A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME DANCES OF LATIN AMERICA AND OF THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR COMMON ORIGIN

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Approved by:
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Factors Which Influence Folk Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>A Historical Survey of Argentine Folk Dances</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Some Latin American Dances</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Picaresque style</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Grave&quot; style</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description of dances and diagrams</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Typical Dances of the United States</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directions for Dancing</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Modern Dances of the Two Peoples</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Some Conclusions Drawn from this Study</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Purpose and Importance

This study has been carried out with the purpose of finding the factors of common interest in the music of two different peoples.

For a long time the study and teaching of folk music has laid emphasis on the national characteristics of each country or folk group and the manner in which its music differs from that of other countries.

In this day, when the emphasis of governments politically, economically and sociologically is toward internationalism and toward those interests which are common to all people, it seems to the writer that music education should attempt to further this feeling through emphasis on those same interests.

This is directly in line with the purpose of the recently organized United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. This organization, which usually is called UNESCO, has as its purpose the actual achievement of world peace. To discover how it proposes to achieve these ends here are the words of one of its members representing the United States of America: "Finally, I think that UNESCO will succeed in proportion as it finds ways actually to influence and modify the educational, scientific, and cultural life of its members and of
other nations throughout the world." (1)

If it can be shown that, although differences exist in the music of these groups, similarities not before noted also are present, that perhaps some of this music has descended from a common source, that therefore we have a lot in common with each other, then the study will have fulfilled its purpose.

Scope and Limitations

The study does not attempt to include all the branches of music of these peoples but is limited to a rather intensive survey of some dances of each group. Not all the dances of these groups could be included. Only those which are the most popular or which were felt to be the most typical of their respective peoples were included. Several dances of Latin America which are no longer danced were also omitted since the problem is concerned with present day dances. A further limitation restricted the majority of musical examples to countries of South America, especially Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. This was necessitated by the need for limiting and by the greater availability of music from these countries.

The gathering of material for this survey has come not only from investigations of the works of competent authorities but from interviews, from analysis of much

music, from listening to phonograph records and from some personal experiences.

**Educational Value**

The educational value of a study of this type can be readily expressed. It should bring a different conception of the music of Latin America and its relation to that of the United States.

It should provide material which can be used in the school program, perhaps in connection with the teaching of our own dances.

Finally, it should demonstrate that music of many of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere is quite similar, that it knows no political or racial barriers, and that therefore the peoples themselves must be fundamentally the same.
CHAPTER I
FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE FOLK MUSIC

Much has been written regarding the different elements which influence the development of folk music and which bring about the various changes which it undergoes among different peoples. But before we can discuss elements which influence folk music we must have an understanding of what the term folklore or folk music means.

A definition often accepted states that folk music is the spontaneous and naive expression of the illiterate classes. As well known an authority as Grove's Dictionary, in an article on the English folksong makes this statement: "The folk-song is limited to the sentiments felt by the people who sing such songs, and the themes are only those of everyday experiences." (1)

Opposed to these statements are some by folklorists of accepted reputations. Gilbert Chase states the following in reference to folklore and folk music:

"Folklore, then, is a historical science. It differs from history proper because it does not study the past directly through contemporary documents, but through survivals. A custom, an object, a folk song, does not have to be very old in order to be folkloric, but it must

old--whether that is taken to mean several centuries or several decades is immaterial. It must in any case be old enough to have been eliminated from one stratum of society so that it can be found as a survival in another stratum. As we said before, it is not a condition of folklore that it be found among the lower classes, but is generally found there because, through exterior circumstances, these are the group which conserve what the higher classes have eliminated."(2)

The writer takes the same point of view as does Mr. Chase that folklore and folk music are not the expressions only of the common people but are rather the records of all classes of society and their customs that have survived. With this in mind let us discover the factors which influence this music.

The following quotation illustrates one point of view: "Folk and popular music in any country is the result of its creation and development by the people of that country, or, of the adaptation and evolution by the people of music taken over from artistic and sophisticated circles. It depends on the ethnological composition of the people, the various groups exerting modifying influences each upon the others. It may also be influenced by the geographical and climatic environment, although there are those who dispute this

point, asserting that environment has no significant effect on folk and popular music. Historic and sociological movements also affect its development..."(3)

Mr. Chase, in proving his point that music is universal rather than national, says: "Folk music takes its nourishment from any and every source, including those hotbeds of cosmopolitanism, the city, the court and the aristocratic salón." (4)

Illustrating further he quotes Carlos Vega: "'Nothing is more universal than folklore; nothing is more regional than folklore. Its elements are universal; its combinations are regional.' In any case, folk music is never national, only regional." (5)

Carlos Vega, a leading folklorist of South America, asserts that environment can have a strong influence on musical evolution. He goes on to add, however, that his environment referred to is purely sociological, although it is often mistakenly accepted as being geographical also. To make his point clearer Mr. Vega adds:

"The natural surroundings...have no influence at all on the choreographic and musical forms, nor on their realization. Although it may seem illogical, not even

(3) Albert T. Luper, The Music of Argentina, p.9
(4) Gilbert Chase, "International Aspects of Music", (Musical America, (Dec. 10, 1945, pp.6,15)
(5) Ibid pp.6,15.
the climate itself can regulate the speed of a dance; its slowness or rapidity is subject to the mental disposition of the performers, and to this rhythmic environment the form of the dance submits and adjusts itself."(6)

Further on, in his endeavor to disprove the theory that music can be created by any given people he states:

"In the presence then of choreographic and musical complexities let us begin by abandoning the idea of independent invention, the thought of local creation....Forms and accessories are definitely human. It seems elementary to suppose that at one time they came from nowhere; but if it should be true that at a given moment they were created in space, it is not less certain that they are derivatives of pregoing forms, combinations of ancient elements."(7)

In summary, these theories insist that folk music did not spring originally from the people but that its forms were introduced from other groups and were adapted to fit their peculiar traits and customs.

A closer study may test the validity of these theories. From an analysis of historical facts and musical examples we will attempt to find those factors that are most influential in shaping the character of the music.

