independent wealth or sponsorship – coaches, costumes, travel, and competition fees can consume upwards of \$50,000 a year just to compete in Canada.

DanceSport's governing body, the IDSF⁹, was formed to cohere the factions within DanceSport. Their self-proclaimed purpose is:

'to attain a wider media awareness of DanceSport competition by improving the image and appeal of DanceSport as well as broadening its membership scope internationally, to support each of its member countries by aiding their administrative and standardization processes, to seek further admittance and recognition under the IOC¹⁰, and to provide international ordinances to regulate and cohere DanceSport competitions worldwide' (01/25/02: www.idsf.net).

The IDSF seeks heightened status in North America by qualifying it either as an Olympic sport or a fine art. The ultimate end to DanceSport's upward mobility would be inclusion in the Olympic games. To date, DanceSport has achieved recognition by the International Olympic Committee, but has not yet gained Olympic status. However, Olympic inclusion is not necessarily the ultimate end of DanceSport's voyage into mainstream. In Europe, it has already attained status similar to ballet, its competitions attracting capacity crowds in auditoriums throughout Europe, Britain, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

This process of assimilation threatened DanceSport's ritual integrity. It was evidenced by DanceSport's increasing compliance with capitalist sport. DanceSport is easy to identify within Hargreaves' parameters of capitalist sport: specialization, standardization, hierarchical administration, drive for maximum productivity, quantification of performance (Budd 2001:6). This DanceSport context was far removed from its original. Status-seeking fervor had reached a crescendo. In one part by the regimentation of dance forms, organizations achieved monetary and administrative control. On another part by the physical self-manipulation of the dancer's body, the dancer achieved competition success and recognition. Consequently, a crisis ensued. The producers found that their material lacked creative freedom. Overcome by technical elements and the need to quantify, the dances lacked 'heart'. Teachers were so consumed with

⁹ The International DanceSport Federation is the world's governing body of DanceSport. Its headquarters are located in Switzerland, where it is presided over by Robert Baumann. The IDSF regulates, coheres, adjudicates, and sponsors DanceSport competitions around the world. Baumann hopes to achieve Olympic status for DanceSport by the 2008 summer games.

¹⁰ International Olympic Committee

training themselves and their students, they forgot to dance¹¹. Consumers as a result were bombarded with messages to buy more dances, participate in more competitions, and bring more guests. The joy of dancing was overlooked. Consequently, the hierarchy of judges, audience members, and competitors questioned the form DanceSport was assuming. Under the onus of artistic integrity, there arose a need to reconnect DanceSport with its inherent link to art, and all things 'social'.

The ensuing critical debate surrounds DanceSport's position as either 'art' or 'sport'. Dissenters believe professional dancing should be 'absolute dance' (Fraleigh 1987:xxv) and conformists would grant it higher status as an athletic sport. Those such as Modern dance guru Mary Wigman, who support the former, view dance as "movement for itself", for its artistic and expressive 'purity' (Fraleigh 1987:xxv). DanceSport practitioners who agree with Wigman purport that heightened competition hinders the movement's artistic essence, and supplants movement-for-itself with movement-for-another. Advocates of movement-for-itself, critical of the showmanship and theatricality of movement-for-another, defy the imposition of curriculum constraints. DanceSport adjudicators reward adherence to conventional curricula, thereby hindering new and innovative choreography from sanction. The resulting incongruity of stylistic interpretation in DanceSport's element artistry represents a sabotage of sorts, through political posturing and maneuvering. These are the infrapolitics of the subordinate class transposed to DanceSport's structural frame, 'taking back the product of [their] labour'. Those under the direction of high-ranking members reassert their power by defying standardization. They open independent studios where new and innovative choreography is encouraged, and seek out the original nature of the dances. They represent a growing faction of ritual adherents.

The movement-for-itself and movement-for-another debate effects DanceSport directly because it represents DanceSport's multiplicity. While individuals dance for themselves, they also

¹¹ Coach and former Canadian Rhythm champion Lola Valair reminds us, as teachers, to keep from obsessing over technical details. After a training session on technique, she insists that we 'just dance to the music'. She warns against taking the soul from the dance. "Don't think about anything", she says, "just dance" (personal communication 07/23/03).

dance for their partners, and subsequently for a third party, the audience, and a fourth party, the judges. In an interview with Russian DanceSport professionals Sergey Ryupin and Elena Khvorova, Eva Allen asked whether she and Ryupin dance for the audience or for the judges, to which Khvorova replied:

'I think I would go for the audience. At the end of the day the result is not everything.... We always feel if they [the audience] are looking at us or other couples. I can not describe how, maybe it's a sixth sense? The energy coming from the crowd is what keeps us going, after all this is what we are doing it for...' (Allen 2002:4).

For performers like Ryupin and Khvorova, who seek *communitas* through DanceSport performance, discrepancies between the high-end status seekers matters little. Their interest lies in preserving the essential creativity and artistry of DanceSport, even though they are part of its structure. For many DanceSport athletes, little changes either their day-to-day routine of training and competition preparation or their passion for the dance that first attracted their interest.

David Best, in *Philosophy and Human Movement* writes:

'It makes sense to suppose that while the context may be important for the spectator, it is the experience itself which is important for the performer, and this is a purely subjective matter which can be understood solely by the performer in isolation from any contextual considerations' (1997:79).

For these dancers, it matters little where the IDSF takes them financially or otherwise, as long as they can continue to express their artistry to an appreciative audience. Taliat Tarsinov, a retired Latin and 10-Dance Champion and New York City studio-owner writes:

'People who have been both judges and spectators at different times, know very well how viewing a particular dance as part of the audience and evaluation of that same dance as a judge, differs psychologically. The many occasions when the judges' placings do not correspond to those of the audience prove the point. In a museum you can appreciate both Matisse and Renoir. The techniques are different – Matisse is color intense and sweeping in brushwork. Renoir's brush just touches the canvas in featherlike strokes. But you are not troubled by the distinction in the technique – you just marvel at human genius' (Tarsinov 1997).

At this point, when the audience experiences this 'marvel' of human genius, they have become engaged, and the interplay of power ceases. In a single instant, DanceSport can transcend the problems interposed by the teacher/student or audience/performer rift. Nevertheless,

competitors are subject to the opinions of judges, and therefore contribute to (as members of) the hierarchy of DanceSport. The fact that while in a structural frame, DanceSport facilitates *communitas* contributes to the overall conclusion that DanceSport is 'betwixt and between'. It is part of society in a structural sense as well as in an anti-structural sense – hence the creative tension.

Turner refers to this duality of structure and anti-structure as a social process. "'Societas', or 'society', as we all experience it, is a process involving both social structure and *communitas*, separately and united in varying proportions" (Turner 1974:238). Further:

'Structure, or all that which holds people apart, defines their differences and constrains their actions, is one pole in a charged field, for which the opposite pole is *communitas*, or anti-structure, the egalitarian 'sentiment for humanity' of which David Hume speaks, representing the desire for a total, unmediated relationship between person and person, a relationship which nevertheless does not submerge one in the other but *safeguards their uniqueness in the very act of realizing their commonness*. *Communitas* does not merge identities, it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion' (Turner 1974:274 emphasis mine).

The needs of the individual clash with societal expectations in a socially-sanctioned ritual space. This is the 'betwixt and between' of the audience/performer dynamic – dance studios provide the players – the audience and performer – and DanceSport provides the stage.

Thus far, DanceSport has been described in its original ritual context and in its subsequent transition to North America. While in its current form it is contradictory in nature, it nonetheless seems to retain its essential connection with ritual integrity through *communitas*. However, the location of DanceSport in society as capitalist sport raises ethical considerations. For example, the commercialization of DanceSport and the subsequent standards administered by the IDSF can be seen as the result of exploitative capitalist interest and bureaucratic commodification. In this view, the term 'DanceSport' itself is a reflection of cultural reconversion, whereby the dominating class 'reforms' the arts of the 'other', re-contextualizing them with new ordinances of value and space (Escobar 2001:84). This commodification is a characteristic of modern sport. Because DanceSport has begged departure from the realm of ballroom dancing, it

has embraced that of sport, and is therefore subject to analysis as such. DanceSport is also subject to the cultural appropriation debacle because of the North American assimilation of Latin/o/African dances. The following chapter views DanceSport as culturally appropriated material and examines the concurrent changes. It examines the Western socio-cultural conditions that led to the indiscriminate borrowing of Latin American ritual material and asks what is missing within current Western society for it to seek ritual material outside its own borders.

CHAPTER THREE

CHANGES IN TRANSMISSION

3:1 Introduction

All reintegrated DanceSport dances are assimilated hybrids of their once-marginal original forms. All 10 dances of DanceSport (Rumba, Cha Cha, Jive, Paso Doble, Samba, QuickStep, Viennese Waltz, Waltz, Foxtrot and Tango) reveal two important similarities: (1), all the dances originated, or were created, *outside* of mainstream, and (2) each dance changed stylistically once *inside* mainstream. Even upon separating the Latin dances from the Smooth dances, there remains a process of upward mobility marked from the inception of the dance to its position in mainstream. This process, which in some cases took up to 200 years, is an example of what Fraleigh refers to as the "cross-cultural assimilation of movement" (1987:87). Conventional movement patterns maintained by the 'dominant' social class reduced the anti-structural essence of the original movements.

Consequently, one wonders what is left of the original dances, if anything. This chapter explores this problem under the pretext of cultural appropriation. To frame this discussion, I will first present the importance of 'due process'. To uphold due process, the mindful and time-consuming consideration of another culture's rituals is required. Due to the endemic lack of such consideration on the part of the North Americans, borrowed rituals in the West tend towards rampant and relatively superficial reproduction. I will briefly discuss what has led to this disavowal of external value systems. I will then use instances in DanceSport practice which lack due process in order to shift perception from what DanceSport does not have to what it has. To do this, for physical understanding I follow Sondra Horton Fraleigh's suggestion to examine transmission changes at the level of body. For mental understanding, I follow Prattis' three levels of reflexivity, which guide intellectual appreciation for the cultural other. By connecting the physical understanding of Latin dancing to the mental understanding of it, I delineate the manner by which due process can be served. This chapter contributes to my overall frame by reaffirming the multifarious nature of DanceSport events, and brings the three-part structure (dance as art,

dance as 'betwixt and between', dance as sport) full circle by ultimately revalidating the ritual efficacy of DanceSport.

