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Beyond Binarism: Exploring a Model of Living Cultural Heritage for Dance

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This essay, inspired by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, explores meanings and definitions of the term “cultural heritage” as it may be applied to dance. UNESCO’s effort to include many different types of human expressions in its lists is commendable and an important attempt to safeguard the aspects of the world’s cultural heritage. However, the binary oppositions of ‘tangible’/‘intangible’, frequently used to describe material and immaterial elements of culture and heritage create a false dichotomy. This label is particularly problematic for dance, given its complex, multi-dimensional nature in which intangible and tangible elements are indissolubly linked. Instead, we suggest an alternative perspective of "living cultural heritage" which is informed by three post-dualist conceptions contained within Giddens’ Structuration theory (structure -agency), Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (mind-body) and Bourdieu's theory of cultural practice (field-practice-habitus). This essay introduces the idea of a living cultural heritage by using the above post-dualist concepts as a stepping stone towards a more inclusive and fluid model of

heritage. In this model, the cultural, embodied, practical, spatial, temporal and artefactual elements of cultural heritage are retained as each contributes to an emergent process of exchange and dialogue resulting in cultural heritage.

Body; dance; intangible cultural heritage; dualism; duality; UNESCO

Introduction

This paper is inspired by the 2003 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), but seeks to move beyond the concept of intangible, by proposing the alternative perspective of “living cultural heritage”. By defining intangible cultural heritage, the 2003 UNESCO convention expands UNESCO’s previous 1972 definition (which focused only on buildings, monuments and sites) to include practices, traditions and performing arts such as dance. It represents a progressive move away from a static and strictly materialistic view of cultural heritage, towards a more comprehensive and dynamic perspective. Since 2003, many practices, traditions and performing arts have been added to the UNESCO’s lists of intangible cultural heritage. The lists now include: traditional craftsmanship, such as the smoke sauna tradition in Võromaa, Estonia; social practices and festivals, such as the coming forth of the masks and puppets in Markala, Mali; oral traditions, including the Vedic chanting in India; knowledge concerning nature, such as the Andean cosmovision of the Kallawaya and performing arts of different types, including Iraqi maqam, Wayang puppet theatre (from Indonesia) and Tibetan opera. Dance forms on UNESCO lists include: Argentinean tango, Spanish flamenco, Chhau dance from India, Bigwala music and dance from Uganda, Huaconada from Peru (UNESCO, 2014).

UNESCO’s effort to include many different types of human expression on its lists is commendable and an important attempt to safeguard aspects of the world’s cultural heritage. However, we agree with Naguib (2008) that the use and interpretation of the term intangible

is problematic to describe the complexity of human practices, because of the polarities implied by the notions of tangible/intangible, which insert a false distinction, in the form of a binary opposition, between the material and immaterial elements of culture. Instead, building on insights from Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) and Ruggles and Silverman (2009), we argue that practices and the artefacts that surround them are embodied heritage, internal to all human beings and affecting us at physical and emotional levels. Therefore, the intangible and tangible are indissolubly linked and a preferred definition might be developed around the idea of “living cultural heritage.”

The label of intangible is particularly problematic when considering dance as heritage, given the central role that the human body has in the practice of dance, and because the phenomenon of dance is simultaneously emergent from, and constitutive of culture and society. Buckland (2001, 1) confirms the increased social science interest in the body and performance has ‘helped to raise the profile of dance as a significant academic site for cultural investigation’. This development has opened up channels for dialogue with other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In recent years, embodiment has been explored sociologically through dance in a range of ways including: cultural theory and everyday life (Thomas 2003, 2013) bodylore and bodily knowledge (Sklar, 1994, 2001), bodywork (Brace-Govan, 2002), embodied identity (Dyck & Archetti, 2003) and ageing, injury and identity (Wainwright & Turner, 2006). There are some notable early exceptions, Novak (1988) for example, incorporated dance as a key exemplar in her work on culture. One reason for this, Buckland argues, drawing on Connerton's (1989) distinction between incorporated and inscribed practices, is that dance ‘has a particular propensity to foreground cultural memory as embodied practice by virtue of its predominantly somatic modes of transmission’, thus making dance strongly relevant to discussions of cultural heritage through the incorporation of specific cultural elements (such as artefacts and movement vocabularies) into its practice.

Dance is also an inscribed practice as Blacking (1983, 97) illustrates, ‘the bodily experience of performance can also stimulate the imagination and help to bring new coherence to the sensuous life, which in turn could affect motivation, commitment and decision-making in other spheres of social life.’ Therefore, while culture is incorporated within dance, such dances are also inscribed with layers of shared meanings (which may be symbolic, narrative, emotional, aesthetic depending on the genre) making it not only a site of cultural reception but also a site of cultural production out of which a range of material or tangible phenomena emerge.

In what follows, first we provide a critical consideration of the UNESCO definitions of cultural heritage and of intangible cultural heritage. Next, we introduce the idea of living cultural heritage illustrated through dance and supported by selected elements of three “post-dualist” social theories: Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and Giddens’ Structuration theory. We focus specifically on the aspects of these theories that attempt to replace binary oppositions between agency/structure, body/mind and cultural fields/dispositions respectively with post-dualist explanations and suggest how these provide the conceptual underpinnings for the idea of living cultural heritage. We conclude by outlining the model of living heritage that uses the above post-dualist ideas as a stepping stone towards a more inclusive and fluid model of cultural heritage in dance. In this model, the cultural, embodied, practical, spatial, temporal and artefactual elements of cultural heritage are retained as each contributes to an emergent process of exchange and dialogue resulting in cultural heritage that is simultaneously tangible and intangible.

UNESCO’s definitions of cultural heritage and the problem of the tangible/intangible binary

UNESCO and other international organisations, such as the International Council on

Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) have, over the years, issued various recommendations, charters and resolutions on the topic of heritage, some of which include definitions (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Ahmad, 2006). However, for the scope of this article, we have focused on the two main UNESCO conventions (which define rules to which member states have to comply as law [UNESCO n.d.]) on cultural heritage. These two UNESCO conventions give definitions of cultural heritage, which represent a big shift in perspective and summarise years of negotiations. The first of these conventions took place in 1972 and the second in 2003. These two definitions reflect a change in attitudes and agendas towards cultural heritage for UNESCO and will provide the starting point for our analysis. Article 1 of the 1972 UNESCO convention states:

For the purpose of this Convention, the following shall be considered as "cultural heritage": monuments ... groups of buildings ... of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; sites ... of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. (UNESCO 1972, 2)