(6) Carlos Vega, Danzas y Canciones Argentinas, p.37 (a translation)

CHAPTER II
A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ARGENTINE FOLK DANCES

Argentina, Chile and Uruguay constitute a group of adjacent South American countries whose music is closely related due to the fact that their people have similar backgrounds. To study the history of one is to have a working knowledge of the other two. To study the findings of folklorists regarding the music of Argentina should then enable one to better understand the musical history of the other two countries.

Albert T. Luper summarizes his research of Argentine music thus: "The principal ethnological elements in Argentine folk music are two: indigenous and European. The barely perceptible African influence came indirectly via Lima, Peru. The strongest contingent of Indians and those least influenced by European traditions are those to the Northwest, Northeast and South of the country. There, one may still hear instrumental groups in which aboriginal instruments are used.

Negro influence has been absent since about the middle of the past century, when the original slaves began to disappear, slave trade having been abolished entirely during the years from 1813 to 1825. In the years when slavery was at its height and during the first years of liberation, Negroes maintained their music and dance festivals.
Other members of the population took no part in these festivals except as observers, so that with the diminishing of the Negro population their influence disappeared as well.

European elements (Spanish, French and Italian in almost equal parts) are responsible for an overwhelmingly large part of popular music of Buenos Aires, whereas in the countryside at large the Spanish tradition prevails almost exclusively today. Songs and dances derived from this source are termed creole music. Originally descended from European forms, they have become naturalized, so to say, and have undergone considerable change, generally taking other names. 

This makes the task of tracing the origins of folk music very difficult. Songs and dances which originated in Europe under one name have been brought in and reappeared under different names, sometimes a different one for each section of the country. This also accounts for the belief among musicians that there are innumerable types of folk songs and dances in South America. This fallacy we shall attempt to disprove.

Quoting further from Mr. Luper we read: "Internal migrations during the early history of the country were responsible for the adoption and spread of many forms of popular music. Argentina was ruled during the first two and a half centuries of the colonial period by the vice-regal government at Lima, Peru. Carlos Vega points out that picaresque

(1) Alfred T. Luper, The Music of Argentina, p.9
dances and creole songs reached Argentina from Peru during the Colonial period, at first by way of Bolivia, later through Chile.

The Peruvian influence was especially strong in the provinces even after Buenos Aires became a vice-royalty in 1776. After that time Buenos Aires, which long had displayed a more independent nature than the provinces, itself became a center of irradiation of culture, importing the latest dances and salon music directly from Europe, instead of receiving them through Lima." (2)

Carlos Vega affirms most of these statements in his conclusions regarding the origin of Argentine music. He says that the principal influences are from southern Europe, which influences in turn have been affected by the native or indigenous customs and practices. He also points out that the picaresque dances came by way of Lima, Peru, when it was the ruling center of that part of South America. The "grave" or solemn and stately dances came by way of Buenos Aires and moved in the opposite direction, toward Lima. So, for a long time there was a struggle for popularity between the two styles, the picaresque finally being driven back out to the rural regions while the "grave" dances remained popular chiefly in Buenos Aires. The advent of the Tango, Waltz and other "close contact" dances, drove the "grave" style

(2) Ibid, p.9
also out to the outlying region, or, as in some cases, to complete extinction.

Here we have evidence to support the theory stated in the preceding chapter that folk music comes from all classes of people; that although it usually goes from the aristocratic circles down to the common classes, yet sometimes it even goes the opposite direction and is adopted by the cosmopolitan centers after it has become popular with the common people.

In addition, the findings of these authorities show the strong influence of European music on certain South American regions. Let us examine this music, specifically the dances, more in detail, in order to discover how much of this influence remains in spite of the changes brought about by the customs and folkways of the people of this region.
CHAPTER III
SOME LATIN AMERICAN DANCES

The first group of dances to be studied are those native to Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Although the popularity of some of the dances varies even in these three countries, they can be found in all three groups.

They show the distinctive traits which they have acquired from association with local customs but they also reveal characteristics of some European dances, especially those of Spain and France.

General Types

These dances can be classified into two general types: those in which the partners dance at a distance from each other, known as "parejas sueltas", and those in which the dancers have close contact, or embrace, as in our own modern ballroom dances.

The first type can be further subdivided into classes known as "picarescas", or picaresque—rather fast and lively—and the "grave" dances, more stately and solemn in character.

Distinctive traits

Certain characteristics, that are typical of all dances which are performed with the partners at a distance, immediately catch the eye of one strange to these regions.
Other traits seem more familiar to us but we will discuss them later.

One practice that catches the eye is the use of the handkerchief by both men and women to add meaningful gestures to the dance. In certain single couple dances the woman sometimes will use it as a fan and hide behind it coquettishly, while the man will use it to attract her attention.

Another is the use of the hats by the men, similar to the use of the handkerchief. In one case a dance in which they were used was called "El Sombrerito", the "Little Hat".

A third distinctive feature is the use of the "zapateo". This consists of a series of rapid figures done with the feet something similar to the clog dance of American country dancers and also something like the tap dance. This figure, done by the men, and occasionally the women, occurs in practically every dance done by these people.

Still another unusual technique is the imitation of castanets, called "castanetas". This is performed by extending the arms horizontally to the side and bending the elbow to raise the hands on a level with the face. By snapping the fingers in varying and intricate rhythms an excellent imitation of the castanet is produced. This figure is done by both men and women.

Probably the most original and striking figure
is the use of the "relacion". This usually comes after a series of figures when one couple will step into the circle made by the other dancers. The music stops and the man begins a recitation in verse stating his love for the woman and begging her for an answer. She answers him immediately or else at a specified time later in the dance. In her reply she either speaks in like manner or taunts him, declaring his love to her false. He, of course, answers her by protesting his love in even more ardent fashion. This continues until she admits her love for him. Then the guitarist strikes up a waltz and the couple dances while others keep time and applaud. Then other couples may take their turn.

**Dances with partners at a distance (picaresque style)**

This group of dances is fast and lively and often involves the use of much footwork, not only in the "zapateo" but also in other figures where the feet keep time sometimes to a sort of schottische step or polka step. The choreography of these dances is centered around certain figures such as "circles", "imitating castanets", and "zapateos", varying in their arrangement according to the dance.

