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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Performance, Practice, and Possibility: How Large Scale Processes Affect the Bodily
Economy of Cambodia's Classical Dancers

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

Celia Johanna Tuchman-Rosta

March 2018

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Sally Ness, Chairperson
Dr. Yolanda Moses
Dr. Christina Schwenkel
Dr. Deborah Wong

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2018

The Dissertation of Celia Johanna Tuchman-Rosta is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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A portion of this dissertation is a revised and expanded version of material I published in 2015 titled "Intangible Heritage in Motion: Classical Cambodian Dance at a

New Year's Festival in Siem Reap" that appears in *Dance, Narratives, Heritage: 28th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology*. Material I published in 2014 in "From Ritual Form to Tourist Attraction: Negotiating the Transformation of Classical Cambodian Dance in a Changing World" that appears in the *Asian Theater Journal* is cited in the dissertation as well.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Lok Da Chheng Phon who devoted his life to the perpetuation of the arts in Cambodia and to the all the generations of dancers who continue to maintain and develop Cambodian artistic practices inside and outside of the country.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Performance, Practice, and Possibility: How Large Scale Processes Affect the Bodily Economy of Cambodia's Classical Dancers

by

Celia Johanna Tuchman-Rosta

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Anthropology

University of California, Riverside, March 2018

Dr. Sally Ness, Chairperson

Classical dance has been tightly woven into discourses of national and international heritage as a representation of Cambodian cultural identity, particularly after the country's devastating civil war in the 1970s. This dissertation articulates how Cambodia's classical dancers and teachers negotiate the effects of large-scale processes, such as heritage development policies, on the art form and their bodies. Several scholars and dancers have developed perspectives on the revitalization efforts of the classical dance form in the period after the Khmer Rouge Regime, but this dissertation fills a gap in the documentation of the role that international nongovernmental organizations and tourism have on dance production.

The dissertation research in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in 2011 and 2012 traced the training and performance activities of practitioners at a broad range of arts NGOs and

tourism venues to examine the large-scale processes that affected the lives of practitioners. To demonstrate the deeply woven connections among global heritage, tourism, NGOs, nationhood and Cambodia's dance artists, this dissertation first articulates the process through which classical dance transformed from ritual practice to global commodity while maintaining ritual functions. Second, it demonstrates how practitioners navigate their personal corporeal economies—the labor of practice and performance—to balance the benefits of their bodily work with the possible alienation of their bodies being commoditized. Third, it shows how UNESCO intangible heritage directives are interpreted and embedded in local contexts, creating paradoxes for dance practitioners. Fourth, it develops a web-based model for understanding classical dance production, preservation and development in Cambodia—a social web that practitioners must navigate to survive. And finally, it further develops Bruner's (2005) borderzone concept, expanding it into a borderzone field, to analyze the experiences of both audiences and performers in tourist settings.

The amalgamated framework proposed in the dissertation, including tourism, heritage, development, and economic theory is necessary to peel away layers of phenomena from the global to the local while unpacking their links to the lived experiences of classical dance practitioners.

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Preface

I have chosen to translate terms from Khmer to English where possible, with the exception of a few major genres of dance. Where translation isn't possible or detracts from reader experience, I use the transliterations provided in Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts documents. When these are not available, I use the transliterations introduced by Paul Cravath (2007). For non-dance related terms I use the transliteration table from the Documentation Center of Cambodia.¹ When abbreviations are used, they will be noted in parentheses after the first use of the term. Cambodia has been known by many names, The Kingdom of Cambodia, the Khmer Republic, Democratic Kampuchea, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, and the State of Cambodia—each of which corresponds to a particular political period in Cambodia's recent history. For ease of reading, I have decided to call the country Cambodia, unless the time period or political situation is integral to the discussion. While some of the troupe and company names as well as the positions and titles of some individuals discussed in this dissertation have changed in the years since the research was conducted, in the dissertation the names and titles of the 2011-2012 period of research will be used unless otherwise stated. Below are some key terms regarding the genres of dance. Other transliterations are defined as they come up and are collated in Appendix C.

Robam boran is a Khmer term referring to a specific genre of dance most commonly translated as classical dance in current literature. This genre the main focus of this dissertation. For a long time, robam boran practice was associated with the royal courts, but it has since 1970 been *officially* separated from the royal family. I generally

refer to this dance genre by the currently accepted Khmer term *robam boran* (which literally translates to ancient dance) or classical dance. When discussing this dance practice prior to 1970, I will use the term court dance to denote its connection with the royal courts. When referring to the practice in Angkorean times ritual dance will be substituted. This change in terminology is meant to demonstrate the fluid nature of the classical dance form. There are four main character types in *robam boran*: *nirong* (male gods and male royalty); *neang* (goddesses and female royalty); *yak* (giants and demons); and *swa* (monkey). Female dancers perform all of the dance roles with the exception of the monkey role. A female dance teacher is respectfully referred to as *Neak Kru*; a male dance teacher is referred to a *Lok Kru*.