3:2 Ritual Poverty

Arguably, cultural appropriation has rid DanceSport dances of authenticity, devalued the spirit by which they were created, and renders them redundant knock-offs of a once powerfully rich symbolic phenomenon. DanceSport's place as competitive capitalist sport in North America today has far removed it from the essential depth it embodied in its original form. Ian Prattis writes:

'In non-industrial societies the underlying mythology, ritual preparation and attention to due process enables initiates to engage safely with archetypal material. This occurs under the guidance of shamans or medicine people who have the requisite knowledge of entire cycles of meaning and of the symbolic transformations involved. Without this kind of knowledge, preparation and guidance, modern day wild man retreats, healing circles, or masking workshops, for instance, may well do more harm than good in terms of releasing unconscious material in circumstances where *nobody has the requisite knowledge or procedures* to facilitate archetypal integration' (2001:47 emphasis mine).

The imperialist onus of seek, conquer, and plunder glorified the acquisition of 'exotic', or 'authentic' cultural materials – things uncorrupted as yet by the process of assimilation. A dominant society emerged who avoided feeling empathy or respect for ritual processes. Prattis points out, as "the heirs to Emerson [we] have traveled from the richness of mythic narrative to the terse paucity of seven-second-sound-bytes", and in the name of bureaucratic efficiency, have cut many a corner in the pursuit of maximum productivity (Prattis 2001:47). Given the short cuts and general lack of tacit knowledge, a profusion of misapplications and exclusions occur. Consequently, the shallow reproductions keep people from "wholly attending" (Turner 1989:128), and they depart the ritual enactment unfulfilled, in search of more. Prattis writes:

'There is a problematic consequence of the deep hunger for ritual in our contemporary society – a civilization that has apparently lost touch with the unconscious, the symbolic significance of myth and with how ritual enactment lead to personal transformation. This hunger has lead to a large-scale and indiscriminate borrowing and appropriation of other cultures' symbols, and to the prolific creation of syncretic ritual – all driven by a deep sadness about the modern world's disconnection from a deeper sense of humanity' (Prattis 2001:46).

In the current West's highly competitive, individualistic consumer society, the retraction of numinosity and morality has left a spiritual void people are struggling to fill (Prattis 1997, 2001, Olaveson 2001). Ritual efficacy, Turner clearly states, is contingent upon sociocentricity, the collective-experiential and integrative socio-functional society, which is an atypical characteristic of North American consumer society. Ritual efficacy invokes a transcendental state, a "unitive consciousness" wherein "all selves are united in transcendental unity" (Haartman 1998:208). Without this, the resultant ritual poverty causes intrapsychic stress. In an attempt to subdue intrapsychic stress, Westerners search for the temporary fix of ritual substitutes. The Western self, saturated with temporary fixes for sale, therefore continues to search for ever-more optimal ritual material because they have ignored the importance of *due process*.

While many factors contribute to North America's resistant adherence to due process in addition to those briefly mentioned above, there are cultural considerations related to DanceSport's performance value I will briefly acknowledge. Because they precipitate the search for ritual integrity, they are an indication of what's missing in North American culture. The problems lie within North American entertainment value and social structure. In North America, art and entertainment are valued according to the intensity of pleasurable, meaningful, psycho-emotive responses they inspire: for most, the greater the depth, the greater the value. Because bureaucracy, commoditization, and mass production results in time constraints, in Prattis' 'seven-second-sound-byte' society, there is a limited amount of substance in North American art and entertainment. This is the dilemma between quality and quantity.

DanceSport, as a communicative visual art, transfers meaning cues through bodily gestures, facial expressions, and symbols, which constitute visual data. This data are recognized subconsciously by the experiential bank of the adaptive human brain (Averbuch 1996, Brown 1999, Laughlin 1995, McCrone 1999, Lowe 1999, Lindquist 1995). As such, they are learned cultural cues. Retained in peoples' memory banks, they act as referents to be consulted in the understanding of future like experiences. If as Laughlin writes, "the natural motivation of the

human brain is toward meaningful experience, rather than toward truth" (1995:12), the brain is genetically inclined to obtain meaningful experience to supply self-optimal information. This information supplies the brain's neural networks with material conducive to the enhancement of subject survival. An individual made subject to his or her learned environment will deem information self-optimal according to societal standards unless a more self-optimal experience is discovered elsewhere. It seems logical then, that if an experience does not provide 'deep meaning' beyond 'surface structure', or entertainment, then the adaptive self will seek more meaningful experience beyond his or her immediate environment. Thus the appeal of DanceSport ritual.

Olaveson writes, "both Durkheim and Turner realized that social structure and the constraints that it places upon people are essentially *alienating*" (2001:108 author's emphasis). The inception of DanceSport into the legitimizing space of mainstream therefore perpetuates the cycle of borrowing. Countries with well-established social structures have perpetual discordance between society and the individual. Social conflict, like liminality, forces people to seek each other out, creating circumstances conducive to the experience of *communitas* and collective effervescence (Turner 1974, Durkheim 1995), but social class conflict has the strength of numbers while individual alienation does not. Individuals feel the pull of structural conformity, but can resist only at the risk of further alienation. Thus they tentatively seek each other out while forbearing alone. The communion they seek fulfills what Turner describes as "a human social need – the need to be fully together with one's fellows and not segregated from them in structural cells" (1974:244). He writes:

'Communitas is, existentially speaking and in its origins, purely spontaneous and self-generating. The 'wind' of existential *communitas* 'bloweth where it listeth'. It is essentially opposed to structure, as antimatter is hypothetically opposed to matter.... Yet exposure to or immersion in *communitas* seems to be an indispensable human social requirement' (1974:243).

Individuals constantly seek regenerative experiences among their like human counterparts. Because the extremes of wealth and poverty in dependent countries facilitate social antagonism, there is a highly dynamic environment conducive to the creation of adaptive ritual material. The

relatively stagnant social structure of dominant countries creates less adaptive material and therefore must look outside themselves to find engaging rituals. Again, in the absence of ritual substance within North America, DanceSport's depth validated outside North America has survivalist value insider rituals lack.

North Americans are therefore starving for *communitas*. Their formal, seven-second-sound-byte system denies them participation in mindful ritual experience. Quick-fixes do not cure their disease. Upon discovering ritual material elsewhere, however, they are exposed to value systems at odds with their own and this experience itself can be enlightening. The following section describes the ideological changes that occurred under the North American tutelage of DanceSport. It calls for a revaluation and redirection of thought. It depicts the North American misperception of Latin DanceSport's body movements and subsequently explains how to avoid making similar transgressions in the future by adhering to due process.

3.3 Paradigmatic Shift

In the absence of material property, there are few resources available to manipulate in order to communicate an assertion of power. In dance, the body is the means by which personalities communicate their beliefs, feelings, dreams, and histories. Delgado and Munoz have written, "The diasporic dancing body becomes the vehicle for the articulation of culture under siege. Dance literally re-members..." (1997:17). Dancers in this context symbolically repossess the material property that was denied them. Capoeira, for example, "produced a microcosm of the festival of the oppressed in which the dispossessed could reclaim some control over their own bodies" (Budd 2001:13). As such, the power of the body as symbol conveys the identity, knowledge, and meaning of self and text through choreographed discourse (Piedra 1997:102).

Desmond, in noting the social trajectory of DanceSport's Latin dances ('upward mobility'), calls for an examination of the concomitant trajectory of body motion. She writes:

'An analysis of appropriation must include not only the transmission pathway and

the mediating effects of the media, immigration patterns, and the like, but also an analysis *at the level of the body* of what changes in the transmission' (Desmond 1997:40 author's emphasis).

Although I agree with the importance of realizing how the transmission of the dances changed stylistically, and that this change is evidenced at the level of body, I disagree with Desmond's and other authors' penchant for allowing dance analysis to linger in terms of sexuality and racial distinctions, which are granted far too much undue attention. This section is written in part to dispel such misconceptions, in the hopes of granting a more fundamental truth in telling the story of DanceSport.

Desmond characterizes changes in form as the "desexualization" of the dances, evidenced by a "less percussive thrusting, undulation, or rotation" of the pelvis, the more upright, apart frame held between partners, and the closure of the woman's thighs (Desmond 1997:40). She believes that Latin dances popularized in America were "promoted in terms of [their] sexual allure" and hybridized as "Anglo-Latin" (Desmond 1997:43). From a process of codification and stylization "evidenced by their canonical inclusion in social dance classes and in national ballroom dance competitions", the dances became "sensual rather than sexual", more "sophisticated" and "whitened" versions of "hot Latin" or "black" dances (Desmond 1997:43, 48).

Above I have mentioned the repressive reaction had by church members, administrators, and leaders when confronted with the 'scandalous' contortions made by the bodies of 'others'. It is unnecessary to reiterate the ideological remnants on the psyche of North Americans left by the stigma of religious -isms.¹² In the example of Samba above, I noted that it began as a rebellion against Catholicism, but if I were to present it not as a rebellion *against* something but as a celebration *for* something, a very different perspective is engendered.

So, too, with the other DanceSport dances. For example, rather than viewing a Rumba performance as 'hot', 'sexy', or 'scandalous', and assuming its purpose is to communicate a definition of what 'hot' and 'sexy' is, Rumba can instead be viewed by the story it tells, its covert

¹² i.e. Puritanism, dogmatism, fundamentalism

meaning as told by two people celebrating their love. In the dialogue between pursuant male and resistant female, he makes an overture, she shies away: he approaches her and she flees only to finally return his embrace in celebration of their love.

Piedra writes of this dance: "Practically any dictionary definition or discursive application of the rumba is relatively colored by race, tainted by ethnicity, blushed by sexism, and reeking with classism" (1997:99-100). This is an example of how a lack of due process causes North Americans to miss the point when they make value assumptions based on superficial, external visual observations, and how performers similarly miss the point when they respond to such value assumptions by offering shallow performances. Despite rumba's voyage from marginal to mainstream, a common audience persists in spreading biased images of underprivileged Afro-Caribbean men and women giving a lusty rendition of sex-play to music. Indeed the sexuality in this dance is teasingly patterned after a "me-Tarzan-you-Jane" scenario, drawing the North American eye to what Piedra refers to as the "offensively overt 'killer' of women" – the *hip*, but sexuality and the "male marketing of third-world women" is nevertheless *not* the intended message or purpose of the dance (Piedra 1997:101-102). Eliade writes:

'A work of art only reveals its meaning insofar as it is regarded as an autonomous creation; that is, insofar as we accept its mode of being – *that of an artistic creation* – and do not reduce it to one of its constituent elements... or to one of its subsequent uses (a poem which carries a political message...)' (Eliade 1969:6 author's emphasis).