Undoubtedly one of the most popular of this type of dance is the **Zamacueca**, known by many other names in other regions.
Among the most common are the following: Zambacueca, Zamba, Cueca, Chilena, Marinera and Samacueca. It is not related in any manner to the Brazilian Samba, however.

During the nineteenth century this dance was performed in almost every country of South America, with the exception of Brazil. Although it is not nearly so popular now, yet it still is danced in the countries of Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, and probably Ecuador, although there is some doubt as to the latter. For a time it was the national dance of Chile and is probably more popular there today than in any other country.

Originally it came from Peru where it appeared during the early part of the nineteenth century. Thence it spread south to Chile and Argentina and later to the northern countries of South America.

It is rather fast and lively in character, written in six-eight meter. It is performed by one, or perhaps more couples. Its entire choreography consists of depicting the steps in courting, the man attempting to win the lady's admiration by demonstrating his skill and she urging him on or rebuffing him until he finally wins her over.

Musically it is noted for the fact that its melody varies from major to minor, or vice versa, frequently.
It has a characteristic rhythm but it, too, varies in different regions. Given below is one very often used pattern.

\[ \begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c} \hline \text{1} & \text{2} & \text{3} & \text{4} & \text{5} & \text{6} & \text{7} & \text{8} \\ \hline \end{array} \]

Another dance of this group is entitled the Resbalosa, often called the Refalosa, or sometimes the Gauchito.

Its origin is also believed to be Peru, although documentary evidence to support this theory is somewhat indefinite. Carlos Vegas in support of this theory, states that in Lima it was first danced at about the same time that it was supposed to appear in Buenos Aires but that in Lima it was already a dance of the common people, proving that it had been in existence for quite a while since these dances were first popular in aristocratic circles and then were adopted by the common people. Therefore, it must have been danced by the aristocracy of Peru prior to this time.

In Argentina it was first popular in Buenos Aires, but has since moved out to rural regions and has remained there.

Musically, it is a rather fast dance, written in six-eight meter but varying to two-four or, in some versions, to three-eight meter. Therefore a rhythmic pattern would be difficult to find that is typical of the dance.
Its choreography is built around the same figures found in all these dances and its form can be discovered only by a detailed study of the dance itself.

The name of the next dance, the Bailecito, translated means "little dance". Although having so general a name nevertheless, it is a specific dance. It has been popular especially in Bolivia and western Argentina. In some sections this name is also applied to the Gato, an entirely different dance.

It originated in Bolivia or Peru, since it was first chronicled as appearing there. Then it moved south to Chile and Argentina but is still popular in Bolivia.

It too, incorporated the same three figures in its form. Like the others it is in two parts, the second being a repetition of the first.

The music is written in six-eight meter, the tempo being usually allegretto.

Its characteristic rhythm pattern is usually one of the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{6}{8} & \quad \frac{7}{8} \quad \frac{3}{8} \quad \frac{1}{8} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The Gato is probably the liveliest and fastest of all this group of dances. It is also one of the most popular today. In some sections it has no rival in popularity.
Like some of the other dances it has more than one name, it having been called Perdiz and Mis-mis. The latter name and the Gato both have their origin in the fact that the words of the song refer to the cat. Given below is the well-known couplet on which they are based:

Salta la perdiz, madre, The partridge jumps, Mother
Salta la infeliz; She jumps, poor thing;
Que se la lleva el gato, The cat will carry her off,
El gato, mis-mis. The pussy cat will.

It is perhaps the oldest of the "danzas criollas", or dances of the people. There is written evidence of its having been danced in Peru, birthplace of most of these dances, as early as 1780. Yet it still remains as one of the most popular dances today, almost a national dance of the rural sections of Argentina.

Its form varies considerably in different regions. One variation introduces the "relacion" and is called the Gato Porteno; another shows the modern influence with the introduction of a "close contact" form of dance, the polka. It is called the Gato Polkeado.

Its characteristic rhythm is hard to describe because of the many variations but it features measures of triple time occurring frequently in duple meter.

These are probably the most typical dances of the picaresque type still in existence today. Other forms are either variations of these or have become extinct.

Dances with partners at a distance--("grave" style)

The other type of dance in which the dancers also
remain apart is called the "grave" style. These dances are more solemn and stately in character, of a slower tempo and require grace and dignity in execution.

The Pericon is one of the most unusual of this type. Although it was quite popular at one time it is found now only in outlying sections and in the theatre. Because of this latter fact the majority of the people of Argentina recognize its form and music although few have danced it.

It seems to have first appeared in Chile, at least first mention of it in writing came from that section. It then spread to rural Argentina and finally to Buenos Aires. It was popular there until the early part of the twentieth century but returned to the rural sectors.

In form it is quite similar to the country dances of the United States, and like them is performed by several couples simultaneously. Its figures are the most intricate and involved of any of the dances.

Its music is in three-quarter meter similar to a slow waltz.

The Media-Caña, like the Pericon, undoubtedly had its origin in Europe. It is difficult to trace its history but the dance itself is definitely patterned after the Caña of Spain. It is popular in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

In form it has quite a resemblance to the Reel of the folk dances of the United States. Some of its figures are quite similar.
Its musical form consists of two alternating tempi. It begins with a fairly rapid *Pericon* tempo in three-eight meter and then shifts to a very fast *Gato* tempo in six-eight meter and finally ends by changing back to the *Pericon* tempo.

The *Cuando* began definitely as a dance of the aristocracy making its first appearance in Buenos Aires and then moving to Chile and thence to the rural sectors of Argentina and Uruguay.

It too shows definite European influences in its use of the *Minuet* as part of its choreography.

In form it consists of a *Minuet*, for the first part then shifts to the strongly contrasting rhythm of the *Gato*, and then goes back to the slow and stately *Minuet* at the end. The choreography consists of figures from these two dances.

For the benefit of those who might wish to study these dances more in detail, several are given here with detailed directions for dancing and accompanying diagrams. Although it was not feasible to present the music here also, it is given along with the rest of the dances. Those who are interested in securing the music and the accompanying helpful illustrations are referred to the collection of Andre Beltrame listed in the bibliography. (The text, however, is written in Spanish).

*Zamba* or *Zamacueca*

— After the dancers are in position as indicated in the
first figure, the singer and the guitarist begin the dance with an introduction in which they announce what is to happen, that the public may pay attention and also that the dancers may prepare to dance.