According to Munjeri (2004, 13) ‘What qualified as cultural heritage was deemed to be stable, and static and having “intrinsic values”.’ However, as Isar (2011, 45) points out, ‘The World Heritage List would inevitably be skewed towards those countries richly endowed with buildings (mainly monumental) and places that satisfied criteria elaborated by experts whose value judgments reflected their own cultural moorings’. This resulted in Europe being overrepresented, at the expense of countries that had fewer monumental buildings. According to Isar (47), it was the election of a Japanese diplomat, Koïchiro Matsuura, to the role of UNESCO Director-General in 1999 (Japan being a country in which there was already strong awareness of “intangible” heritage), together with the emergence of the ‘combat for cultural diversity’ in international cultural politics, that led to the 2003 UNESCO convention on intangible cultural heritage. However, Schmitt (2008) argues, on the other hand, that the

process that led to the 2003 convention first started from the need to protect Jemaa el Fna Square in Marrakech. In any case, the 2003 Convention was very significant and both events certainly played a role in its development. According to Article 2 of the 2003 Convention:

“Intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

The above is a much more inclusive definition of heritage worthy of being protected by UNESCO, including a wide range of activities, traditions, performing arts, not previously taken into consideration. This new definition, reflects a big shift in the field from what Bodo (2012, 182) calls an ‘essentialist’ ‘static’ paradigm of heritage, to a ‘dialogical’ one. Bodo further reflects that, ‘whilst in the former, decisions are made on what is worth preserving and transmitting to future generations, in the latter, this heritage is constantly questioned and rediscovered by individuals who breathe new life into it.’

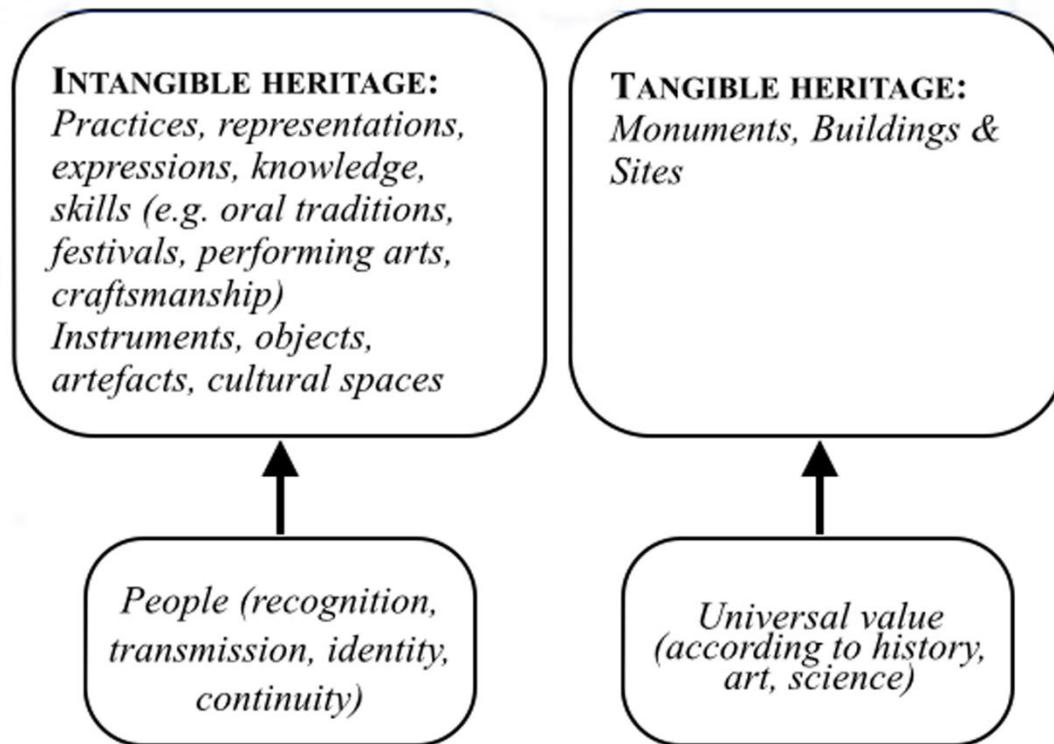


FIGURE 1: HERITAGE BASED ON UNESCO'S 1972 AND 2003 DEFINITIONS

Figure 1 illustrates this point graphically, by summarising and showing the idea of heritage that emerges from the 1972 and 2003 UNESCO's conventions. In this model, the elements that UNESCO includes in the definition of intangible cultural heritage are on the left, completely separated from what is included in the 1972 definition, which we have labelled as tangible in opposition to what UNESCO considers intangible. However, the shift towards a dialogical view raises some important questions we consider below.

Moving beyond the in/tangible dualism: towards a post-dualist view of living cultural heritage

Although the 2003 UNESCO definition is a step forward towards a more open perspective of heritage, the label of intangible is problematic. The word intangible means that it cannot be touched, from the Latin *tangere*, to touch. However, in the English language, it may also mean vague. For example, according to the Collins Dictionary online (Collins, n.d.) it can

mean ‘incapable of being perceived by touch; impalpable’ but also ‘imprecise or unclear to the mind’. According to the Oxford Dictionary online (Oxford, n.d.), intangible means ‘unable to be touched; not having physical presence’ but also ‘difficult or impossible to define or understand; vague and abstract’. In this paper we have adopted the first meaning of the word intangible, the most literal one of something that cannot be touched. However, ‘practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills’ involve the human body to one degree or another (especially so in the case of dance) and are neither completely immaterial, nor vague, because, as the UNESCO definition itself states, they provide communities and individuals with a sense of identity and way of life. Moreover, the expression intangible cultural heritage creates a dichotomy between tangible and intangible domains, which is analogous to the mind-body Cartesian dichotomy for the way in which it separates the immaterial and material. Therefore, we consider, it is better to replace the dualism (two divided and distinct entities) of tangible vs intangible with the post-dualist idea of duality (a unity of two divergent aspects of the same reality), as a first step towards a model of heritage in which material and immaterial entities interact. The idea of duality is inspired by Giddens’ (1984) Structuration theory, which explicitly presents social structure and individual agency as a duality. A number of experts in the field of heritage have already highlighted the fact that distinguishing clearly between tangible and intangible elements in heritage is not possible. For example, as Howard points out (2003, 6), ‘things actually inherited do not become heritage until they are recognized as such.’ Hence, even tangible objects have value as heritage because of this intangible quality they are invested with. Similarly, Smith and Akagawa (2008, 6) ‘question the ... utility of polarising debate between “tangible” and “intangible” heritage. Heritage only becomes “heritage” when it becomes recognisable within a particular set of cultural or social values, which are themselves “intangible”.’

Smith (2006, 3) goes further, arguing that the in/tangible binary sustains an ‘authorized heritage discourse’ which privileges objects over people and practices, commenting, ‘all heritage is intangible. In stressing the intangibility of heritage, however, I am not dismissing the tangible or pre-discursive, but simply deprivileging and denaturalizing it as the self-evident form and essence of heritage.’ (4). Conversely, Skounti (2008, 77) contends ‘pure immateriality is a fiction: can something intangible exist?’ He focuses on the embodied dimension of heritage, identifying a spectrum that goes from the most intangible to tangible elements:

There is obviously a material dimension to every element of intangible heritage: the human brain and body that detain it, the book that retains a trace of it, the audiovisual material that captures its sound or image. Without this material dimension this element could not be shared, would not exist.