In the closing embrace of the traditional Rumba, the dancers have told their history, communicated their identity, and taken the viewer to a different time and place, where value judgments and love barriers do not exist and cannot hinder natural expression. Piedra calls this a "well-balanced power play" between man and woman, an "aesthetic/ethic-stretching, Other/Self exchange of moves", and "an egalitarian form of poetics" (Piedra 1997:105). This is the substance of the dances; they defy superficiality and imbue depth. What Piedra attends to in depicting Rumba as both an emblem of empowerment in one context and a symbol of harmony in another, is the discrepancy of meaning in dance expression.

Discrepancies occur during the process of cultural exchange, when known notions are

affixed to those of the unfamiliar. Lindquist views this process in terms of 'cognitive mapping', which serves to "incorporate and organize experience as it occurs" (Dunn 1999:73). In an attempt to conciliate one experience with another, subjects become susceptible to other "models or frames of reference" (Dunn 1999:73). Those incapable of overcoming existing ideological modes of thought are flummoxed by lingering psychological inhibitions left by religious ideological inculcation. For example, my upbringing was so conservative, that to perform a pelvic or hip rotation¹³, I had to mentally and physically deconstruct social value givens in order to reconcile myself with the movement. My first attempts were blushing forced, and in my awkwardness I struggled to maintain composure. To overcome this discomfort, I could not consider the terms 'sexy' or 'lewd' to be in any way associated with my actions. This reconciliation eventually changed my point of view, a requirement which contributed to my overall learning process by opening my mind to other frames of reference. The incorporation of variant points of view is therefore a necessary process which must be undertaken.

Desmond claims that the rotation of the pelvis was lessened and the space between partners increased, calling this a 'whitening' of the dance. Assumedly, ideological inhibition delayed the learning process and tainted the end result. Preliminary attempts to recreate this movement through imitation undoubtedly fell short of the real thing; the actual movement takes years to perfect. During this time, a reckoning must be reached between what is known and what is unknown. Rather than viewing this process as a means of desexualization, it can instead be seen as a result of the cross-cultural exchange of aesthetic value systems. In this way, the middle ground conceived of during the process of understanding will infuse into the dance an adaptation of both cultures forged into one movement.

Aside from changing mental preconceptions to facilitate learning, habitual body movements must also be reevaluated. To learn the dances requires an isolation of parts. For example, I recall my own inhibitions in learning how to move my body in a manner I previously

¹³ The characteristic lateral motion of the hips in Latin and Rhythm dancing is called Cuban Motion, and is caused by the bending and straightening of the knees.

termed seductive or sexy – psychologically, I could not just ‘move’ this way in a formal setting. To me, professional and sexy did not correlate, particularly when teaching students who knew less about the movement than I did. Without the careful dissection and isolation of each part – how far to bend my knee, how many degrees to rotate my hip, where to distribute my body weight, how to use floor/partner pressure to develop dimension – I could not separate a specific body movement from its socially-constructed derogatory association and nor could my student. By reducing each move to a technical pattern, I redefined it conceptually, and allowed my body to ‘properly’ dance it (Journal entry 11/18/00).

Without this formalization, and codification of contents, preconceptions too readily persist. In dance training, particularly when teaching adults, there is a process through which physical boundaries created by ideological dispositions must be overcome. Because body parts have functioned daily with little conscious manipulation, in habitual strides, gestures, and weight exchanges, to take on new forms requires the isolation of each part in order to re-entrain learned inclinations. The entraining process, while contributing to the hybridization and transformation of dance, simultaneously injects innovative contents and meanings into the dance. The closure of the thighs for the woman is an example, as is the pointing of the toe, and a higher, more straightened body line, alterations all conducive to a known, formalist, linear body-line aesthetic familiar to ballet. Although not necessarily natural, subject most certainly to training and expertise, such alterations are representative not of blatant attempts to ‘whiten’ or ‘tone down’ movements, but rather represent the incorporation of traditional, shared value aesthetics into the dance. To call this a ‘whitening’ of the dance is to deny the existence of an alternative aesthetic value system. The injection of known body movements removes the fear of unknown elements while simultaneously coming to terms with alternate notions of value.

Because of this process, I agree with Febres, who believes that “geographical limits of the nation” are superseded through Latin/o dances such as salsa, because this cross-cultural sharing forms new communal values based on positive information exchange (1997:186), and I agree also with Firmat, who writes that this exchange creates an “eccentric space... where North meets

South, where Ricky loves Lucy, and where mambo kings play songs of love forever" (1997:252). This is not to assume that attitude exchanges and value judgements desist altogether under the auspices of intercultural exchange, but it certainly provides an avenue for good intention and enrichment, and this avenue is obtainable within the DanceSport context.

While maintaining North American aesthetic value by rewarding long lines, weightlessness, and shape, DanceSport also rewards expression, sincerity, and story-telling. Although the body is the medium used to tell this story, it cannot do so through mimicry alone. The mind of the dancer must also be engaged by the text, making the conceptual separation of mind and body paramount to its understanding. Fraleigh writes:

'Part of the dancer's power lies in her ability to objectify, to visualize herself as she may appear to others, to make herself into the dance she visualizes. The dancer objectifies her body, and herself – but in a curious and unique sense that I can describe best in terms of self evidence. The dance is distanced from me as an object when I visualize it or seek to convert it into my own movement. The object dissolves when I achieve my intentions in motion. My awareness changes as I become the dance, reminding me that the significance of my dance – its signifying power – depends on the inescapable lived moment of its execution in which I experience my body as subject (myself) and object (the dance), simultaneously' (1997:37).

When context and conception are balanced, and mind and body are fused to create and perceive the dance text, the concept of misappropriation is dissolved. To illustrate what this means to DanceSport, the following section will draw upon Fraleigh's discussion of the dancing body's 'vital movement', and Prattis' three levels of reflexivity, which I will relate to conceptual awareness and empathetic knowledge. Since the dancing body undergoes self-objectification as a training procedure, so too does the mind undergo reflexive training. Both procedures connote various stages in the practice and theory of the process of understanding (due process).

3:4 Empathy and Interiority

DanceSport, seen as an art, an athletic sport, or as a creative outlet and ritual communicating archetype, history, and spirituality, is considered thus on the basis of its contextual manifestation. In this manner, the 'upward mobility' inferred by DanceSport is not

only a social mobility, but also a mobility of understanding. Lack of due process creates contradictory messages at individual mental and physical levels. This duplicity can be examined in terms of reflexive levels of mind and body. Empathetic depth as contingent upon knowledge and experience of due process determines the ability of the mind to understand the ritual and the ability of the body to recreate the ritual. The disparity of context concurs with a disparity in conception, which in turn is an indication of the level of adherence to due process. The extent to which an assimilating culture obtains fulfillment from their ritual context is interdependently linked to the individual's adherence to due process. The mobility of understanding, required for the adherence to the due process of DanceSport ritual, is attained through reflexivity. Prattis delineates this vital process by offering three levels, made relevant by his pragmatic approach to the importance of transcending personal boundaries in an effort to understand the cultural and ethnographic 'other' (Prattis 1995:3).

In the first, 'exploitative' level, the realm of the cultural other is invaded by a questioning outsider. Prattis describes this relationship as "unidirectional", in that all information gleaned by the anthropologist is controlled by his or her research goals, and as such mirrors back and reaffirms the "biases, presuppositions, interests and personal epistemology of the observer" (1995:5). The second level, of intersubjectivity, involves an awareness of "the constraints on perception and knowledge production" of the self as well as the other (1995:7). This engenders an acknowledgment of intercultural variation and invokes relativity, cooperation, and mutual respect. At the third level of reflexivity, termed "interiority", the anthropologist has "engaged with the cultural other... expressing this engagement in the symbolic language of poetry" (1995:9). At this level, the anthropologist and cultural other are in collusion; they recognize the value of one another's insights and understandings, and join together to form a new understanding.

In dance training, the body and its parts follow comparable stages. As noted by Fraleigh, the dancer undergoes a process of objectification, first by objectifying the body in order that its parts may be manipulated to create a visual whole. The dancer then forms a conceptual

connection with the objectified entity by ceasing to manipulate its parts in order to operate in tandem with its parts. In the final stage, the dancer's mind and body, as one, merges with the purpose of the dance. In this final stage social mores are transcended by symbolic space/time and the objectification process has become redundant.

Reflexivity such as this requires the consideration of one's existential self through the acknowledgment and comparison of the information sequences and constructions of others. However, as understood in the ethical consideration of research practices, the disposition of the researcher, or observer, often dictates the level of understanding. Many will find the transition from 'exploitative' to 'intersubjective' self-defeating, and will choose apathy over engagement to avoid the honesty imbued by self reflection. There is thus a plenitude of levels of understanding, all contingent upon the individual disposition of the investigator as per his or her willingness to uncover personal and societal obstructions of ideological indoctrination not yet neither affirmed nor disproved by experience. Therefore the self-schema of the investigator who is observing the dancing body are fundamentally affected by his or her previous experience and knowledge of dancing because certain cognitive-emotive states cannot be reached without them.

The non-dancer, for example, views an idealized, illusory and picturesque dancing performance and assumes it is done with ease because to him/her, the dancers seem to float effortlessly across the floor. At this level, kinesthetic empathy will not incur muscle tension or teeth gritting in anticipation of particular moves, but will instead incur a light, balanced and almost airborne feeling. If this observer attempted to imitate the dancer's movements, the result would be disappointing, which had she or he not attempted it, would have perpetuated his or her previously illusory and idealistic view of dancing. For DanceSport ritual reproduction to occur, then, a reflexive process must have been undergone in order to first learn the motions of the body-of-other, and then to reproduce them in the body-of-self.

To learn the dancing movements of another, imaginative assumptions are made as to how the movement is achieved. What one notices about the movement is determined by the aesthetic expectations and assumptions held in the mind of the viewer. If viewed at the first

level of reflexivity, as exploitative, the learning process would be characterized by an affirmation of cultural biases and 'expected' motions. At this exploitative body-of-other stage, Desmond's "act of sexualizing oneself" by "temporarily becoming or playing at being a 'hot Latin' oneself" forms the basis of the experience as body-of-other (Desmond 1997:48). It is exploitative in that a sincere attempt at understanding the body-of-other is not made, but rather avoided in the pursuit of gaining a novel, daring experience of the exotic. It is 'unidirectional' in that the informant is used to give information, but receives no feedback.