When the dance begins the man will find the position best suited to attract the attention of the public and also to arouse the interest of his partner that he may show her his delight in being able to take part in this display of skill with her.

She, meanwhile, will respond in like manner, lifting her skirt slightly with her left hand to exhibit her shapely foot during the figures of the dance. With her right hand she will raise high a handkerchief, whirling it from time to time, seemingly wishing to crown her partner with it in admiration of his skill.

The figures are explained as follows: when the dance begins the first figure is executed, quite free and full in its form; some carry out the steps quite simply while others extend themselves to the full to show their skill at dancing; the dancers, after completing the first figure, remaining in their original places still dancing until the end of the first verse which lasts twelve measures. See Fig. 1.
The second circle is simply a change of places while the singer sings the second verse. Fig. 2.

Immediately comes the third, which is the same form as the second the dancers again changing places, during verse three. Fig. 3.

The last figure differs from the others in the fact that at the end of the next to the last measure the dancers should execute some small figures as though the gentleman wished to pass the spot where the lady is and she, in turn, rebuffs him, heading him off. To do this the man advances and then retreats back to his place so that in the last half circle, or perhaps in the "aura", or "crowning", the woman, being conquered, allows the man to approach, he crossing over to her and holding his handkerchief over her head as though crowning her.

This dance is distinctive in the use of the handkerchief to carry on a conversation or romantic pantomime between the dancers.

Although its form does not show a very close relationship with the folk dances of the United States the position of the dancers at the beginning, at a distance from
each other, is very like most of our dances. The pantomime of wooing is more reminiscent of the dances of Europe. Most of the steps and figures show quite a resemblance to the dances of Spain and of central Europe.

**Resbalosa**

Once the dancers have taken their places the guitarist will begin singing the song. The man leaves the place marked A, (fig. 1) advances toward B (lifting his arms a little above his shoulders and imitating castanets with his fingers) until he arrives at the place directly across laterally from the starting point of his partner, marked B. (This lasts during the first two lines of the first stanza). When the singer repeats the line, "con el cura de Santa Rosa", the man will take short side steps to his right to the place which his partner had occupied, marked C. From there he will move backwards while doing a "zapateo" until reaching the place marked D. While doing the "zapateo" he will keep his arms at his sides.

The woman does the same as her companion, leaves the place marked C, reaches D, takes short side steps to the right until reaching A, and moves backwards also until reaching B. According to fig. 1, while the man retreats with a "zapateo" she will place her right hand on her waist and will lift her skirt with her left hand and point her
foot until reaching her starting place.

![Diagram](image1)

![Diagram](image2)

It is interesting to note the similarity of the figures in the first two diagrams with the "do-si-do" of the United States dances. It is really a variation of the American figure, done in more extended form and with differing steps.

When the singer begins the song again and sings "por penitencia" (third and fourth lines of the verse), the man will leave as before, from D, will go to C, then will take side steps to his left to B, then will move backwards, with "zapateo", to A. Fig. 2

The woman will do the same. Finding herself at B, she will leave, imitating castanets with her fingers until reaching A; will take side steps to the left until reaching D, will move backwards in the direction of C, until reaching it. Fig. 2. (During the last two lines of the first stanza).

Once again the dancers will repeat all that has happened, this time with different words (second stanza).
The dancers finding themselves in their places, once more the music will continue for from four to eight measures while the man will do a "zapateo" and the woman, facing him, will execute small circles advancing and retreating, in her place as before. Fig. 3.

After this figure, while the singer sings the third verse, the dancers will execute a small turn to the right, then will make a complete circle to the left, both meanwhile imitating castanets. Fig. 4.

The final figure consists of a half turn which the dancers will execute until they find themselves in positions opposite from those in which they started, when they will advance to the middle, the man executing large gliding steps, or other individual figures.

This ends the first part. The second part is a repetition of the first with the dancers now in reversed positions.
The fancy steps done by the man in the last figure reminds one immediately of European dances where the male attempts to display his skill and win the admiration of his partner.

**Bailecito**

When the guitarist or the singer begins the song, the dancers advance from a position slightly to the left of the place where they were standing, fig. 1, until reaching the place where they partners had been, all the time waving the handkerchief up in the air. Upon reaching this place each takes several side steps to the right, then retreats backwards until reaching the original starting place, still flourishing the handkerchief. (This lasts for three lines of the verse). The whole thing is then repeated but this time the dancers begin slightly from the right. Fig. 2. (Last three lines of the verse).

Again we point out the similarity between the figures executed in the first two diagrams and the "do-si-do" of the United States dance. Although a slight variation of the American figure, it is even more of a resemblance than
was the figure in the Resbalosa.

The dancers now being in their original places they will salute each other with handkerchiefs, first to the outside and toward the right, see fig. 3, and in the following manner: advance the left foot and then do a "giro", or turn on oneself, both dancers doing this simultaneously. The right hand, in which the handkerchief is held, is lowered to the height of the chest then raised high and flung toward the outside, this movement describing a circumference, the whole figure being executed gracefully with the arm extended. The dancers are now back to back. (First line of the second verse).

The second salute is done as follows: The right foot is drawn back and the "giro" is repeated in the same direction as before, the partners returning to their original positions, facing each other. The salute is to the inside, with more pause in the bow than before. Fig. 4 (Second line of the second verse).

Here is another figure used in the dances of the United States. The salute is quite commonly used to begin the Quadrille. With the exception of the hand-
kerchief the maneuver is exactly the same as in the **Quadrille**.

When the guitarist begins the last two lines of the second verse, the dancers will do a special turn or "giro", a complete turn in place to the left, always whirling the handkerchief aloft. **Fig. 5**.

The final figure consists of a half circle to the right (without the handkerchief, this having been fastened around the shoulders), the dancers imitating castanets. Upon arriving at the place their partners had been occupying, they will each do a small "giro", and will advance to the center, the man raising his hand to the height of his partner's head as though crowning her. This ends the first part. **Fig. 6**.

The second part is a repetition of the first, the partners being in reversed positions.

It is interesting to note here that the maneuver executed in figure 6, that of crowning, is quite typical not only of these dances but also those of Europe.
Gato

When the couples are in place the singer will give the signal to begin, the man advances to his partner and takes her right hand with his left.