Other performing arts forms mentioned in the paper include *lakhon khol* (the all-male masked dance drama), folk dance (a genre of dances created in the 1950s and based on the dances or traditions of various ethnic groups in Cambodia), *bokatao* (a Cambodian form of martial arts), *sbek thom* (giant shadow puppet theater), and *yike* (a form of Khmer opera). While these art forms were not initially part of the dissertation project, they became naturally entwined in my research. Many performers found versatility and training in multiple genres to be an economic necessity. Folk dance is particularly important because it is a part of nearly every tourism show (see Appendix C).

¹ The Documentation Center of Cambodia was founded in 1995. The organization's objective is to archive and record material generated by the Khmer Rouge Regime. The table developed in 1998 provides an imperfect standard for transliteration from Khmer: http://www.dccam.org/Database/GIS_Database/Transliteration.pdf.

Introduction

Setting the Stage

The preparation for a performance begins long before an audience arrives and the curtain rises—similar to the planning, research, and analysis that occur while writing a dissertation. This introduction articulates the process through which the material presented here was developed, lays out the main research objectives, and outlines the project’s theoretical framework using the artistic events of a particular day in Phnom Penh to document their importance in the development of classical Cambodian dance. It begins with a description of that day in Cambodia, and its relevance to the effects that heritage policy, tourism, national ideology, international support, and bodily labor have on the development of the dance form and the dancers’ experiences—the main focus of this work. The subsequent sections explain the path that led me to conduct research in Cambodia and articulate the methodological strategies used in the research. Next, the introduction provides an outline of the regional and anthropological literature that influenced my theoretical framework, followed by an overview of the chapters ahead. Finally, it details the contributions that this project makes to anthropological theory and scholarly discourse on Cambodia and Southeast Asia.

The expected afternoon stillness at Cambodia’s National Museum in Phnom Penh never materialized. The subdued glow of the sconces on the red colonial façade revealed the bustling preparations of performers. A portable stage was constructed in front of the museum doors. At the back of the stage, a panel of black cloth stretched along the outer edge of the museum terrace transforming the patio into a surprisingly

spacious “backstage” area necessary for the dancers’ quick costume changes. It was December 1, 2011, the first “*A Children of Bassac Performance at the National Museum of Cambodia*” for the 2011-2012 dry season.² Mainly geared towards tourists, the Children of Bassac weekly performance was the most expensive in Phnom Penh with an US\$18 ticket price. As such, international guests and a smattering of elite Cambodians (often acquaintances of the troupe founder) were given first-class treatment while friends of the performers were invited to fill unsold seats and overflow onto plaza benches near the side of the stage.

December 1 was particularly packed. I spent the earlier part of the day at the Khmer Art Theater in Takhamao viewing dance demonstrations that were part of a Goethe Institute cultural exchange: *Tanzconnexion* (see Figure 1). This was the second meeting of the three-part program designed to inspire new choreography in Southeast Asia. Classically trained choreographers from Thailand (Pichet Klunchon), Indonesia (Eko Supriyanto) and Cambodia (Sophiline Cheam Shapiro), artists from their companies, and a few other guests came together with the support of the Goethe Institute Asia Pacific region to explore the creation of contemporary dance rooted in Southeast Asian tradition. From there, I traveled directly to the National Museum for the Children of Bassac performance. I negotiated my way up the stairs and behind the curtain to find a state of organized chaos (see Figure 2).

I greeted one of the folk dance teachers, Neak Kru Thyda and the regional program coordinator Song Seng—both busy preparing for the event. Thyda was on the phone getting a colleague to buy bananas for the ceremonial offering. Apparently there

was an oversight, and they were never purchased! Seng was talking to a young man that I hadn't seen before and asked if I would help him.³ He was a reporter for a small journal and needed information about the performers and performance before the show. I walked with him backstage answering questions about the costumes, the offerings, and the training process. I also translated into English the artists' responses to his questions about why they danced and what the dance meant.

A sudden flurry of excitement drew our attention to an event on the other side of the museum. Dancers and musicians already prepared for opening night were whispering to each other inclining their heads towards the fence dividing the patio where attendees at the neighboring event focused their attention on a speaker at the podium. The artists on our side of the fence were focused elsewhere: on a petite woman with dark, straight, shoulder-length brown hair. She glanced momentarily at the performers, and they brought their palms together, their fingertips just above the bridge of their noses and bent their knees as much as possible. In response to the journalist's query, I responded that this woman was HRH Princess Buppha Devi, the current Artistic Director and Patron of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia and former Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, who had been a star performer of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia in the mid-1960s. He asked, "So this performance must be a pretty big deal then?" I replied that I was fairly certain she was there for a separate event and explained that the dancers in the Children of Bassac performance were familiar with her because of her role in the dance world and because many of the performers in the Children of Bassac Troupe also attended government-run training programs.⁴ After the Children of Bassac performance my suspicions were

confirmed. The princess had long since departed, but the event on the other side of the patio was still going on. A guest recognized me and waved me over unconcerned that I didn't have an official invitation. She explained that the event was an opening reception for an exhibit of photographs developed from a set of negatives of classical dancers taken in the 1920s by George Groslier that had been stored indefinitely in the national archives. The Princess had been there to officially open the exhibit.⁵