More recently, Naguib (2013) argued that tangible and intangible aspects of heritage are tightly interwoven. For Naguib (2008, 278): ‘The tangible is transfused into the intangible, and concrete objects evoke historical events, ways of life, social structures and practices, religious systems and beliefs.’ In this sense, Isar (2011, 49) considers:

All monuments, sites and artefacts embody intangible components such as spiritual values, symbols, and meanings, together with the knowledge and the know-how of craftsmanship and construction. Without these intangibles they would not have been made in the first place, nor would they have become ‘heritage’ today.

UNESCO itself introduces tangible elements in its intangible heritage definition: ‘The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith.’ However, Howard (2010, 4) struggles with the idea of intangible cultural heritage, so much so that he prefers ‘the concept of activities, as food and drink, for example, are quite tangible,

though not easy to conserve, and in this case it is the continuance of the activity that is sought.’ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004), like Naguib, is also wary of neat separations between tangibility and intangibility. She points out that there is increasing awareness of the ‘arbitrariness’ of the distinction between UNESCO’s natural, tangible and intangible lists, as these do not reflect the ‘real world’ overlap between the tangible, intangible and natural elements of heritage. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004, 53) adds that intangible cultural heritage is not a completely new invention:

The earlier folklore model supported scholars and institutions to document and preserve a record of disappearing traditions. The most recent model seeks to sustain a living, if endangered, tradition by supporting the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction. This means according value to the ‘carriers’ and ‘transmitters’ of oral traditions, as well as to their habitus and habitat ... like tangible heritage, intangible heritage is culture, like natural heritage, it is alive.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett introduces three key ideas that lend credence to re-framing the paradigm of intangible cultural heritage around the concept of living cultural heritage; namely traditions, the concept of heritage being alive and the term habitus. Each of these ideas will be developed further in this paper and linked with the social concepts being addressed.

For us, the link to address the dualism of tangible versus intangible rests with making connections between the post-dualistic social science literature, which presents powerful critiques of Cartesianism and offers alternative stances on human mind-body-society-environment-artefact relationships. More specifically, Merleau-Ponty’s ([1945] 1992) phenomenology and concept of habit fuses the ideas of perceptions, emotions and mind/body unity, a stance now supported by recent discoveries in neuroscience (Damasio, 2012); Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice and notion of habitus integrates cultural environment influences and embodied individuals. Lastly, Giddens’ (1984) Structuration theory collapses distinctions between structure/agency.

Each of these are important as they place people at the heart of society, its processes and structures which resonates with Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (2004) view that it is people who are carriers of "traditions" via their "habitus". Moreover, for Fairchild and Silverman:

Place and performance are bound together through the human body ... The dramatic shift in values implied in the Intangible Heritage Convention ... represents a radical paradigm shift from the objective nature of material culture to the subjective experience of the human being. (2009, 11)

The alternative model and definition of living heritage, which we propose, seeks to collapse the tangible/intangible dualism and to integrate embodied human beings with heritage.

In/tangible cultural heritage can be defined thus: "Living cultural heritage" is embodied by individuals, in connections with the artefacts they produce and use and the environment they interact with and it is expressed through practices, activities and performances. Living cultural heritage is also constituted by socially and culturally influenced traditions and conventions, as well as by the feelings and emotions of people and the way they relate to this heritage, including taste and perceptions. Heritage and human beings are indissolubly connected and continuously shape each other in an open ended fluid dialogue.

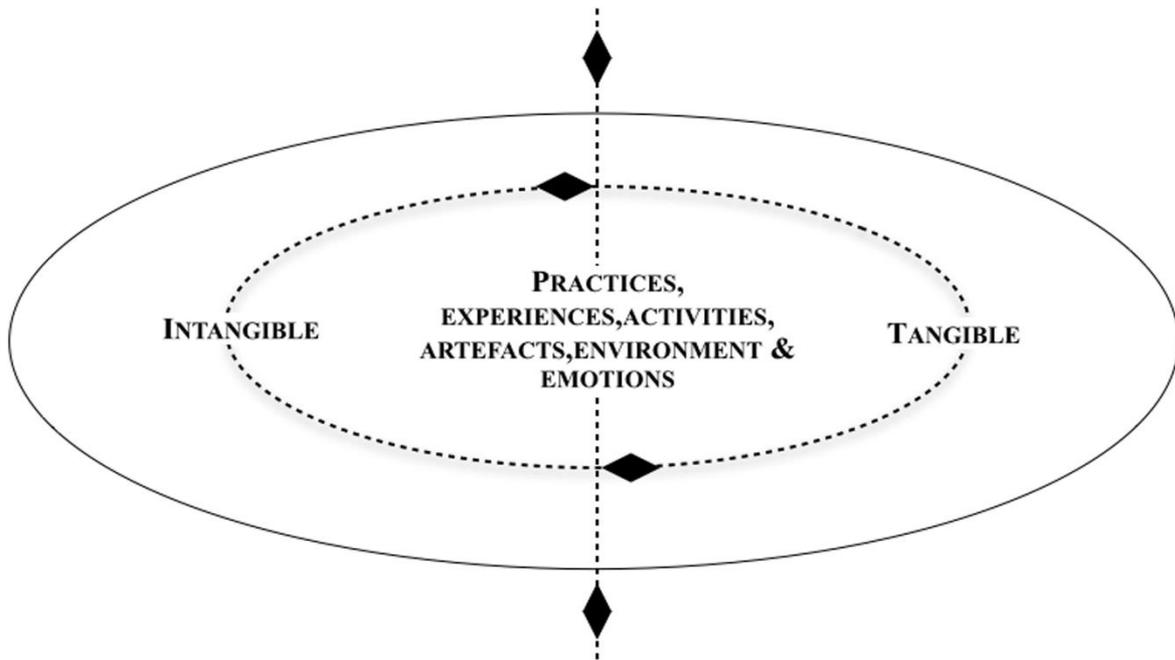


FIGURE 2: IN/TANGIBLE VIEW OF LIVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Figure 2 illustrates the starting point; the tangible and intangible elements not only overlap as they are currently expressed in practices, experiences and activities, but rather are infused with one another so that intangible and tangible elements combine and emerge as living cultural heritage through practices, experiences, activities, artefacts, emotions and environment. The arrows in the figure represent the idea of movement and reflexivity, the circular relationship between tangible and intangible elements as they interact. Similarly, the dotted lines represent movement and the vertical one is a fulcrum around which tangible and intangible move. In order to substantiate this, we now turn to the respective “post-dualist” perspectives offered in the theories of Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu and Giddens respectively, which will be drawn on with the activity of dance used alongside these discussions to show how these concepts apply to dance.

Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology: mind-(perceptual habit)-body holism

Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1992, 102) provides the first in/tangible perspective: that of a holistic

view of mind and body with the bridge being habit. He postulates, 'the union of soul and body is not an amalgamation between two mutually external terms, subject and object, brought about by arbitrary decree. It is enacted at every instant in the movement of existence'.

According to Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1992, 165), when we learn, we do so through our bodies, developing bodily habits, which are inscribed in culture and which change as we learn new skills, 'It is the body which "catches" (*kapiert*) and "comprehends" the movement. The acquisition of habit is indeed the grasping of a significance, but it is the motor grasping of a motor significance.' Kearney has already pointed out how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology:

Renders distinctions of tangible and intangible almost redundant as the only imperative status of tangible is held by the human actor and agent, as physical embodiment of culture and heritage. Through this 'being', human heritage is always and at once tangible and intangible...Most commonly deemed as that which cannot be seen or perceived through the senses, intangible cultural elements are often defined through their incorporeality. In phenomenological terms, this separation cannot exist. As such, any discussion of intangibility implicates tangibility (of the body). (2008, 211)

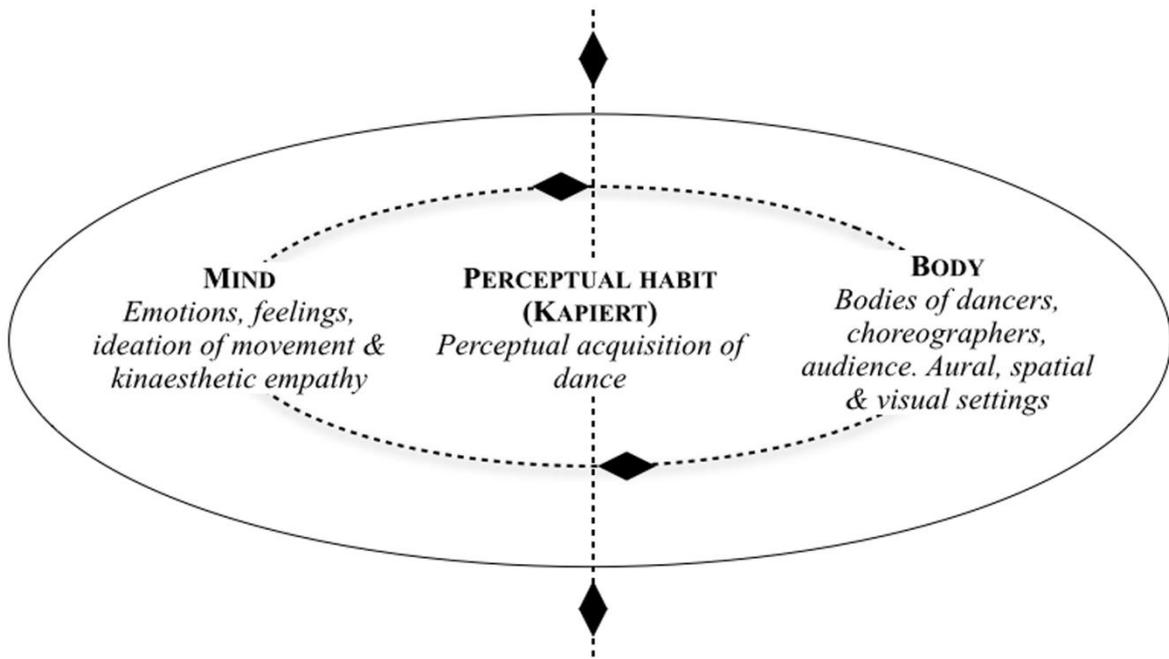


FIGURE 3: MERLEAU-PONTY'S MIND-(HABIT)-BODY DUALITY AND DANCE

Figure 3 illustrates how the tangible/intangible dualism becomes a holistic entity from a Merleau-Pontian phenomenological point of view. For phenomenology, perception is central, so perception is the overarching post-dualist element in this model. The mind corresponds to the intangible elements, the body to the tangible elements. As body and mind are a unity, they are constituted of a holistic amalgam of tangible and intangible elements of being. Perceptual habit is the way in which the body learns from and negotiates with the world around it. As Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1992) argued, skills are learnt in an embodied way, by enlargement of body schemata. A body schema is, as Bullington (2013) explains, ‘a description of the intuitive understanding of one’s own the body and its position in space’. Figure 3 also exemplifies how Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological perspective provides a perceptual “lived” focus to a form of cultural heritage such as dance. The intangible elements on the left are in the realm of the mind, they involve emotions and feelings elicited or involved in the dance; mental representations we have of codified dance movements and kinaesthetic empathy. The tangible elements on the right remain the bodies of people involved in dance:

dancers and choreographers as performers and creators, as well as the audience. Here the emphasis of the mind-body holism are the perceptual and emotional forms of intercorporeality. Perceptual acquisition of dance movements results in the forming of habits, as dance is learnt through the body and we cannot separate the tangible from the intangible elements. Indeed, as Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg argue (2002, 7) ‘Embodying ... in dance ... fuses the ideas with the movement and with the performer of the movement ... embodying a dance work fuses all the participants in the event in a multilayered tangible process’.

These articulations also point to other key elements in our perception of cultural heritage - time, space, light and sound. Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1992, 117) explains how time and space are connected with the body, commenting ‘by considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them.’ We also need to consider other perceptual-environmental elements such as sound and light, which Adshead (1988) includes in her theory of dance analysis (as well as other environmental elements such as location, natural and built environment). This point is particularly well illustrated by dance. The dancer, through movement, interacts actively with time (when movement synchronises with music and its rhythm, sound level), space (through the kinaesthetic positioning) and light (such as “mood” lighting in performances) each occurring through the body-mind as a perceptual unity.

The significance of the phenomenological holism is that it shows how dance heritage and the emotions are deeply, inseparably connected. A specific example can be found in Egyptian dance. When a dancer performs to folkloric music, according to Bordelon:

Arabic customers see movement they know and understand, recognize it as part of their cultural heritage, and echo that movement in their own bodies ... Some people get up and dance on stage, there is ... a physical empathy in the room. (2013, 39)

When dancing to traditional Egyptian songs, the dancer has the power to communicate to the audience the feelings that she perceives in the music and to create a shared sense of *tarab*, which in Arabic means ecstasy, transcendence, enchantment. As Bordelon continues:

The dancer evokes feelings and emotions from the music and lyrics and invokes images and memories from the past. The feelings produced by those memories, are, in turn, transferred to the current performance environment inching the dancer, the musicians, and the audience, towards a state of tarab. (2013, 42)

Through tarab, therefore, the dancer creates a connection with the audience who identify with her in that moment. The dancer becomes the embodiment of the music, the feelings and the memory evoked by the song, in such a way that ‘the audience members can identify with the dancer and thereby access the music in an entirely unique, physical fashion.’ (Bordelon continues 2013, 45). Connecting to the concept of mirror neurons can help explain where the neurological basis for this lies. Modern neuroscience supports the idea that body and mind are a unity; according to Damasio (2012, 21) ‘body and brain bond’. Moreover, the concept of mirror neurons can help explain the intercorporeal phenomena of kinaesthetic empathy (which is involved in the state of tarab) in neuroscientists terms. As Damasio explains (103): ‘So-called mirror neurons are, in effect, the ultimate as-if body device ... the simulation, in the brain’s body maps, of a body state that is not actually taking place in the organism.’ Another study by Barsalou et alia (2003, 44) highlights how the body can re-enact memories:

When an event is experienced originally, the underlying sensory, motor and introspective states are partially stored. Later, when knowledge of the event becomes relevant in memory, language or thought, these original states are partially simulated.