(In order to understand this maneuver better an explanation follows: the man advances to his partner and offers his own left hand, palm down and the woman offers her right hand, palm up; the man takes the hand and lifts it up on a level with his partner's head, causing her to make a turn to the left. Fig. 1. After making the turn, another form of the "giro", the partners still holding hands, the man places his left hand on his partner's waist and in this position both will do a polka while traveling in a complete circle. Fig. 2. (This takes place during six lines of the first verse).

This variation of the "giro" as illustrated in fig. 1 is another maneuver used in both European and United States folk dances.

The third figure is done in the following manner:
the dancers advance one step toward the center, then finding themselves face to face will join right hands, lift then up even with their faces and will make a complete turn to the left, in place. (This figure is called a "molinetę".) Then, without letting go of hands they will advance to the center where they will meet the opposite couple, the man offering his left hand to the woman of the opposite couple and executing another "molinetę"; the man then returns to his starting place while the woman changes place with the opposite woman in a move quite similar to that figure of United States dances called "two ladies chain". Fig. 4.

The "molinetę", in addition, is another figure quite common to American "square dances". In this country it is called a "turn" or "allemande to the left".

The next figure is the same as the third, with the exception that the women are in opposite places. When they meet again in the center they exchange right hands once again and return to their original places. Figs. 5, 6.
Then the guitarist stops playing and the first man begins his "relacion" or recitation, which we have described before in this study. (See page 11.)

After this the music again begins and the dancers again take hold of hands, the man with right holding the woman's left and thus they again execute a polka while moving in a half circle, the couples exchanging places. Fig. 7.

Here is another form familiar to people of this country, namely the Polka. Although it is incorporated into the dance rather than being used as a separate dance as in the United States, yet it is exactly the same step and performed in the same position.

The dance then goes through figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 again.
Then the woman gives her "relacion" and the dance continues with a Polka.

This time the polka step takes the couple to the center where the man causes the woman to do a "giro" by dropping his right hand and twirling her about under their upraised left hands. Fig. 8.

The second part is a repetition of the first with the couples beginning in the opposite places from those in which they started.

The Gato Forteno is much simpler in form than this dance and does not include either the polka step or the "molinetes". It is composed, roughly speaking, of figures 1, 2, 7 and 8 of the foregoing dance.

Pericon

This dance, even more than the ones already described, incorporates into its choreography many figures used in our own folk dances. It is more complicated in design, however, therefore a small outline of the different figures is given before more detailed directions are presented.

1-face to face 9-arms shoulder high
2-the mirror 10-the jar
3-"zarandeo" to the center 11-large wheel and "relacion"
4-"giro" and to place 12-the running chain
5-half chain with opp.partner 13-two wheels (crowning)
6-"molinetes" to the center 14-a little walk
7-crown your partner 15-the "pabellon"
8-waltz while circling 16-intertwined chain
The dance is done by several couples lined up in the form indicated in figure 1.

1-Face to face

This refers to the position taken by the dancers at the beginning of the dance.

The dance begins with a "zarandeo" to the left, a movement reminiscent to some of those used in our Reels, except that the partners follow each other and promenade in two circles continually imitating castanets. Fig. 1.

The formation itself seems to be a combination of the Reel and the Quadrille.

2-The mirror

The men standing in the left column take one step to the front, each with his right foot, then each takes the left hand of his partner and executes a "giro" and remains facing the public as in fig. 2. The ladies of the same side will also take a step, each with their right foot and will do a "giro" to the right as shown in fig. 2. The left hands should be raised high by each couple to form the mirror. The man will place his right
hand behind him, waist high, in order to take the right hand of his partner at the proper time.

The men on the right side will each take his partner's right hand in his own right and will take steps with his right foot in order to cause his partner to effect a semi-circle, or "giro", as shown in fig. 2.

This figure reminds one of our own dances in the form of "giro" used here but it also suggests some European dances in the "tableau" effect which it produces.

3- "Zarandeo" to the center

The couples, who are now facing the public, will each execute a complete turn in place without changing the positions of the hands. Fig. 3.

This figure is the nearest thing to our "swing your partner" but is done a little more slowly and deliberately.

4- "Giro" and to places

The men on the left side without losing the left hands of their partners will each cause his partner to do a "giro" to the right placing them in the position of fig. 1,
the man meanwhile doing a half "giro" and returning to his original place.

The men on the right without losing their right hands each will cause his partner to do a half "molinete", will himself execute a "giro" as in fig. 4, and return to his original place.

This maneuver utilizes the "turn" of the American Quadrille.

5-Half chain

The first and the third women now execute the figure "two ladies chain" as done in our own dances with the exception that after passing each other each one cuts across the path of the other. Then each continues on to do a "turn" or "molinete" to the left with the opposite man and goes back out to the center to "chain" again and go back to place.

6-"Molinete" to the center

The women advance to the center and all execute the well known "ladies grand chain" while the men effect a face to face with their nearest "partner", imitating castanets. The women may change hands and circle in the opposite direction, according to the directions of the "bastonero" or caller.

The relation of these figures to those of our own dances is self evident.
7-Crowning your partner

The men on the left will kneel on the left knee and each will take his partner's right hand in his left; she then will make a "giro" at his side, or completely around him, and with her left hand will lift her skirt. Fig. 7. The dancers on the right will do the same using the right hand and knee.

This figure is more the "tableau" effect found in European dances.

8-The little waltz

In regular waltzing position the couple will waltz completely around a circle. Variations such as changing
partners progressively depend on the caller.

This, of course, is exactly the same figure as that in our own dances even to the variation.

9-Arms shoulder high

This maneuver is exactly the same as our own "promenade", the exception being that the men are in front of the women instead of being behind as in our dances.

10-The jar; put and take

The woman will place her hands on her waist, this figure representing a jar, then will move forward the man following behind and alternately sliding his left and right hands in and out of the arc made by her arms. They will describe on complete circle. This is called "put and take".

11-Large circle or wheel

All the dancers will form a circle, take hold of hands and will move slowly around to the right exactly as in our figure "eight hands around". Fig. 9

12-Recitation (relaciones)

This has been described on page 11.