Viewed as a model representing the whole, the informant's movements are painstakingly copied and recorded as standard. Often the informant's data reflect traditional versions of a discrepant dance step that may no longer be either practiced or recognized. If the exploiter were to perform these dances, he or she would be incapable of viewing him or herself from the outside; even though he or she is exerting great effort and feels effective, often his or her movements appear forced, certain body parts exaggerated, movement out of synch, nonparallel or unbalanced. The energy of the body and focus of the mind is projected inward rather than outward, and unable to dance for an outside audience, the dancer is self-absorbed and uncertain.

The body-of-self at this level reproduces dances by exploiting his or her body parts. Each part is separated and seen as foreign, subject to drill and forced manipulation. Fraleigh writes that because the body must be trained, it "is then conceived mechanistically, as a thing to be whipped, honed and molded..." (Fraleigh 1987:11). The dancer must therefore objectify his or her body in a manner by which the parts are feared for their power and revered for their potential. The picture the dancer hopes to attain with his or her body is an external image reproduced by the exploitation of specific body parts. The image is culture-bound and complies with an expected aesthetic standard. The dancer has made assumptions as to the pliability of his or her body parts. Because limbs do not easily move in the intended direction, manner, or with necessary force, the dancer must manipulate their structure and musculature to create the desired position, similar to the way a researcher manipulates data in order to reach a desired conclusion. What the dancer's body lacks is what the researcher's mind is also missing –

empathy. The body positions of the dancer can be forced independently but not yet within the moving dance, and the researcher can force conclusions but cannot fluently converse. This mobility of understanding, or lack thereof, represents the understanding of the mind at this stage – the reflexive individual exploits the body-of-other as well as the body-of-self uni-directionally.

In the second stage of intersubjectivity, the knowledge of the body-of-other is increased through relativity, cooperation and mutual respect (Prattis 1995:8). The text behind the motions emerges in the understanding of the researcher, and an active attempt is made to hear what it is saying. Because residual layers of cultural conditioning are recognized, the researcher can accept variant roles and informatively reproduce them in dance patterns. A respect for the variations in character depiction encourages an acknowledgement of purpose. Intersubjectivity allows the researcher to share experiences with the body-of-other, offering a reciprocal relationship based on mutual understanding. Because the researcher has a more profound comprehension of the body-of-other, it looks and feels less foreign, and cultural similarities are noticed. The reproduced dances, although imperfect, appear more natural, less forced, and evince meaning.

An intersubjective body-of-self gains cohesion and body flow. The objectification of body dissolves as the mind and body of the dancer become one. With this fusion, the dancer projects fluidity in motion, continuity in body-line, and appears balanced and poised. The dancer is aware of how his or her body appears to the audience, aware of the lines and shapes his or her body creates at various angles and during various stages of the dance, and is able to fuse the movements together with the spirit and timing of the music. Although the dancing body-of-self performs rhythmically and extraordinarily, the dancer is not yet communicating symbolically. A story line is evident, but because the dancer is yet consciously aware of his/her external image, neither the dancer nor the audience member can be conceptually engaged by the story being danced.

At the level of interiority, the body-of-other is no longer seen as foreign or unknowable, but as a like human counterpart, whose existence, perseverance and attunement is respected.

Intellectually, this level infers a radical break with traditional, cultural notions of what it means to be an 'other' because the researcher has been empathetically engaged by the body-of-other in the dialogue of the dance. The purpose of body-of-other dance has been made abundantly clear to the researcher through his or her experiential participation in the dance ritual. By having been engaged as audience member, the researcher has been kinesthetically involved in the dance text, and has attained a state of mind reflective of universal awareness. Because the researcher can be lured into a transcendental state, he or she will depart the ritual experience with a new knowledge of human potential, and will have experienced the 'lived body'. Fraleigh writes:

'Our collective embodiment is most clearly demonstrated in dance. The art of dance draws upon both the personal and the universal body – tending, I believe, toward the latter as it becomes a source for communion, testifying to our bodily lived existence, our mutual grounding in nature, and our shared bodily acculturations' (Fraleigh 1987:xvi).

The story told by the dance through the body has enlivened the dancer who will subsequently become one with the body-of-other through this mutually shared mind/body experience.

The body-of-self at the reflexive level of interiority supercedes normal parameters of time and space. Because the dancer has already become one with his or her body, the dance text can be internalized and therefore expressed by a dancing body unconcerned with spatio-temporal limitations. A new purpose emboldens the dancer, providing body dialogue with delimited text. During performance, the dancer *is* the dance, as well as the archetype being represented, and the conscious manipulation of body and its parts is overcome by extraordinary content. Fraleigh writes:

'Because dance is in essence an embodied art, the body is the lived (experiential) ground of the dance aesthetic. Both dancer and audience experience dance through its lived attributes – its kinesthetic and existential character. Dance is the art that intentionally isolates and reveals the aesthetic qualities of the human body-of-action and its vital life' (Fraleigh 1987:xiii).

As such, the driver which compels the mind to seek meaningful experience in dance is temporarily satiated by participation in DanceSport ritual, particularly that which is experienced by a reflexive researcher at the level of interiority. DanceSport ritual recreated at previous levels, lacking due process, will fail to do justice to the spirit of the dance, and may thus be considered

wrong. Fraleigh writes:

'There is no moral imperative here. Yet, curiously, these words [right and wrong] apply. When I make a dance, I search for the right movement. When I perform, I want to get it right.... That which moves us in dance must be well done' (Fraleigh 1987:34,35).

3.5 Accountability

We assume ourselves knowledgeable about the cultural 'others' we study.

Indiscriminately we reproduce their rituals, and record their customs as though they were our own. If they were to hold us accountable for all our reproductions and theories about that which we have limited personal experience of, how true to form would we be?

We are obliged to follow due process. In an attempt to gain knowledge of this due process, several important and unavoidable stages must be undergone by both body and mind. As an individual cultivates a reflexive mind, so the mind cultivates a reflexive body by isolating and re-entraining its parts. The empathetic understanding of the mind must be entrained as per the historical experience of the other, and the kinesthetic feeling of the body must be entrained as per the textual dialogue of the other. When this is achieved, thought and movement become synchronized to create an extraordinary, engaged 'lived body'. Only by following this time-consuming due process, which for the majority of dancers takes decades, will the offensive, overtly emphasized 'hip' movement of the inexperienced be underplayed in the pursuit of depth, narration, and wholeness.

CHAPTER FOUR

DANCESPORT RITUAL

"Given the shortcuts, lack of attention to preparation and due process in symbolic appropriation, is it then possible in the modern world to create meaningful symbolic systems that serve the interests of transformation and societal change?"-Prattis 2001:47-48

4:1 Introduction

To identify DanceSport's relation to ritual process and its effectiveness within this context, it must coincide with the contextual parameters of ritual before it is identified as either efficacious or infelicitous. Frederick Bird (1995) has compiled such parameters using the combined works of ritual analysis by Durkheim, Freud, Weber, Eliade, Bourguignon, Levi-Strauss, and others, insisting that "no one hermeneutical strategy suffices to make sense of ritual behaviour" (Bird 1995:50). Bird provides five dimensions of ritual communication that "can also be used as reference points for evaluating and comparing actual ritual performances" (Bird 1995:45). These are: "(1) constitutive; (2) self-representative; (3) expressive; (4) regulative; and (5) invocative" (Bird 1995:45).

First, as constitutive, ritual performances "constitute or reconstitute social reality", they "cement relationships, bring about desired states of mind and foster sentiments" (Bird 1995:45). Second, ritual performances, as self-representative, are self-acknowledging relative to Durkheim's moral self, and to the extent that the performance connects script to participant. The genuine actor is one whose connection to "animals, gods, or mythical ancestors" is strongest, as opposed to one whose connection flounders due to either a misunderstanding of script (it is too adaptive), or an overused script (not adaptive enough). Third, an expressive ritual performance engages the audience in an expected form. Bird says that too little expression is boring and too much is distracting, in which case the ritual is moot because it has defeated its purpose of being both engaging and communicative. There are understood rules that permit a predetermined, harmonious degree of expression, perpetrated "by using words and gestures that are standardized yet special and symbolic, not casual" (Bird 1995:47).

Fourth, the regulative ritual performance neither adheres too firmly with regimentation

(too didactic), nor with flamboyancy (too sensationalized):

'An effective ritual performance is one in which the aesthetic and moral dimensions are balanced and the ritual takes place on its own terms; an ineffective ritual performance is one in which either dimension subverts the other due to a preoccupation with artful staging or moralistic utility' (Bird 1995:47).

Fifth, an invocative dimension of ritual performance is met through the "symbols and gestures used to address sacred realities", which must be held "both distant and exclusive but also accessible under specific circumstances" (Bird 1995:47). They lose their aura, their engaging, sacred qualities when they become too familiar, prosaic, or when they are used for political purposes.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, the creative tension in DanceSport is verified by an acknowledged 'official' function of DanceSport performance as well as by its simultaneous, 'unofficial', and experiential function. Second, DanceSport's ritual integrity is verified under Bird's definitional parameters mentioned above. Third, I will not only apply DanceSport to Bird's five dimensions of ritual performance, but also to the dance theories of noted anthropologists Peterson-Royce, Hanna, Prokosch-Kurath, Fraleigh, Kaeppler, Keali'inohomoku, and others. This collusion broadens the theoretical scope of DanceSport and qualifies it within the anthropology of human movement.

4:2 Constitutive

As constitutive, DanceSport is conducive to societal cohesion by uniting people through shared experience. The artistic element of DanceSport evokes "collective effervescence", or "communitas", identified by Durkheim and Turner as the ultimate feeling of community. Turner writes:

'The notion that there is a generic bond between [people], and its related sentiment of 'humankindness,' are not epiphenomena of some kind of herd instinct but are products of '[people] in their wholeness wholly attending' (Turner 1989:128).

An engaging performance of DanceSport ensures audience participation to the extent that a 'wholeness' is felt, but this feeling varies according to context. Although none of my colleagues

or students with whom I have discussed this would liken their experience to religious or numinous phenomena, they do use descriptors such as "exciting", and "escapist"; they feel "energy", "force", and "fun". A student I'll call Joe likened his first four dance lessons to "a roller-coaster ride". When dancing as part of a performance, inexperienced dancers tend to become so lost in the moment, that they have no conscious thought. In my journals, writing of my first few performances, I recorded feeling "larger-than-life", "taken-away", and "blissful" to the point that ordinary thought ceased and all I heard when performing was the beat of the music, but these describe my earlier dance performances only. In them, I was more carefree; dancing was fun, not work. As I gained technical skill, was familiarized with the dances in their historical context, and became more aware of my body parts and their functions (arms, toes, centre, rib cage, facial expression, connection), my dancing became more of a production and less of an 'anti-production'.