Depending on the situation, according to the authors, embodiment may range from simulation, to traces of execution, to full-blown execution. To further highlight the connection between body and emotions, a study by Sedlmeier, Weigelt and Walther (2011, 303) investigates how body movement can influence taste in music:

When ... music is listened to in situations in which "positive" body movements and muscle inner actions are frequent, this positive affect could become strongly associated with the music ... dancing might increase the liking for the music one is dancing to.

Kearney (2008) is surely right in her argument that embodied and emotional impact is very important in overcoming current dualistic heritage discourse. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty and modern neuroscience support the unity of body and mind, which, for dance heritage, means that we might better focus on how dance heritage emerges holistically between embodied individuals and their emotions, via a set of codified movements learnt with the body but also deeply embedded in their minds. However, while the mind-(habit)-body holism in phenomenology is central to better understanding dance heritage, an important gap remains: the specific social and cultural environments in which heritage is experienced and practiced. For this we turn to Bourdieu's theory of practice.

It is worth noting that Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty come from completely different disciplinary positions: phenomenology for Merleau-Ponty and a philosophical/sociological/anthropological background for Bourdieu. In spite of the inherent differences in these positions, Bourdieu's and Merleau-Ponty's ideas have been used together elsewhere to highlight the importance of a multiple perspective on the body. In proposing a paradigm for embodiment, Csordas (1990, 1993) brings together Bourdieu's issue of practice and Merleau-Ponty's concept of perception. Csordas (1993: 137) clarifies that:

Merleau-Ponty ... recognized that perception was always embedded in a cultural world ... at the same time, he acknowledged that his own work did not elaborate the steps between

perception and explicit cultural and historical analysis ... precisely at this point where Merleau-Ponty left off, it is valuable to reintroduce Bourdieu's emphasis on the socially informed body as the ground of collective life.

Bourdieu's theory of practice: Field-(practice)-habitus as reflexivity

Bourdieu's (1990:25) work sought to overcome the pervasive opposition between subjectivism and objectivism in social sciences, on which he commented, 'of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism in sociological terms.' In order to overcome such dualism, Bourdieu developed a reflexive sociological account focusing on the modality of cultural practice:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (for example, the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices. (Bourdieu, 1977, 72)

Therefore, the sociocultural environment via practice produces habitus which can also be read as a fusion of the in/tangible being part physical, part perceptual, because it consists of certain practical bodily dispositions, which are learnt by watching (perception), judging (appreciation) and doing (action):

Produced by practice of successive generations, in conditions of existence of a determinate type, these schemes of perception, appreciation, and action, which are acquired through practice and applied in their practical state without acceding to explicit representation, function as practical operators through which the objective structures of which they are a product tend to reproduce themselves in practice. (Bourdieu, 1977: 97)

The significance of the reflexive habitus-(practice)-field perspective, therefore, in the field of heritage is doubly important. Firstly, habitus is rooted in history; Bourdieu (1990, 56) states

that habitus is ‘embodied history, internalized as a second nature ... the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product.’ Therefore, habitus helps to think beyond the dualism of tangible bodies vs intangible rules and traditions, as habitus is physical, but also partly intangible being the location for the expression of social structures and the legitimate, valued practices and tastes they contain. The historic dimension of the field-(practice)-habitus inter-relationship is also important for a second reason, because it explains how cultural dance heritage is transmitted from the field to the habitus of the dancer (and viewer) through field specific practices.

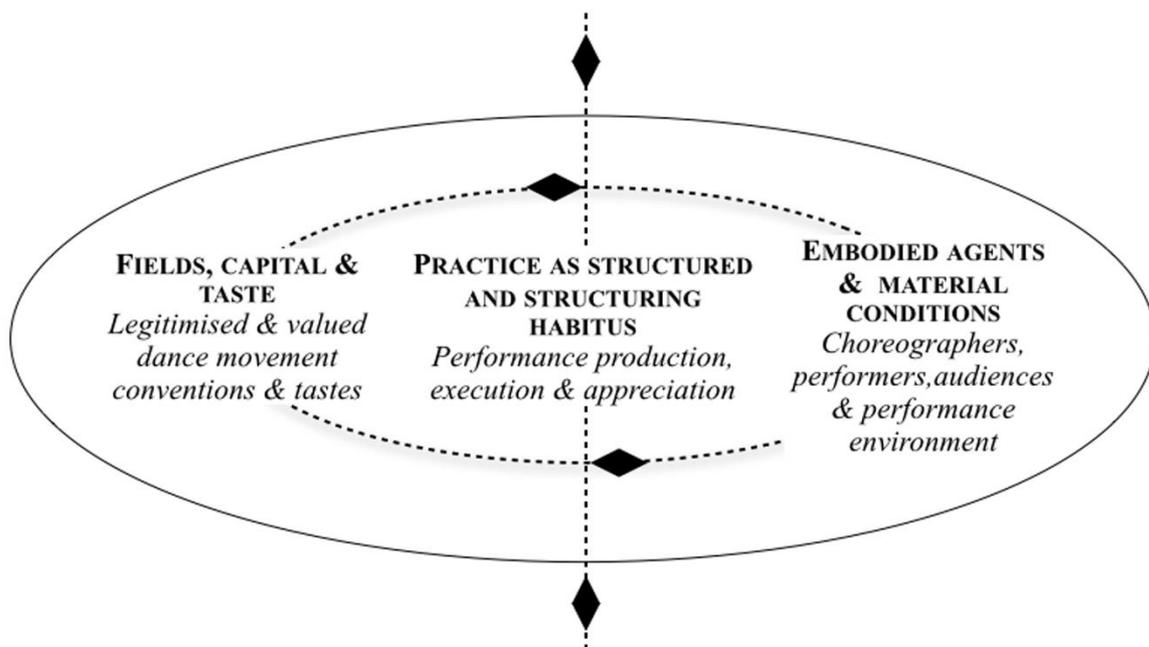


FIGURE 4: BOURDIEU’S FIELD -(PRACTICE)-HABITUS DUALITY AND DANCE CULTURE

Figure 4 illustrates Bourdieu’s field-(practice)-habitus duality according to the model we have suggested so far. The intangible elements we have identified in Bourdieu’s system are the orthodoxies of social fields such as practical conventions, shared value (capital) and tastes. Taste, according to Bourdieu, is influenced by the class to which individuals belong and is (Bourdieu 1986, 174) ‘a system of classificatory schemes which may only very partially become conscious.’ The tangible elements are the embodied individuals, the material

conditions of existence within the field and the cultural practices in evidence.