13-The running or moving chain

This figure is the same thing as the "grand right and left" of our dances, the men moving counter clockwise and the women clockwise. One variation occurs when the partners meet. They then execute a "molinete" and continue on around. Fig. 10.
13-Two circles or wheels

This figure must be preceded by a single circle, all holding hands, which will be formed after completing figure 10. At a signal from the caller the women drop hands and step in toward the center to form a smaller circle, take hold of hands and continue in the same direction. The men again take hold of hands but move their circle in an opposite direction. At a signal from the caller, the men clap hands once and then duck in under the arms of the women. The men join hands again by reaching around the backs of the women who are still holding hands. In this position they move about to the right in a circle. Fig. 11.

This is like the figure "ladies bow and the gents bow under" in a Quadrille.

14-A little walk

This is nothing but a walk around a circle with the partners arm in arm. It is simply a rest for the dancers.

15-The "pabellon"

The men will each take his partner's left hand in
his right, then with his left will raise one end of a handkerchief over his head. The woman will take hold of the other end of it with her right hand will stretch the kerchief out so that it extends over both their heads, the couples then moving in a clockwise circle once around. Fig. 12.

This again is more of a "tableau" effect although it is also a variation of a "promenade" as we know it.

![Fig. 11](image1)

![Fig. 12](image2)

16-Interwoven chain

After the preceding figure, at a signal from the caller, the dancers will face out, still in a circle, the women joining hands and forming a circle, the men in an inner circle doing likewise but joining hands so that they reach around the women, very similar to the figure done in fig. 11, with the exception that everybody is facing out. In this position the group moves clockwise in a complete circle. (The handkerchief still in the man's left hand and the woman's right.) Fig. 13. Finish
The men will kneel still holding the kerchief by one point, those on the right holding it with that hand and those on the left with the left, the women holding it with the opposite hand from that of the men. The dancers are in two lines as at the beginning.

The men arise and place the handkerchief on the shoulders of their partners as a gesture of crowning her. Fig. 14.

Figure 13 is exactly like figure 11 with the exception that the dancers face out instead of in. Again we note that it is merely a variation of our own "ladies bow and gents bow under".

Figure 14 is more reminiscent of the climax of several European dances with its pictorial form.

Fig. 13

Fig. 14

Media-Caña

This dance, like the Pericon, has an outline given at the beginning, a feature quite common to many of our own dances.
The outline gives you the figures of the dance, the explanation merely illustrates them in detail.

**Pericon tempo**

1. The couples take their places fig. 1
2. Complete circle and giro...
3. Zarandeo and giro (canto 1)...
4. Pase, first couple...
5. Zarandeo and giro (canto)...
6. Pase, second couple...
7. Zarandeo and giro (canto 3)...
8. Pase, third couple...
9. Zarandeo and giro (canto 4)...

**Gato tempo**

10. Pase, first couple...
11. Salute and giro (canto 5)...
12. Pase, second couple...
13. Salute and giro (canto 6)...
14. Pase, third couple...
15. Salute and giro (canto 7)...
16. Complete circle and giro (canto 8)...
17. Salute and giro (canto 9)...
18. Retirada (pericon tempo)...

Fig. 1. This is a lineup of the couples in the dance, exactly the same as in the "Virginia" reel and other reels.

Fig. 2. The man takes the right hand of his partner in his own right and her left in his own left, the hands being crossed in front of the body. The couple then walks side by side around the circle.

This, of course is merely a variation of our "promenade".
Fig. 3. The men do a right flank and then go down and back, going down on the inside and coming back on the outside. The women also do a right flank but they go down on the outside and come back on the inside. Then all simultaneously do a "giro".

A similar step in our dances is the "cast off" of the reels. However, it is done by only one couple at a time in the reel.

In the South American version the dancers also imitate castanets, although they never actually use them.

Fig. 4. The first man advances to the center and offers his right hand to his partner and both execute a "molinete", then he goes to the second lady, offers her his left hand and does another "molinete", then advances to the third lady and, offering her his left hand, does a fourth "molinete", then goes back to the center to do a "giro" with his partner, using right hands.

The woman executes the same figure as the man only does her "molinetes" with the other men.
After the final "giro" the woman is in the place of the third woman and the man occupies the spot of the third man. The other couples at the same time move on down one place in the line. While this is done castanets are imitated.

Here is a figure quite similar those used in reels. It would be perfectly in place in our dances.

Fig. 5. All the dancers face their partners and advance to the center, face to face, salute each other, imitating castanets, and then turn backs to their partners and return to their starting places. They simultaneously execute a "giro".

This figure is similar to the one in our dances in which all take hands and then advance to the center and then back. It is found in Quadrilles.

![Fig. 5](image)

Fig. 6. The dancers will do a right flank and move around in a complete circle with "giros" thrown in according to the pleasures of the dancers.

This figure is exactly like one in a Quadrille -entitled "Indian Style", with the exception of the "giros",
Fig. 7. All will do a flank movement to face the public, the couples will cross arms as in fig. 1, then will move in a circle ending up in a half circle as in fig. 7. Then all women will execute a "giro" simultaneously, the men loosing the women's right hands and turning their partners about. The dance ends with all executing a bow.

![Diagram of dance movement]

This is a variation of the "promenade", might be termed a "half promenade".

**Cuando**

Minuet tempo: The two people who do the dance begin it in a position facing the public. The man gives his right hand to his partner who takes it in her left, they both raise them to the level of their heads, take four steps forward, loose their hands and bow to each other; then they join hands again, the man this time with his left and she with her right, they turn their backs on the public and again take four steps forward,
still in time with the music. Fig. 1.

The couple then does a right flank and each walks in time to the music four steps to his left, see fig. 2. The woman goes ahead and he follows, she with her hands on her hips and he with his behind him. (This lasts for two lines of the verse.)

These figures, although not related to our own dances are familiar to those who recognize the Minuet.

Gato tempo: The couple must be prepared for the change in the rhythm and tempo of the music. The dancers will lift their arms to the height of their shoulders and imitate castanets with their fingers, make a slight turn toward the right and then proceed in a circle, counter clockwise, continuing until making a complete circle. (Second verse) Fig. 3.