Because structure has supplied me with an acute awareness of audience, I have the means to affect the audience. Similarly with Ryupin and Khvorova, mentioned above, who while forming part of DanceSport structure, simultaneously seek and inspire *communitas*. Their performance is deemed a success when they feel that they have engaged the audience. Thus, in facilitating an escape from structure, they have regained the performance's anti-structural essence. A recent article by Tim Olaveson illustrates this ritual bipolarity. "Ritual thus performs a constraining function in society" while at the same time "implies a dissolution of regular social and normative structures" (Olaveson 2001:98, 102). Without this "re-creative effervescence", he writes, "religion and society would become listless or die" (2001:102).

Concurrent with Judith Hanna's definition of dance, the dancer's movements, despite following somewhat predictable patterns within textualized social circumstances, holds "charismatic quality... moving from an ordinary state of being to another realm of perception" (Hanna 1979:37). The 'existential flow', or action, of dancing, which binds the dance to the dancer (Hanna 1979:3), surpasses culturally-bound constructs by being limitlessly experiential. Engaged participants feel 'psychosomatic affectation', and 'kinesthetic empathy' (Hanna 1979,

Peterson Royce 1977, Prokosch-Kurath 1960, Kaeppler 1972, Keali'inohomoku 1967, Fraleigh 1987, Averbuch 1996). Peterson Royce writes:

'Dance is one of the most effective vehicles for psychological release because its instrument is the human body. Feedback is instantaneous and catharsis immediate for both the dancer and the observer' (1977:81).

In a scheduled DanceSport event, the performers are the object of attention, inhabiting the perceptual field of the audience. This constitutes an aesthetic experience, or aesthetic perception, identified by Merleau-Ponty as:

'no less active than ordinary sense perception [but taking on] a particular kind of value, which accrues from a subjective process set into motion when we are struck by the outstanding qualities of some object' (Fraleigh 1987:62).

An audience member "marveling at human genius", experiences an active involvement of aesthetic process (Tarsinov 1997). Roman Ingarten refers to this aesthetic experience as an "inner performance", wherein the audience member, undergoing a process of sense perception, is no longer preoccupied with the utility or 'official' function of an object, but has passed from "perception of the real object to phases in which we become occupied with something that enriches our life and confers upon it a new sense" (Fraleigh 1987:63). The recognition of "outstanding qualities" is termed "vital movement sensibility" by Fraleigh, described as the aesthetic "stasis" in dance, which "includes the bodily lived sensibility of both the dancer and the audience. It is the basis for the realization of the dance between them" (1987:61). This formal performance context accrues a self-optimal experience, and engenders *communitas* in DanceSport ritual.

In a less formal performative context of DanceSport, the experiences of the dancers, whether professionals or amateurs, has less 'depth' and more 'fun'. For example, an informal gathering of dance students may take place at a restaurant or ballroom designed for dining and dancing. Although there is no formal structure or leadership in this situation, there are rules of inclusion. One can always identify the 'dancers' in a crowd, i.e. a couple who conspicuously demonstrates 'school figures', generic basic movements taught in most dance schools. As such, they are reaffirming their affiliation with each other, and experiencing community. In this case,

the people involved will probably say they are just going out to have fun, to practice their moves, or to socialize. Dancing frees them from the preoccupations of daily living, as an escape from the mundane, and by dancing, they express with their bodies what they cannot with words. When dancing, they regain the nostalgic, childlike carelessness they once knew. In this case, they are free to 'play'. Budd writes:

'Play enables a reconnection with, and integration of, ourselves without fear of social disapproval, a rediscovery of childhood intoxication with the joys of contact with the elements and the body, of improvising its shape, running 'til we drop, jumping for joy' (2001:15).

This physical release is liberating; heavy breathing increases blood flow and oxygenation, and people *feel* better. When bodily expression is elicited in lieu of verbal expression, the subsequent cathartic release improves brain schemata. Hillman et al write, "the affective engagement to emotionally arousing material elicits positive cortical waves... [and prompts] enhanced processing" (2001:15). As an adaptive, 'meaningful experience', dancing in this context fills in varying degree the void left by ritual poverty. Thus informal performances of DanceSport differ in ritual efficacy than formal performances, but both inspire a sense of community, identity, and shared emotion.

4:3 Self-Representative

Turner identifies a human being as *Homo performans*, "a performing animal", whose performances are reflexive, allowing an individual to self-reveal, and to generate self-revelation to others (Turner 1986:81). In order to be representative, one must be able to identify with the part being played. This identity, even when assumed briefly, not only connects performer to audience, but also performer to performer. Relative to previous experience, the deeper the connection, the more 'meaningful' the performance.

A performer at the level of intersubjectivity not only elicits empathy, but also the opportunity to be a moral actor, even if only briefly. Charles Hillman et al, noting the work of S. L. Jackson (1988) write:

'People often develop an intense personal interest and emotional involvement in athletic contests and actively *share* in the event's proceedings. That is, they invest some amount of financial, emotional, personal, and *collective* identity in the competition' (2000:13 emphasis mine).

When life-long training has come to the fore, and the dreams and careers of performers are in peril, the back stage is rife with hostility and tension. However, at stage front, the performers self-represent as moral, ethical actors, reinforcing the moral identity of audience, and thereby injecting DanceSport with ritual efficacy.

While performing, ordinary space-time becomes blurred, and conscious preoccupations dissipate (Turner 1989, Boyd and Williams 1999). Mutual hostility is momentarily forgotten, while an ideal, virtuous persona is portrayed by performers. Sometimes physical contact between performing couples momentarily compromises this transcendence, i.e., when the performing space of one couple infringes on that of another, but the performer is expected to ignore or humour such a situation rather than react negatively. Rules of engagement forbid emotional outbursts until the performance is complete and a winner is announced, and contrary to the film, *Strictly Ballroom*, malicious sabotage on stage cannot happen without compromising the very rules of engagement, in which case, the violator will be shunned and persecuted.

In this manner, despite the emotion of DanceSport competitions, the audience is nonetheless infused with feelings of identity that they share with other audience members. To further this feeling, the performance connects script to participant through vicarious self-representation. The opiate effect once had by religion is now had by sport (Budd 2001:15).

Mary Douglas, also making reference to the Western psyche, believes that ritual provides scripts for the social interaction between individuals: "ritual fosters the expression of feelings wherever people would otherwise be likely to babble or remain inarticulate" (in Bird 1995:32). In a society that engenders suspicion between individuals, un-scripted interaction is terse and strained; conversation between strangers in public is diligently avoided (public transportation, the grocery store, passing strangers on a sidewalk). By providing rules of engagement, DanceSport transcends estrangement. It provides symbolic language, and those familiar with it exchange

information in order to mutually reinforce their status and claims. In being both engaging and communicative, DanceSport provides an atmosphere conducive to societal adaptation. In extreme cases, when there is either too little expression or too much, indeed the function of the ritual has been compromised, and the process is futile. Grimes writes that as "definitional not moral", the critical parameter of ritual in this context "comes from [ritual participants'] ability to articulate, not their ability to prove or coerce" (1990:208). Mary Douglas and Thomas Scheff, Bird notes, recognize that social adjustment and adaptation are facilitated through ritual, as they are through DanceSport.

4:4 Expressive

Boyd and Williams discuss the purifying power of ritual, presupposing that purity in its natural state cannot be re-attained but recovered through "the removal of polluting factors" (1999:46). They write:

'...since liminality is a distinct and wide-spread power of ritual art, and since it creates an extra-mundane effect, it shares with formal and virtual features a similar relation to the idea of purity. Liminal phases of ritual are experienced as compelling and out-of-the-ordinary, with their own sense of time and space. The participants return from them as from a journey. More importantly, because liminal experience involves temporarily stripping away some of the normal social ties and conventions, it is a fitting representation of purification-as-recoverable. Though one does not live permanently in a liminal state, it can afford a glimpse of a more fundamental level of community not encumbered by convention, hypocrisy, or undue self-interest' (1999:47).

By participating in a DanceSport performance, both audience and performer shed the societal constructs that separate individuals from their collective human identity. Boyd and Williams call this "recoverable purity". I consider these 'polluting factors' ego-centric, individualist paradigms generated by Western society which protect the self by alienating the other. What an 'extra-mundane' experience signifies is an escape from this daily struggle between individuals. The individualistic Western paradigm dislocates group identity by peddling get-rich-quick schemes, self-improvement, psychotropics, self-armament, etc., in an endless appeal to the desire for individual power. 'Ritual poverty' is prolonged by shallow quick-fixes which elicit an escape from

intra-psychic stress, but not a cure. A 'meaningful' ritual for the Western self is that which not only provides self-optimal experience to soothe the wounds of selfish living, but one which eases the psychological adjustment to selfish living.

Thomas Scheff, in accordance with authors Hazzard-Gordon, Scott, Desmond, Delgado and Munoz, Firmat, Febres, etc., points out that "ritual enables people to acknowledge and express feelings in ways that avoid the extremes of having to repress them or of allowing them to become overwhelming" (in Bird 1995:32). Scheff's premise differs from those of the other authors because he is referring to the emotional distress of the individual, Western psyche bound by societal conventions. He offers further, "rituals often facilitate the cathartic release of distressing feelings by actions that allow those involved to retain a strong sense of themselves as individuals" (in Bird 1995:32). With the cognitive-affective power of DanceSport, the psychological stress experienced daily is diffused through the purification of such "polluting factors".

Hillman et al identify the effectiveness of engagement by measuring levels of valence and arousal: "Valence refers to an organism's disposition to assume either an appetitive or aversive behavioral set, whereas arousal is considered the degree of energy or force expelled during the response" (2000:14). For example, an ill-prepared performer might inspire a moderate amount of both valence and arousal, failing to engage the audience at all, and an overly-prepared performer might abuse DanceSport by being excessively self-absorbed, in which case the audience will feel high levels of negative valence with high arousal, and distracted by performance disharmony, will also fail to be engaged. Fraleigh writes, "The audience does not want to see what the dancer can only attempt to do. They want to see what she [or he] has mastered" (1987:34). An overly adaptive performance will introduce elements too radical to be internalized, and a performance not adaptive enough will fail to engage the audience at all.