Figure 4 also illustrates dance as in/tangible cultural heritage, following Bourdieu's theory of practice. A dance genre, like other forms of art and literature, is a field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993), with its own rules and in which individual dancers, choreographers and audiences have interests at stake which involve different forms of convertible capital (for example, developing and converting physical capital - as practical dance performance - into symbolic capital/prestige, from becoming known as a great dancer and/or into economic capital from earning money from performances). The intangible elements (all culturally shaped) are the sets of movements and conventions of the dance, as well as the taste both of the audience and of those who create and/or perform the dance. The tangible elements are the embodied individuals and the performance is the moment in which the dance is expressed. However, performance, being a form of habitus, in this model includes conscious elements (such as consciously learning and performing a piece of choreography), and also ways of moving that are culturally and socially influenced, learnt and performed without the individuals even realising what the origins of those movements are and the reasons behind them.

As Butterworth (2012) argues, dancing bodies are influenced by the social and cultural background a person comes from and by their life experiences and beliefs and, according to Sklar (2001, 92) movements cannot be isolated from their cultural and social environment and 'movement systems are ... ways of thinking that embody different structures (and habits) for thinking.' For example, according to Ibsen al Faruqi (1978), dance in Muslim countries reflects the way other arts are expressed. Solo improvisational dance (in the West usually called belly dance), for instance, is traditionally abstract and improvised, much like visual arts, which are abstract because Islam does not allow the representation of real objects or living beings. Moreover, just like Arabic designs are characterised by minute and intricate

details, Arabic dances prefer small and intricate movements of the torso, rather than big movements of limbs or high leaps. According to Ibsen al Faruqi (1978, 10), ‘the beautiful details of an Islamic painting or building or dance remain hidden from the casual viewer. Only with that viewer's careful investigation of the minutiae do they disclose their treasure.’ Therefore, in building a conception of living cultural heritage, Bourdieu’s use of reflexivity is extremely important as it helps us to see how:

Social agents are the product ... of the history of the whole social field and of the accumulated experience of a path within the specific subfield...social agents will actively determine, on the basis of these socially and historically constituted categories of perception and appreciation, the situation that determines them. (Bourdieu, 1992: 136)

Bourdieu’s reflexive perspective of field-(practice)-habitus helps highlight how the dancing body takes in and (normatively) reproduces, in movement, some of the core values of a cultural field and society and, in so doing, bridges the in/tangible divide. Moreover, this view of cultural context helps to re-appraise Merleau-Ponty’s concept of habit as also dynamic and reflexive, because new actions create new habits, as we learn by changing our ‘body schemata’. This helps us to assert how living cultural heritage in dance is not only acquired through practice and habit, but also changeable according to changing cultural contexts and practices and a dancer's relationship to them. For further insight into this latter point we turn, finally, to Giddens’ idea of structure/agency duality.

Giddens’ Structuration theory: structure-(rules/resources)-agency as duality

Giddens (1984) developed Structuration theory in order to modify the dualism of agency and structure and, in particular, address the ‘problem of agency’ that according to him had existed up until that point in sociology. His solution was to propose structure (and agency) as a duality, arguing that, ‘By the duality of structure I mean that the structural properties of social

systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems' (Giddens, 1976, 69), suggesting that agency and structure are much more than coexisting but dual entities, but they inherently depended on each other, with the 'bridge' being the engagement with rules and resources. Giddens (1984, 171) postulates: 'Human societies, or social systems, would plainly not exist without any agency. But it is not the case that actors create social systems: they reproduce or transform them, remaking what is already made in the continuity of praxis'. In evolving the process of structuration as an explanation of continuity and change, he argues that structures are simultaneously external and internal to individuals. Moreover:

Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling. This, of course, does not prevent the structured properties of social systems from stretching away, in time and space, beyond the control of any individual actors. (Giddens 1984, 25)

There is, therefore, a dialectic relationship between individuals and structures, as individuals simultaneously draw on, challenge and reproduce structures through their own actions. The way in which individuals act on structures can be conscious, unconscious or in a third way that Giddens identifies: through practical consciousness which, 'consists of all the things which actors know tacitly about how to "go on" in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression' (1984, XXII). Daily repetition of the same actions, according to Giddens, gives individuals ontological security, a feeling of stability and continuity.

At the heart of Giddens' duality of structure and agency is also a perspective that helps us move beyond the in/tangible dualism in developing the idea of living cultural heritage. Giddens argues, structures comprise sets of rules and resources, which are simultaneously tangible and intangible. Individuals draw on rules and resources (structures) to act and,

depending on their knowledge of certain rules and access to certain resources, may find these enabling or constraining. The in/tangible duality lies in Giddens' articulation of how individuals draw on what he refers to as allocative resources or 'forms of transformative capacity' (1984, 33) to facilitate social action in ways which sustain and transform traditions. This relates to artefacts (and space, as discussed earlier) which are present in UNESCO's intangible heritage definition as 'instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces' (2003, 2). Artefacts are connected to the society and culture that creates them and the bodies that manipulate them and therefore can reasonably be considered as tangible resources or 'structural properties of social systems' which are 'both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize' (Giddens, 1984, 25). Burkitt (1999, 36) further articulates the transformative capacity of artefacts:

The term artefact refers to a created object in which human acting is embodied because it has been fashioned for some use within human practices ... certain forms of bodily carriage and movement appear, or ways of handling objects and manipulating them, which are culture specific. Thus, our way of 'being in the world', of acting, knowing and thinking, is largely dependant on artefacts and how they re-form embodiment.

This point about artefacts echoes Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1992: 166), as 'habit expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments'. Hence, artefacts can become extensions of a person's body when they learn how to use them through habit.