When four loud chords of music are heard the caller shouts "cuando, cuando, etc." and the dancers begin to execute a "giro" each in his own place, first to the right (two lines), and then to the left. (last two lines of
the verse. Fig. 4.

At this place the music has begun a "Punteado", or section with no singing; the woman puts her left hand on her waist, lifts her skirt with her right hand and does a series of small circles, all the time facing her partner who is executing a "zapateo". Fig. 5. Then four more loud chords are heard and fig. 4 is repeated.

Minuet tempo: In the final figure the dancers are once more in their original positions and repeat fig. 1. This ends the first part.

The second part is an exact repetition of the first.

The following are some additional figures found in other dances which are quite similar to some figures in the
dances of the United States.

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

This is an arch formed by the joined hands of one couple under which the other passes. A similar figure is used in the American dance called "Dip and Dive the Ocean Wave".

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

This figure is called "Advance and Retreat". Given below is a similar figure from our own dances called "Right and Left through". This, of course, is only part of the figure.
This figure is called, "Two men change". Our own dances have a similar one known as "Head two gents cross over". Part of it is given here.

One characteristic common to the dances of both the United States and Latin America is the use of singing calls and songs to accompany the dancers. They are given by callers who shout out directions for the dance. Although the styles of the callers from these two regions differs, yet they have much in common. Both call out the directions for dancing and for moving from one figure to another, both direct the program of dances for the evening and both
often introduce their own variations of the calls in order to make them more interesting, and both give their calls in exact rhythm with the music in order to keep the dance progressing accurately.

One of the most famous "bastoneros", as the South American caller is named, is Carlos Spaventa. Given below is one of his calls, along with a literal translation, taken from records made by him. This dance is entitled, "La Firmeza"! (1)

**Spanish**

| Daraste una vuelta con tu companera,         | Execute a circle with your partner |
| Con las tras trazera y a la delantera;     | With the one behind you, with the one before you; |
| Retirate un paso dande un abrazo;          | Take a step back embracing your partner; |
| Otro poquitito con el elmodito;            | Now once more with elegance; |
| Una mano al hombro que te correspondo;     | Now one hand on the shoulder and she will do likewise; |
| Desde costado le daras un besito;          | When you are resting you may kiss your partner; |
| Ay no, no, no, no! que me da verguenza;    | Oh no, no, no! it makes me ashamed; |
| Lavate la cara yo to doy licencia.         | Wash your face now, I will allow it. |

It is interesting to notice the flowery and poetic style of call as compared to the technique of the United States caller, one of whose calls is given below. Although the "bastonero"s calls are more poetic they are not as clear as those from our country. Given below is a Waltz (1) *Bailes Nacionales*, (Boston Album ES4)
Quadrille.

Head couples down center
And there you'll divide

The lady go right
And gent the left side

Bow to your partners
And corners the same

And swing on the corner
To the waltz promenade

(This continues on for nine verses)  (1)

(1) The Square Dance, p. 192-3
CHAPTER IV

TYPICAL DANCES OF THE UNITED STATES

So much has been written about these dances by people who have made an extended study of them and who have a rich background to help them form their judgments that this study will rely almost entirely on their selections for examples.

Similarly, because these dances are so much more familiar to many in this country, the writer feels that a detailed discussion of them here would be a case of "exploring ground already well trodden", to quote a well known phrase.

Instead the discussion will be confined to the main types and their origins, with perhaps an example of each.

**General types**

**Quadrilles**, composed of two couples, the dancing being a combination of the "loose" Type, the dancers not making too close contact with each other in their figures and the closer contact as evidenced in that figure called "seizing your partner".

Its origin is undoubtedly French, the name itself suggesting it. In addition, such terms as "Chassez" and "dos a dos", often called "do-si-do", are definitely
French. Many of these terms came from the early French dancing masters who came to the colonies to recoup personal fortunes squandered abroad and who traveled up and down the Atlantic coast giving lessons.

Attention should be called here to the misuse of terms and names so evident in these dances but also very common in Latin American dances. This accounts for much of the mis-understanding and confusion that exists regarding correct names and authentic origins of terms and names of dances.

As an example, Contra dances are sometimes called country dances or country dances. Contra, as the name suggests, means against or opposite to and refers to the position the dancers assume before beginning this dance. To support this statement here is a quotation from a student of American folk dances. She says, "To get the whole business straightened out once and for all, here's a little formula: Contry dances plus Quadrilles equal Country dances." (1) Country dance, in this respect, does not merely mean a rustic dance.

Although no definite reference is made as to their origin, the starting position of the men and women before beginning the dance, i.e. in two parallel lines,

(1) Beth Tolman and Ralph Page, The Country Dance Book, p.83
suggests an English origin.

The types of dances included in this form also suggest a relation to English dances. The Irish Jig, the Scotch Reel, the English Hornpipe, either are English or show similarity to English dances.

Of course, they have been adapted by the people of different sections to conform to their customs but that is true of any folk dance in any country. They even vary in form considerably in different sections of this country.

Another form of dance of this country includes that group which performed from a "close contact" or waltz position. It includes the Polka, the Mazurka, the Scottische and the Waltz itself. The latter has come to be regarded as a modern ballroom dance since being accepted into those circles but it is still performed quite generally in connection with the country dances. The other three are of Polish origin and like the Quadrille, undoubtedly came over here directly from Europe. But all have found their place in our country dances although they have maintained their original forms pretty well, being used principally as a contrast to the Quadrilles and the other country dances.
Given below are examples of each type of country dance of the United States.

Quadrille

Figure One

(Wait first eight bars, addressing partner, then your corner)

First four half right and left 4 bars
Promenade across and back 8 "
Half right and left to place 4 "
Same four ladies chain 8 "
Promenade 8 "
Ladies grand chain 8 "
Balance and turn partner 8 "
Sides now repeat same figures.