Thus the DanceSport performance offers escapism to the individual, who is soothed by experiencing community inscription. When daily discontent is temporarily forgotten through ritual participation, and aggressive tension circumvented through performance, the individual has

essentially adjusted him or herself to societal norms of selfish living. To the collective, DanceSport offers empathetic, deep experience, inter-connecting humanity in a shared space, and facilitating social transformation.

4:5 Regulative

Rituals provide models to regulate social interaction by facilitating a liminal's journey back to structure. The voyage back to structure, however, will bring with it an infusion of moralistic integrity, and will therefore replenish and innovate structure through cultural enrichment. Olaveson points out that both Durkheim and Turner recognized the creative and innovative power of *communitas* and collective effervescence. He writes:

'Anti-structure can thus be a positive and generative force, and is a condition in which myths, symbols, rituals, philosophy, and art are generated, which are templates for the periodical reclassification of reality and man's relationship to society, nature, and culture' (2001:106).

Above, I quoted Bird as saying that proportionate aesthetic and moral dimensions are conducive to effective ritual, but his use of the term moral refers to an overly didactic, external construct imposed on a potentially construct-free experiential state. External admonitions of moral and aesthetic constructs, although necessary to the structural formulation of ritual, do not comprise the innate moral integrity of collective experience, and yet, the latter cannot be had without the former.

By identifying with a performer via empathetic response systems, the subsequent connection to an "integrated and unified whole", will incur a peak experience, which is by nature, moral. Keith Haartman writes:

'Inner unity is expressed in consciousness as the momentary perception of outer unity, and one's inclusion within it. The external symbolic projection of self-acceptance fosters an identificatory alliance with external reality, thereby increasing empathic relatedness. The increasing ability to imaginatively take on another's point of view through identification coincides with a shift in moral sensibility and motivation' (1998:217).

Haartman identifies first a conscious "I", whose alliance with the 'other' produces a conscious "we", which when made subject to an empathic "we", transcends external reality, becoming an

transcendent "we", which finally produces an altered "I": I (external individual) + WE (external community) + WE (moral internal cosmos) = I (external/internal morality). Although the commercialization of DanceSport has lauded the individual far beyond the collectivity by which it was borne, the "I" is yet accommodated in modern ritual.

Throop and Laughlin have recently shown Durkheim's work to have recognized the direct, individual experience of collective effervescence as paramount to the creation of "categories of understanding... pure, generic concepts that serve to structure the cultural content of conceptional frames" (Throop and Laughlin 2002:42). Although the individual is driven by a "social force", this force is:

"not wholly external; it does not move us entirely from outside. Indeed because society can exist only in and by means of individual minds, it must enter into us and become organized within us" (Durkheim 1995:211).

Throop and Laughlin note that Durkheim identified the individual as concurrently embodying an "impersonal (social) principle that is collectively shared and tied to the functioning intellect through collective representations, and an individuating principle tied to the immediate experiences of the senses and the body" (2002:45), in which case the above mentioned external 'I' and 'WE' are two parts of the same whole, both of which are capable of launching the individual into an experiential realm of collective understanding, the meaning of which is construed based on the fundamental categories of understanding invoked in a "single instant" of ritual efficacy.

Essentially, Throop and Laughlin have reaffirmed the efficacy of ritual within individualist paradigms, stating that Durkheim's work synthesizes:

'1) a view of the sensory and affective experiences of individuals as resistant to, and able to transform received cultural norms, values, and ideals; 2) a view of cultural norms, values and ideals as transfigured through the shared and emotionally driven structuring of sensory impressions that pattern themselves after socially constructed parameters; and 3) a view of emotionally infused experiences of collective effervescence that serve as a generative source for the formation of collectively shared categories of understanding' (Throop and Laughlin 2002:46).

Olaveson illustrates that "like Durkheim, Turner saw individual needs and the needs of society as often being opposed and contrary... he was interested in how societies encouraged their

members to conform to norms of behaviour, especially when those norms often entailed the thwarting of individual needs and desires" (2001:97). Durkheim believed that effervescent assemblies, i.e., rituals, "impart to symbolic objects intense emotions, effectively 'making the obligatory desirable,' and binding people to the ideals of their social group" (Olaveson 2001:98).

As continuing to embody both mainstream structural parameters and marginal categories of understanding, DanceSport facilitates adaptation by itself being adaptive. Olaveson writes, "[ritual] is the place where a society's values, norms, and deep knowledge of itself are reaffirmed, and sometimes, *created*" (2001:93, emphasis mine). Further:

'The experience of *communitas* is also a necessity for the proper functioning of social structure. Without it, structure can begin to stagnate and die, or become too partisan and individualistic. It must be periodically imbued with the anti-structural values of *communitas*, and made to serve the common good. This occurs in ritual' (Olaveson 2001:109).

The artistic integrity of DanceSport elicits transformational experiences through psycho-somatic affectivity and ASCs¹⁴. As regulative, DanceSport disintegrates the "perpetual restraint" of the individual by intensifying collective unity, thereby reestablishing a connection to the "rude but natural" morality of humankind (Rousseau 1950). This natural morality, or 'pure' morality, escapes the grasp of egocentric ambitions, which come full circle to reaffirm some moral nature, provided through ritual efficacy.

Following ritual efficacy, an individual readapts to daily egocentric living. Has he or she been changed? Haartman's work conforms to that of Abraham Maslow, who wrote that unitive states incur behavioural transformations through "reality attributes" divided into three idealisms: "perfection, morality, and aesthetics" (Haartman 1998:217). In representing these ideals, DanceSport rituals inspire social transformation. As such, DanceSport cannot act solely as a purveyor of societal norms; it must act also as a catalyst to seraphic ideals. Maslow suggests as consequent to peak experiences, occurring either temporally or permanently, the following moral changes, listed by Haartman:

¹⁴ Altered state of consciousness

'[A] greater appreciation of human relationships; a heightening of sensitivity, compassion, tolerance, and closeness in interpersonal relationships; increased personality integration; a renewed sense of personal worth and gratitude; relaxation of defenses, coupled with spontaneity; a decrease in anxiety and depression; a greater sense of security; and an increase in feelings of cosmic spirituality' (Haartman 1998:218).

In sustaining a connection to perfection, DanceSport ritual is purifying. The moral, perfect and aesthetic idealisms symbolized in DanceSport proffers some vestige of residual perfection with which the ritual participant departs. The permanence of this perfection is contingent upon the participant's willingness to maintain it, to make it a permanent part of his or her constitution. As a meaningful experience, the human mind will seek it further, bringing the participant closer to the attainment of a self-less state of being.

4:6 Invocative

Mircea Eliade writes:

'[I]mages express the nostalgia for a mythicised past transformed into an archetype, and that this 'past' signifies not only regrets for a vanished time but countless other meanings; it expresses all that might have been but was not, the sadness of all existence, which *is* only by ceasing to be something else; regrets that one does not live in the country or in the times evoked by the song... in short, the longing for something *altogether different* from the present instant; something in fact inaccessible or irretrievably lost: 'Paradise' itself' (Eliade 1952:17 author's emphasis).

Above I noted that the unitive quality of an ASC was reached through a connection to an idealism of aesthetic, perfect and moral integrity (Haartman 1998:217). These idealisms, although embedded in the external societal script, constitute the 'sacred' of DanceSport performances because by being limitlessly experiential, they supercede the external script and become part of the internal categories of understanding. As such, Durkheim writes, they "are directly displayed to our consciousness in a single instance" (Throop and Laughlin 2002:42). Although still considered a religious experience in the sense not necessarily of a "belief in god, gods, or ghosts," but in the *sacred* sense of "ideas of *being, meaning, and truth*" (Eliade 1969), DanceSport's humanist adaptation invokes meaningful material into the empathic memory of the human mind through the symbolism of supraordinate human ideals, i.e., primordial images.

They represent what Antoine-Nicholas de Condorcet called the "true perfection of [hu]mankind" (Antoine-Nicholas 1955).

If in art we look to the geniuses of the past whose work has been immortalized and mourn the passing of circumstances that nourished artistic production, in DanceSport, we are momentarily reconnected with this creative time/space through the symbolic movements of the dancers who for a brief moment in time endear us to the species-specific collective unconscious. For example, Delgado and Munoz write of Rumba's history:

'A frequent lack of specificity in the telling only makes [Rumba] history more forceful in the living memory of Latinos today; the cultures of Africa survived the institutions of capitalism and so-called development, in the sounding of the drums.... [I]n the times of our ancestors, the drums invoked the gods and the gods dwelled within the body for the duration of the dance. And they still do' (1997:11).

The performers, as mediums, enact "certain sensory codes... i.e., gestures, facial expressions, [which] connote different meanings and messages... in their performance, in their use in social settings – they should not be seen merely as scripts" (Turner 1986:23). The script, or structural preparation, is a mere guide representative of residual societal rules, but it is at the onus of the performer to provide the sub-script, or anti-script, which provides the symbolism of archetypal material.

Not necessarily cognizant of the symbolism revealed through the conjuncture of body movement and music, the performer as representative and medium, draws on the phenomenological powers of art and fantasy to invoke the power of the past. Referred to as 'flow', by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975), when a performance 'takes off', "the performers have touched or moved the audience, and some kind of collaboration, collective special theatrical life, is born" (Schechner 1985:11). Further:

'Performances gather their energies almost as if time and rhythm were concrete, physical, pliable things. Time and rhythm can be used in the same way as text, props, costumes, and the bodies of the performers and audience. A great performance modulates intervals of sound and silence, the increasing density of events temporally, spatially, emotionally, and kinesthetically' (Schechner 1985:11).

The potency of symbols, in altering normal parameters of space, time, and reality, is dependent upon the level of empathy or due process imbued by audience and performer. The audience

member needs to enter an imaginative, kinesthetic empathic state for the symbols to gain potency, which is itself dependent upon the participant's willingness to 'eradicate all preconceptions', enter the 'deep structures of consciousness', and "bracket the natural attitude in order 'to go behind appearances to the ground of reality'" (Durkheim, Husserl, Tiryakian in Throop and Lauglin 2002:43).

Empathy is a necessary precursor to 'vital movement sensibility' (communitas) and 'inner performance' (liminality). Without empathy, the process of sense perception will not transcend the 'official', practical function, and although the dance performance may have an 'affective' power, i.e., it provokes kinesthetic empathy, "the subliminal communication of the sense of bodily movement, position or tension, which has the power to arouse an empathetic physical response in the viewer" (Royce 1977:194), it will not have a cognitive power, i.e., a "communication of meaning through symbols to the mind" (Averbuch 1996:6). S. Harris writes:

'Knowledge of this practical meaning does not imply the necessary existence of the appropriate conscious processes: when we program the use of the sign, a machine is capable of using it correctly even though it does not understand the programmed rules or the meaning of the signs' (1998:41).