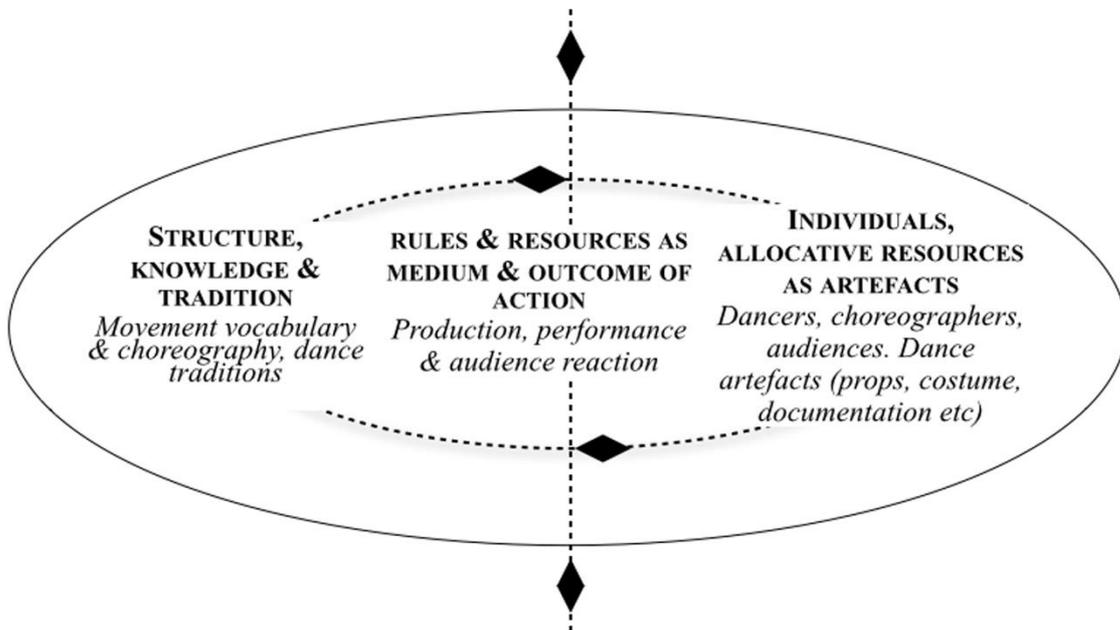


FIGURE 5: GIDDENS STRUCTURE- (RULES/RESOURCES)-AGENCY DUALITY AND DANCE

Following Burkitt and Merleau-Ponty, the skills and artefacts mentioned in the UNESCO definition are allocative resources connected to each other and are also, in turn, embodied in the individuals that form part of the fields which produce those skills and artefacts. Skills are intangible and connect with Giddens' rules in terms of how best to use these artefacts. Figure 5 represents the core duality of Giddens' agency and structure relationship and how they relate to the in/tangible duality as presented in the process of structuration. Social systems are constantly reformed by the interplay of individuals and structures; the intangible elements are structures (that generate rules, resources and opportunities for/constraints on social action); individuals are the tangible elements, as they have bodies that allow them to interact with structures through actions (praxis). Figure 5 also illustrates how this model informs living cultural heritage in dance. The intangibles are the structures of a dance genre, such as its movement vocabulary, choreographies and conventions, all of which form a body of traditions. The tangibles are the bodies of the individuals involved with dance: dancers, who perform; choreographers, who design the choreography (if the dance is choreographed and not improvised); the audience as they can influence the dance through their reactions.

Artefacts can include props (for example, finger cymbals or veils for raqs sharqi), costumes, stage settings and technologies of various type involved, for example, in producing lights, in the recording of dance (such as video cameras) or in the reproduction of images or sound, as well as objects such as DVDs on which videos are recorded or paper on which dance notation is written. The duality of structuration is represented through the social action /praxis of dancers, choreographers and audiences drawing on in/tangible rules and resources to produce, perform and observe dances through which traditions are continued but also challenged and modified.

Such a view accords with Hodgens (1988, 75) who takes both permanent and ephemeral aspects of dance into consideration as she acknowledges that dance is:

firmly embedded in specific conventions and traditions ... Within genres and styles, however, there is considerable freedom and fluidity. Their specific conventions and traditions are general enough to allow for the creation of dances which are individual and, in their overall effect and meaning, unique. They also demonstrate a gradual evolution or development under the influences of changes in the culture and changing choreographers and performers.

The above quotation highlights the intangible and traditional aspects of dance as a living form of cultural heritage (conventions and traditions) with the tangibility of the individuals who transmit and change this heritage and the artefacts drawn on to accomplish these. The structure-(rules/resources)-agency duality in Structuration theory thus helps us to understand how conventions and traditions that comprise (dance) heritage are resources and rules that individuals draw on, and, in so doing, they reproduce and change.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was three fold. Firstly, we highlighted the artificial distinction between the tangible and intangible in UNESCO cultural heritage discourse embedded in its

definitions of cultural heritage, as per UNESCO 1972 and 2003 conventions. Second, we expressed the view that this conceptualisation is especially problematic for dance. Third we have sought to move beyond this dualist position towards the holistic idea of "living cultural heritage". We express this position as a conversation of tangible and intangible elements. This view is informed by post-dualist perspectives as a series of conceptual tools, to aid the shaping of a view of cultural heritage in dance as one which refuses to isolate the tangible and intangible elements it contains.

We define the concept of "Living cultural heritage" as embodied by individuals, in connections with the artefacts they produce and use and the environment they interact with and as expressed through practices, activities and performances. Living cultural heritage is also constituted by socially and culturally influenced traditions and conventions, as well as by the feelings and emotions of people and the way they relate to this heritage, including taste and perceptions. Heritage and human beings are indissolubly connected and continuously shape each other in an open-ended fluid dialogue.