Figure Two

First four forward and back 4 bars
Forward again and four hands half around 4 bars
First four ladies chain 8 "
Forward four 4 "
Half right and left to place 4 "
Grand right and left 16 "
All balance and turn partners 8 "
Sides now repeat same figures.
**Figure Three**

All join hands and circle eight hands around 8 bars

Four ladies grand chain 8 "

Grand right and left 16 "

Eight hands around 8 "

Four gentlemen grand chain 8 "

Grand right and left 16 "

All forward and back, turn partners 8 "

All promenade to seats. (1)

**Virginia Reel**

Music: First part "Irish Washerwoman", second part "White Cockade", third part "There' ll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." (1)

Form Country Line-up.....Six or Eight Couples in a set

All forward and back 4 bars

Forward again and reel partner with right arm 4 "

Forward again and reel with left arm 4 "

All forward and back 4 "

All turn partners with right hand 4 "

All turn partners with left hand 4 "

All turn partners with both hands 4 "

All dos a dos with partner (2) 4 "

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(1) Beth Tolman and Ralph Page, *The Country Dance Book*, p.67
(2) Ibid, p. 114
Hornpipe
(Form Contry line-up........Six or Eight couples in a set)

First couple down the outside and back 8 bars
Down the center and back 8 "
Six hands around 8 "
Right and left four 8 "
Fourth couple also start the dance (3)

Jig
(Form Contry line-up........Six or Eight Couples in a Set)

First three couples forward and back 4 bars
Turn partners half around with right hand 4 "
Same six forward and back again 4 "
Turn partners to place with right hand 4 "
First two couples down center and back 8 "
First couple cast off, right and left four 8 "
Fourth couple also start the dance (4)

(3) Ibid, p. 120
(4) Ibid, p. 101
CHAPTER FIVE
MODERN POPULAR DANCES OF THE TWO PEOPLES

A close scrutiny of the modern dances of these two regions reveals that there seems to be even more similarity between them than there is in the folk dances. There also seems to be more knowledge concerning the form and music of the dances of one region among the peoples of the other region, and a ready acceptance of them. They seem willing to embrace these foreign dances and admit them to be as interesting as their own. Perhaps it is because these people have had actual contact with the dances that the latter have flourished and grown in popularity in these "foreign" regions.

Thus the Tango, of South America, came North and the Foxtrot, of the United States, went south and both dances attained considerable popularity in their unfamiliar surroundings. So well known did each dance become in its new field that not only was it adopted into the cosmopolitan circles but it also traveled to less aristocratic circles.

In the United States this was more evident because of a much less noticeable class difference than in the countries of South America. What was accepted in the more cosmopolitan circles of eastern United States soon spread
to other sections of the country through the medium of radio programs and phonograph recordings.

In addition, the fascination of the Latin American rhythms led to the introduction of other modern dances from this sector, namely the Cuban Rhumba, the Brazilian Conga and Samba and others. Typically Latin American dance orchestras such as those of Xavier Cugat and Enric Madriguera, which feature their native dance rhythms, are quite popular today in this country.

Similarly the Foxtrot, introduced in aristocratic circles such as Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Santiago, Mexico City and Havana became very popular and was accepted by these circles, eventually spreading its popularity over most of South and Central America. Its popularity has led to the introduction of other United States popular dances of the faster type known here by the general term "jitterbug music."

This ready acceptance of dances from other countries may have also been brought about by the fact that the dances that were introduced had several points in common with the "home" dances. Specifically, the Tango and the Foxtrot are both danced in a waltz position, they are both in duple meter, their steps are fairly similar and both are rather simple in form so that they can be changed to meet the desires of the dancers. Nevertheless, each
one has traits that are distinctive enough to attract the attention of those not familiar with it; the Tango with its strongly accented and often syncopated first beat and the Foxtrot with less smoothness but a more sprightly rhythm, almost jerky at times.

What are the origins of these dances that are now such "close relatives"?

The Tango was introduced into Buenos Aires in the nineteenth century undoubtedly coming from Spain. Its forerunners were the Spanish Milonga, from which dance it copied its choreography, the Cuban Habanera, from whence came its rhythm and the Spanish Tango Andaluz, which gave it little other than its name.

The Foxtrot is undoubtedly a development of the Two Step, existent in this country for a long time. The origin of the latter is not certain but it is supposed that it came from Europe in some form. Like some of the folk dances it seems to have a history rather difficult to trace down.

Another dance very popular in both regions today is the waltz. In both sections it is used in the folk dances as well as in the modern dance. Its form is practically identical in the two sections; its origin is the Austrian Landler. However, it is much slower than the Landler, and its descendant the Viennese Waltz.
Another modern dance of the South American region is the **Ranchera**. This is an adaptation of the Polish **Mazurka** but is not nearly so popular as the **Tango**. According to Carlos Vega it is now danced only in the rural sections.

A slightly different type of dance now very popular especially in Central America and Mexico is the **Bamba**. Although its form suggests the folk dance it is quite popular in cosmopolitan centers today. It is danced with partners in two parallel lines, exactly as in our **Reels**, and includes figures used in this type of dance such as the "cast off", and the "do-si-do" as well as the "turn" and the "allemande".

Another dance that was formerly quite popular in the United States, the "**Big Apple**", is also very similar to it in form. The figures are somewhat similar and both are done to a fast, hopping step and are set to a quick rhythm suggesting that both had a common origin.
As this investigation comes to a close it seems to the writer that certain conclusions can be drawn from the facts presented.

In the first place this study has revealed that although the dances of the two regions have certain characteristic traits yet they have many figures that are quite similar in nature and that the forms of some of them show unusual likenesses. This is all the more remarkable when one considers the great distance separating the two sections and the lack of information in one group regarding the folk dances of the other people.

This would seem to suggest that the dances must have had a common origin, or at least similar origins. The study has shown that most of these dances did have their origin in Europe, some from the southern part and others from section farther north. Although the origins are not the chief point of interest of this investigation, it might be of interest to mention what Violet Alford and Rodney Gallop believe regarding
the origins of the folk dances of Europe. They state that no country can claim to have a completely original dance; that dances of one country are related to those of another; that dances as apparently different as those from Spain and England in reality must have had a common origin. (1)

Secondly, it has been shown that when the people of these regions do come in contact with the dances of the other peoples, as in the modern dance, they have found them quite acceptable and have adapted them to their own use and have even desired more.

These points, that there is so much in common in the dances, that the people themselves find the "foreign" dances so acceptable, indicate to the writer that the peoples themselves do have common interests and desires and are fundamentally the same.

(1) Violet Alford and Rodney Galop, The Traditional Dance
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