

In Argentina, Tango is an expression which extends far beyond the dance floor. Rather, it is a unique cultural phenomenon revealing porteño cultural identity and social history. This paper will explore Tango expressions of song lyrics, and their reflection in various narratives, within a discursive analysis of diverse sources such as literature, popular culture and media reportage. In effect, the ubiquity of tango-derived expressions shapes a distinct 'language' -or metacommentary - commonly understood by Argentines, with broad-ranging meanings apart from the obvious denotation of the words. These meanings represent decades of historical Argentine experience. The crisis of Argentina in the twentieth century, and particularly in 2001-2003, will be elucidated by the investigation of cultural meanings uncovered by what the researcher terms 'tango lingo'.