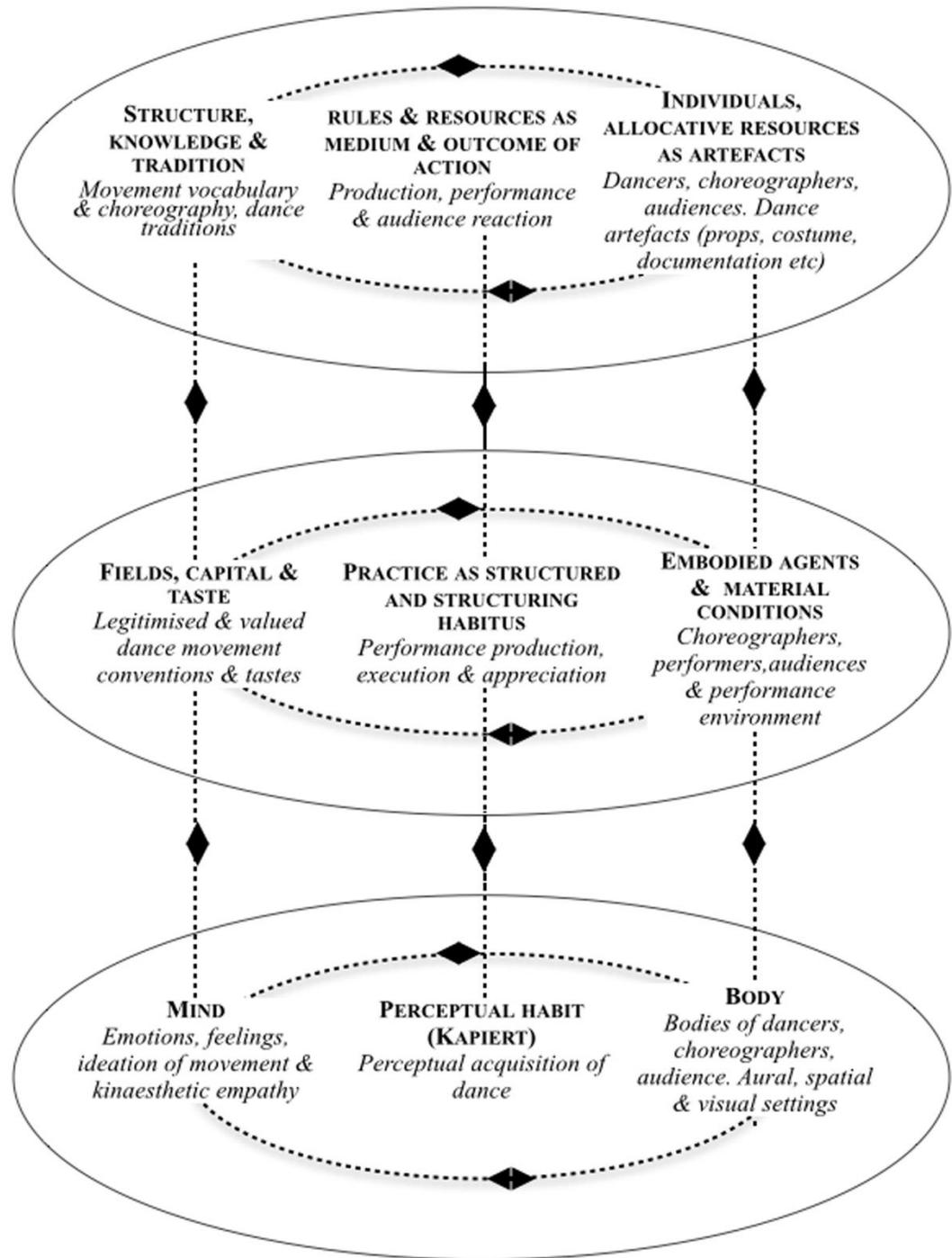


FIGURE 6: MODEL OF (IN/TANGIBLE) LIVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Figure 6 is intended as a visual representation of the above definition of living heritage. It illustrates how the post-dualist perspectives that we have drawn together in this paper (Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Bourdieu's theory of practice and Giddens' Structuration

theory) can be brought together to inform an inclusive idea of dance as living cultural heritage. The figure illustrates how heritage is much more than either tangible or intangible, but it is a phenomenon that includes people (with bodies and feelings), space, traditions, cultural values, objects etc. These elements all coexist and interact continuously. The vertical lines in this figure show the connections between the three perspectives. The elements of the model applied to dance connect with, compliment and extend aspects that Adshead (1988) identifies as important in analysing dance. For Adshead, the elements of the dance are: dancers, movement, visual settings and aural elements. The tangible elements include embodied individuals involved in the dance, artefacts and environmental elements, which we have split into visual settings (which include space and light) and the aural elements (such as sounds and music), as they have quite distinct functions for dance. Light and sound have been considered tangible as they are physical phenomena. The intangibles include the movement vocabulary, choreographies, emotions and feelings, conventions, taste and cultural and social influences. The moment in which dance is expressed and enacted is the performance, when all these elements come together. Performance refers to any instance in which the dance is expressed; it can be a performance for an audience, a rehearsal, dance recorded on video, a teacher showing the movements to the class.

The model of living heritage for dance provides a structured (in the sense that it accords with certain recurrent principles of sociocultural dynamics), but at the same time fluid framework, for the protection of dance forms. Dance is tangible and intangible at the same time, as well as exhibiting qualities of ephemerality (as argued by Mackrell [1997]) and permanence (as, McFee remarks [1992], when he refers to choreography as the 'recipe' that allows us to recognise the same dance piece even when performed at different times by different people). Even when it is not choreographed, dance is embedded in tradition, as discussed. At the same time, dance is fluid and flexible because people involved have the

freedom or agency to innovate, even while remaining connected to traditions. However, the amount of agency that individuals have in innovating the dance, as well as the relationship between traditions and how individuals experience them, varies depending on the society and the genre of dance in question. For example, the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance in the county of Staffordshire and the Britannia Coco-Nut dance of Bacup, in the Rossendale Valley of Lancashire, studied by Buckland (2001) are based on traditions that have been kept as unchanged as possible for hundreds of years, with very little space for innovation. At the other end of the spectrum there are forms of dance which are very open to experimentation, such as post-modern dance (Daly et alia, 1992), or genres that initially appeared in hybrid form and continue to be influenced by a variety of different cultures, such as belly dance (a label that includes genres as diverse as Egyptian raqs sharqi or modern American tribal) as highlighted by Sellers-Young (2013).

In any pursuit of protecting and/or documenting dance as heritage, the model of 'living heritage' helps to identify the many in/tangible pieces that make up the 'puzzle' of dance. For example, in documenting dance as heritage according to this model, it is insufficient to limit ourselves to transmitting the movements, or to writing notations or filming the dance. On the other hand, it is not enough to just document the context of the dance, whilst ignoring the movements. In order to document a complex phenomenon such as dance, we need to document movements, feelings (by recording interviews given or refer to texts written by the people involved), cultural context, artefacts and everything that helps assemble this complex cultural puzzle. This is a process that has already been started by dance scholars such as Novack (1988), who analysed dances from the physical as well as cultural point of view. The framework of living heritage expands Novack's view on dance and connects it with the heritage discourse, in order to facilitate dance's broadest possible transmission and documentation. Finally, connecting dance with the broader heritage

discourses through the model of living heritage, will allow dance to be elevated in value as a vital part of human world heritage, but on its own terms, without being forced into pre-existing heritage models, none of which make justice to dance in its entirety.

This model is not intended as a construction particular to dance, but it can be adapted to other specific forms of heritage (such as traditional martial arts and other ritualised physical activities). To varying degrees, all heritage contains both tangible and intangible elements which are social, cultural, physical, material and emotional, all of which cannot be disconnected from each other. Differences in the type of heritage would, of course, need to be taken into account, particularly the fact that the body can be more or less central in other types of heritage (being very central in dance and other expressions of physical culture but less so, although still present, in monumental heritage, for example).

Hence, we consider that the perspective of living cultural heritage for dance developed in this paper, offers a principled conceptual starting point to facilitate further critical scrutiny of how specific forms of living physical cultural heritage come into being, are passed on and, therefore, how they might best be protected. Finally, an important aspect this perspective of cultural heritage can illuminate, which is beyond the space of this essay, is the increasingly rapid transmission and transformation of dance as living cultural heritage as it takes place across social and cultural time and space, un-restricted by geographical boundaries. This will be the subject of future enquiry.

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