Dance instructors program responses into the motor-memory of students as part of initial dance training. The desired effect is to elicit an automatic action that requires no cognitive pre-course. Aside from learning basic step patterns, students must learn to either 'lead' or 'follow'. As a social skill, the ability to lead and follow on the dance floor is a creditable technique to learn, one which may elude the most attentive mind, but also one which represents only a rudimentary knowledge of the body of the other. E. Thompson writes:

'...experience can remain at the first level of accomplishment – the emergence of experience, where it remains tacit and prereflective, a matter of passive association – or it can proceed to the second level – the fulfilling explication, where it unfolds according to the imaginative self-transposal to the place of the Other. This imaginative self-transposal presupposes the open intersubjectivity of consciousness.... It enables us to gain a new spatial perspective on the world, that of the Other' (2001:19).

The fulfilling explication refers to an acknowledgement of due process. Without this tacit knowledge, the associative lack of intersubjectivity at level two renders empathy absent

(Thompson 2001:18, 19). It is one thing to *imagine* the experience of the other – and another to *feel* it for oneself. Without due process, an individual in the audience will not be able to fully identify kinesthetically with the performer. At level one first-time viewers will be awed and excited by performances, but they cannot appreciate the due process undergone by ritual adherents without undergoing it themselves. By seeing the signs, they are affected, since symbols incite action (Turner 1974, Olaveson 2001), and will at best be motivated to seek more information, but they will not be driven to experience a change in consciousness.

A mere gesture of the arm, for example, perceived within prescribed aesthetic value, will invoke only as much meaning as permitted by its mental frame – the shape and flow of the movement may appear extraordinary in itself – but the same gesture when perceived phenomenologically, will be seen as a part of a unified whole, the whole representing the irretrievably lost 'Paradise'.

DanceSport performances are constitutive in that they unite people, self-representative in that they relate to people, expressive in that they relieve the strain of the human condition, regulative in that they inspire moral empathy, and invocative because they reach into the past to allow symbolic time to merge with the present.

The previous discussion of DanceSport ritual revealed the disparate intention and expectation had by DanceSport participants as well as spectators with regards to 'form' – technical structure, and 'feeling' – expressive content engendered by the dances. For many North American audiences, form and feeling are juxtaposed by the metaphysical dualism of mind and body (Fraleigh 1987:117). The discipline of the mind determines technical proclivity while the freedom of the body determines improvisational expression. Fraleigh would have us subsume dance under an existential phenomenological 'lived body', which defies unitarian incentives of mind vs. body to advocate 'lived' dualism, a perspective which assumes no communicative barrier between mind and body (Fraleigh 1987:3).

'Lived dualism', however, is a state achieved only by North American dancers who have cultivated the requisite knowledge of due process. The personal reconciliation of dynamic parts

does not occur spontaneously in this type of dancing – it evolves as a process of development with clearly defined rites of passage. The four stages of Turner's social drama (breach, crisis, redressive action, reintegration) in compliance with Van Gennep's rites of passage (separation, margin, aggregation) provide a methodological solution to the understanding of this development for myself. Therefore, what remains to be uncovered are circumstances under which DanceSport rituals are 'infelicitous' or ineffective as well as my own personal experiences in this area. Grimes writes:

'Despite... difficulties and caveats, people still engage in ritual criticism. As religious traditions and cultures clash and converge, and individuals engage in overt and covert syncretism, criticism becomes increasingly necessary – if not for participants themselves, then for us who study ritual behavior' (1990:193).

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPERIENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

5:1 Introduction

Turner's process of deconstruction and reconstruction which incurs the empathetic understanding of self has long been recognized by anthropologists as a difficult experience often resisted. However, it seems that the time for the uncovering of this personal experience has come for me in the final stages of this thesis.

Grimes notes that ritual participants resist criticism in the same way that they resist criticism of their myths and dreams (1990:208). So, too, do anthropologists "avoid making explicit, written judgments about the failure or success of the rites they observe and record" (Grimes 1990:193). In an attempt to frontally attack this resistance, this chapter will peruse my personal experience in DanceSport ritual as participant and observer, weighed against Grimes' and Bird's definitional parameters of ineffectual ritual performances.

5:2 Inculcation

I have described my initial forays into DanceSport as being 'dream-like' – all conscious awareness escaped me as I was being floated across the dance floor in the capable arms of a senior instructor. It was after this first extraordinary experience that I began writing down my thoughts and feelings about dancing. At the time of this first benchmark, I had just completed my three months of training. I had minimal technical training, and knew only the bare essentials by having memorized the step patterns. I had never 'danced' these patterns, and while being whirled around the floor in that single instant, I barely recognized them for what they were. I marveled at the *feeling* of being 'danced'. At the time, I had no notion of what 'being danced' meant. I recorded only the overwhelming sensations I experienced as "floating" and I must admit I was also temporarily love-struck by that instructor. "What an amazing man!" I wrote (Journal Entry 07/16/00).

Once I began teaching lessons, I trained less often for myself, but was obsessed with gaining more instruction. Luckily, one of the instructors took me under his tutelage and worked with me whenever he could. I didn't realize at the time how vital this was to my career, since many who had come before me or after had no such opportunity.

My first competition occurred in November of 2000. My journals are rife with thoughts of failure; of forgetting my steps, my body positions, the timing. I was absolutely petrified. I was not cognizant of the judges, the audience, or even of the music, but I was very aware of my partner and my fear of not being able to follow him. For me, competing was exciting and highly desirable despite the fear factor. For my cohorts, they were merely witnessing a stage in the process of my inception into the studio. All of the violations I feared would happen on the competition floor did, but unbeknownst to me at the time they didn't scare me away from pursuing the dance. Meanwhile, I had fallen in love with my trainer, another more experienced instructor in the studio, and as a colleague, our relationship developed within the studio environment.

After my preliminary excitement, I began to feel resentful of the system. My love was in dancing, but I resisted full-fledged acceptance of dance as a career. To continue dancing, I had to dedicate myself to at least 60 hours a week, not including competition requirements and weekend events. As a result I was forced to abandon my outside interests. Over time, I reconciled myself to this schedule, because I wanted to dance more than anything else. The resentment arose because I still maintained ideals of a professional career in any field but dance. Hanna writes, "Most people today go into professional dance out of a passion, not for the rewards of financial security and stability..." (1988:117). She also writes, "Individuals who go into the occupation of dance... may experience stress if they come from or work in a milieu which has negative stigma associated with dancing" (1988:116).

In August of 2001, I went on vacation to Vermont. While at a campsite, my partner at the time and I introduced ourselves to our neighbours, who happened to be from the same city where we taught dancing. These people immediately felt awkward and distant as soon as I told

them that I was a ballroom dance teacher (Journal entry 08/04/01). I wrote in my journal that night, "We were clearly not up to par intellectually as 'ballroom dance teachers' and they assumed we would have nothing in common" (Journal Entry 08/04/01). I had not expected such a reaction, to say the least, and it not only both embarrassed and upset me, but it made me hesitate in the future to tell anyone else my vocation. This further distressed me. I resented my disconnection with mainstream. Olaveson writes, "both Turner and Durkheim realized that social structure and the constraints that it places on people are essentially *alienating*" (2001:108 author's emphasis).

I fulfilled the requirements of my contract at the studio by July of 2001. I remained, however, because I still enjoyed teaching, and I resisted leaving my own dancing. Because a year of teaching was abnormally long by relative standards, I gained status for my determination, and staying solidified that status through reinforcement. By January of the following year, however, I was convinced that I knew the business too well, and wanted out. My fiancé and I moved to Toronto, where he gained a position as Instructor in a rival studio, and I went back to my books, determined to leave behind the discordance of the dance. We resolved to dance together, however, competitively, which marked the inception of my dance training experience independently of the teaching business.

5:3 *Tabula Rasa*

At this stage, I wholly embraced technical training in the absence of fun. This, I was convinced, was the way it was supposed to be. DanceSport was a serious art, and required discipline and hardship. Notions of twirling and floating were no longer happy ones; they represented the burden of maintaining posture and balance, and, oh, yes, don't forget about the position of your foot on the floor. Pay attention to your partner. Look where you're going. Keep your head up, push your head down. I was helpless. I was a shell of my former self. No one told me I did anything right. It was all wrong and all necessary to change. In this state of being nothing, I reached a personal crisis. I began competing and failed miserably. I felt awkward,

looked worse, and lost every time. I must have been better than I was last year! Was it because I was so offensive to the judge's eye? Was it because they didn't know me, and didn't recognize me as experienced? Certainly I wasn't very experienced. Was it that painfully obvious? Indeed it was. (Journal Entries 07/27/02).

My husband, aware of each stage I needed to go through in the learning process, dutifully, if not patiently, guided me throughout my tumultuous change. Before long, I was teaching again in order to help finance competition costs. Dance training was colored by emotional outbursts over my dilemma – extreme love and extreme hate of dance competition. Competition was only as bad as its preparation. Then, when performing, all sense of discordance was lost in the moment. The music began, and my thoughts ceased. The 10 minute performance liberated me from all that I feared. Eventually I reached a stage when I was hyper-aware of my surroundings while performing. I could acknowledge audience members or I could focus only on my partner. Things got better. I didn't look forward to my future progress, but at the same time, I was too proud to give up. I embraced the dualities of my position in my mind and in my body. To resist these discrepancies was to miss the point of the dance.

5:4 Efficacy

d'Aquili writes that symbols have the capacity to "contract or expand complexity, to advance the process of integration or to advance the process of differentiation, to make whole or to divide" (d'Aquili 1990:77). Turner writes that part of ritual form is its duality.

Bird identifies circumstances of poor performance which constitute what Erik Erikson refers to as 'ritualisms', "in connection with events that are, respectively, lively or fulfilling and deadly or dull" (Bird 1995:43). Grimes adds to the list of mishaps: "misfires, abuses, ineffectual performances, violations, vague presentations, misframed staging, omissions, and contagion" (Bird 1995:43-44, Grimes 1990:204-205). When DanceSport leaders (teachers and performers) fail to follow due process, any of these violations do occur.

The sense and character of the audience member determines the perception he or she

forms upon witnessing a DanceSport ritual. An audience member unaware of the communicative dynamic occurring during a dance may dwell perceptually on external features such as beauty, dress style, body line/musculature, etc., and as a result of such a limited view, grant these features undue importance, using them to create a standard of value upon which to infer biased preferences. Such a standard is a substitute for intellectual contemplation, and is automatically generated by an individual unwilling to mentally delineate visual data.

The performer similarly limited in perception will fail to communicate the story of the dance, and will contribute to poor audience interaction. An audience member may infer so much meaning into the dance's communicative dynamic so as to imagine the performers as divine, conferring upon them undue status and reverence. It may distort their notion of historical people, time, and events, and allow assumptions to superimpose into text.

By subsuming form and feeling similarly, as two parts of a dynamic whole, DanceSport captivates and secures a ritual following. As a whole capable of transcending the sum of its parts, the diversity of audience does not threaten DanceSport's symbolic content. This content, by virtue of its original potency, will not change, but the ability of audience members to perceive its value will. Because the modern DanceSport venue is multi-textual, to whom and to what standard DanceSport performers are held accountable is inconsistent, and the symbolic *meaning* is ultimately transformed and reformulated, if not wholly missed. This does not, however, render DanceSport ritual ineffective. It indicates that DanceSport is a phenomenon experienced idiosyncratically in accordance with an individual's cognitive maps, or self-schema, and contingent upon the memory systems of the individual undergoing the experience.

Retrospectively I can call my first competition performance (as well as several thereafter), a failure. Under DanceSport standards, it was a gross misrepresentation of what the Foxtrot and Mambo were supposed to have looked like, or represent. However, to me it was a very real, dynamic, phenomenal experience at that time, and in that moment, there was no time. It was a stage in the process of my development. Without it, there would have been no DanceSport ritual or rite of passage for me because the critical stages of that journey would have

been missed. Part of the ritual form is its journey, its learning process, and far be it for me or anyone else to look at a performer and deny them their right to due process.

Some months ago, a family friend approached me, asking when my next competition would be so that she could watch my husband and I dance. I was worried. What was she expecting? Relative to the other couples on the floor, I was only at the earliest stages of my development. When I assured her I had no expectation of winning the competition, she replied, "I don't need to see you win. I want to see the process that turns you into a winner" (Journal Entry 10/14/02). This thought had not occurred to me. I was so determined to be as good as and better than everyone else, I forgot to appreciate the moments of discovery along the way. The experience of 'becoming', while necessary, is the most difficult, and should be glorified rather than disdained.

Retrospectively, I can recognize the stages of my dancing, undergone by all dancers before me, but know that I have certainly not yet come full circle. The dualism of the dance represents human conflict, waged internally and expressed on the floor. My infatuation with the dance led me to disavow societal norms, and I followed my dream. This dream, however, was marked by imbalance. It was marginal; it was 'betwixt and between'. I hovered between rebel and conformist.

Most certainly this experience was transformational in that it caused me to analyze my role in society. It also engendered in me a sincere respect for those who had gone before me. How brave those dancers are who can fully embrace their art, and by so doing, deny themselves the 'luxuries' of mainstream. For them to come full circle, DanceSport and its constituent dances must gain recognition in mainstream. Olympic inclusion would represent the definitive end of their journey from marginal. By knowing the circumstances under which these dances were created, it is possible to understand the significance of what they have become. DanceSport proponents who have followed due process need to be esteemed, and held up as cultural icons. They have brought meaningful ritual content into North America, and must be distinguished from the 'seven-second-sound-byte' proponents who erroneously shout, "dancing is easy!"

DanceSport achievement consumes a lifetime and ought never be considered easy.

CONCLUSION

This conclusion begins with the discourse of social resistance and ends with that of social cohesion. It is my contention that the former becomes the latter as a result of the process of reintegration. Social resistance itself, then, as social drama, is a ritual process exemplified by the creation of DanceSport. By transitioning the societally-obscure role of artist into the bureaucratically-contrived role of athlete, DanceSport mirrors the social process which transitions subaltern dissenters into mainstream conformists. As a cultural product dispersed by the information age and made common, DanceSport's current role in society therefore ought to no longer hold the archetypal power of its forebears. However, its status remains as 'betwixt and between' society at large, and as such, has not been rendered inconsequential, and does in fact retain associations of symbolic power because of its inherent relation to pure art. As such, it is a positive result of inter-cultural borrowing, and will benefit us in the long run by broadening our cultural and artistic perspectives.

I have shown that the constituent parts of DanceSport were created by the artistic expression of the oppressed in a cultural milieu perpetrated by the West but entirely unknown to it. As objects of mystery and intrigue belonging to the cultural 'other', the Latin social dances were coveted and appropriated by an unfulfilled Western self in search of meaning. They were altered, changed to conciliate differing aesthetic value systems. Nonetheless, because they represent the mythic tales of Afro/Caribbean/Latin/o culture, their practice in the West, when accompanying due process, has the potential to morally transform the initiate, and contributes to the cultural whole as a result. DanceSport rituals contain the symbolic power embedded in the cultural heritage of both experiences, and as such are characterized by the spiritual essence, deep structure, and textual dialogue of several cultures.

Eliade wrote, "the understanding of [hu]man[kind] as first and foremost a historical

being implies a profound humiliation for the Western consciousness" (1969:51). The very present to which well-intentioned ritual practitioners attend will be glorified by posterity in the same way we currently glorify our past. It, too, will be seen as more efficacious, less egocentric, more intense, less superficial, because it is the very adaptive material we use every day to make sense of our lives. Posterity, in attempting to make sense of their lives, will look to ours for guidance. The truth is that the past can be nothing more than what we, empathetically or not construct it to be, so we glorify it in order to deny that we are our own past. Durkheim writes:

'In fact, if religious ceremonies have any importance at all, it is that they set collectivity in motion: groups come together to celebrate them. Thus their first result is to bring individuals together, multiply the contacts between them, and make those contacts more intimate. That in itself modifies the content of consciousnesses. On ordinary days, the mind is chiefly occupied with utilitarian and individualistic affairs. Everyone goes about his own personal business; for most people, what is most important is to meet the demands of material life; the principal motive of economic activity has always been private interest. Of course, social feelings could not be absent altogether. We remain in relationship with our fellow men; the habits, ideas, and tendencies that upbringing has stamped on us, and that ordinarily preside over our relations with others, continue to make their influence felt. But they are constantly frustrated and held in check by the opposing tendencies that the requirements of the day-in, day-out struggle produce and perpetuate. Depending on the intrinsic energy of those social feelings, they hold up more or less successfully; but that energy is not renewed. They live on their past, and in consequence, they would in time be depleted if nothing came to give back a little of the strength they lose through this incessant conflict and friction' (1995:352).

The truth alluded to earlier by Laughlin upon stating that humans seek meaningfulness without necessarily seeking truth reflects this fundamental reality – it is more meaningful for us to pretend we can experience the past because it alleviates the responsibility we take for our actions of the present. Pre-industrial rituals were not necessarily performed by *moral*, well-intentioned human societies or individuals. They were not necessarily more profound, sincere or efficacious. S. Harris has said, "the most curious fact about ritual preservation [is that they] are always guarded jealously and with extreme conservatism" (1997:40). If archaic rituals represented the intrinsic value of beneficent truths, loaded with notions of 'purity', 'utopia', 'ecstatic states', and invoking communion with ancestors or spirits, they are by nature unselfish acts, which need not be guarded jealously.

If the same rituals represented the extrinsic value of maintaining societal confabulations, which addressed the strain of daily living by providing escapist events, they would be by nature, selfish, and so guarded jealously. Harris contends that the more inutile a ritual is to a given society, the more severely it is protected from others. Hence, purity is associated with an 'ultimate inutility' because purifying rituals transcend daily concerns motivated by selfish living. Both, however, do represent adaptation and adjustment to societal norms/values/beliefs. One is simply of a 'natural morality' (intrinsic) while the other is of a superficial morality (extrinsic). If the modern West values syncretic ritual for its superficial meaningfulness, and guards it jealously from the non-member, or 'other', why believe that archaic rituals were any less subject to socio-political agendas that similarly compromised their morality?

It is the idealized, at times 'histrionic' nostalgic experience engendered by modern ritual, that, although based on external notions of value, appeals to the empathetic, willing individual by deconstructing societal layers and reconnecting individuals with 'truth', 'meaning' and 'being'. If syncretic rituals attend to the Western formalist aesthetic by offering shallow, escapist, but nevertheless 'meaningful' experiences to the individual as well as the collective, a syncretic ritual which simultaneously attends to due process has the power to debunk the Western formalist aesthetic entirely as a social construct, and elicit ASCs. Due process, adhering to the knowledge of 'entire cycles of meaning' and 'symbolic transformation', follows historical, archaic, and mythical, idealized notions constantly subject to being recreated each day. The 'official' and 'unofficial' value of DanceSport ritual are both meaningful in that they are both adaptive, but only one is ultimately moral, which will, by attending to the permanence of morality of subject, be the driver for social transformation.

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Appendix 1

Source: (*modified*) I. Averbuch, 1996, "Performing Power: On the Nature of the Japanese Ritual Dance Performance of *Yamabushi Kagura*" in *Journal of Ritual Studies* 10(2), p. 3

Appendix 2

Domination and Resistance

	Material Domination	Status Domination	Ideological Domination
Practices of Domination	Appropriation of grain, taxes, labour, etc.	Humiliation, disprivilege, insults, assaults on dignity	Justification by ruling groups from slavery, serfdom, caste, privilege
Forms of Public Declared Resistance	Petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, land invasions and open revolts	Public assertion of worth by gesture and/or open desecration of status symbols of the dominant	Public counter-ideologies propagating equality, revolution, or negating the ruling ideology
Forms of disguised, low-profile, undeclared resistance: infrapolitics	Everyday forms of resistance, e.g. poaching, squatting, desertion, foot-dragging. Direct resistance by disguised resisters, e.g. masked appropriations, threats, anonymous threats	Hidden transcript of anger, aggression and disguised discourses of dignity, e.g. rituals of aggression, tales of revenge, use of carnival symbolism, gossip, rumour, creation of autonomous social space for assertion of dignity	Development of dissident sub-cultures, e.g. millennial religions, slave 'hush-arbors', folk religion, myths of social banditry and class heroes, world-upside-down imagery, myths of the 'good' king or the time before the 'Norman Yoke'

Source: James C. Scott, 1997, "The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups" in *The Post-Development Reader*. M. Rahnema and V. Bawtree (eds.) p322