Earlier, standing backstage with the journalist, my attention was refocused on the performance about to take place when one of the dancers ran up and cautioned us, "If you are watching the performance, you had better take your seats!" We both hurried down the stairs just in time to see the dancers do the same and sneak surreptitiously behind the audience in the dark. Hidden behind the large potted bushes that form part of the picturesque landscaping of the museum, most of the performers gathered in a semi-circle huddled together holding small bowls containing a candle in each hand and preparing to present a theatrical Samphea Kru ceremony (see Figure 3).⁶ In this staged version, the leader lit each candle out of sight of the majority of the audience. He then led the dancers down the central aisle and onto the stage. The dancers arranged themselves in diagonal lines radiating outwards from the shrine so that the audience would have a better view. They sat with their weight on one hip and knees bent at sharp angles so that the soles of their feet pointed behind them, and began to chant a prayer to the ancestor spirits of the dance. One performer played the role of a layman who chanted Buddhist prayers and sprinkled blessed jasmine water on performers and audience members with a flick of the wrist (see Figure 4). As the brief ceremony came to a close, the dancers rose and

approached the shrine each taking one item off the shrine table and exiting the stage.

When the last of the artists picked up the table and left, the stage was finally set for the first piece: Apsara Dance, a dance that has become symbolic of the classical dance genre as a whole.

Just as the 30 or so artists, teachers, and volunteers set the stage for the opening night performance in the courtyard of one of Phnom Penh's landmarks, in the pages that follow, the events of that day can be seen as setting the stage for this dissertation project. While giving voice to groups of Cambodian dancers rarely heard from (those on the outskirts of the Royal Ballet and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts community), it peels away layers of phenomena from the global to the local that have a bearing on Cambodian dance development.⁷ It sorts out the deeply woven connections between global heritage, tourism, NGOs, nationhood and the artist in Cambodia's dance world.

Early on, the goal of this project was to explore how globalization, in particular tourism, continued the revitalization of classical Cambodian dance after decades of war in the country. This recovery project was particularly significant in the wake of the cultural devastation of the Khmer Rouge Regime (Democratic Kampuchea 1975-1979) where an estimated 90% of Cambodia's artists died from a combination of malnutrition, disease and execution. Toni Shapiro's 1994 dissertation *Dance and the Spirit of Cambodia* documents the beginnings of the process of revitalization, the reemergence of classical dance after the war in refugee camps and various provinces in the immediate aftermath and the reconstruction process that occurred in Phnom Penh under the wary supervision of officials in the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Shapiro's dissertation

includes vivid descriptions of international touring and briefly mentions the growing financial enticements of cultural tourism, but the focus is on the how classical dance creates a sense of order and rootedness for a people that so recently had been uprooted. I build on Toni Shapiro's work exploring the revitalization efforts moving into the new millennium, but almost 20-years later, the dynamics of dance development had dramatically changed.

Perhaps most importantly, many of the young artists that I worked with in the country had no personal memories of the civil war—some were born in the post war period. For them, dance practice wasn't about recovery from war, it was about finding a sense of cultural identity and a struggle to find a solution to economic difficulties in the midst of external pressures. As demonstrated by the events of December 1, by 2011 the tourism industry and arts development NGOs had exploded and interconnections between international, national, and local agencies involved in dance production were a complex tangle that the artist had to negotiate to survive in Cambodia's steadily recovering economy. While recovery from war was still an element of the larger dance development narrative, the younger dancers did not always identify with this cause. Thus rather than looking at dance as a framework for cultural survival the dissertation project documents how the dancers engaged with international and national processes.

My work explores how international, national, and local levels of social experience affect the embodied understandings of Cambodia's classical dancers and teachers as they struggle with the ways in which their art form, and in some regards their bodies, have become tourist commodities. It sheds light on the possible impacts that

heritage, tourism, and cultural programs have on Cambodian dancing bodies, providing insight into how heritage and tourism policies become embedded at the local level.

The exhibit opening demonstrated the historical depth of the classical dance form, including the legacy of royal patronage for Cambodian classical dance, and outside interest in it that culminated in international efforts of intangible heritage preservation in the post-war period. The role of NGOs in the development of the dance was more pronounced in the cross-cultural Goethe Institute exchange that took place earlier in the day exploring the boundaries of artistic exploration in the genre. The Children of Bassac performance demonstrated the role of both NGOs and tourism in the economic side of dance development, highlighting the bodily economy of the dancers and the negotiation between commercial development and ritual maintenance. Seeing the tourism performance and the exhibit opening side by side highlights the contradictions inherent in discourses of heritage development and preservation. These cases point to the major themes of the dissertation: 1) the process through which classical dance has become increasingly commoditized from its ritual and courtly origins. 2) The corporeal economy of the dancers as they labor to survive. 3) The importance of international discourses of intangible heritage on dance production and the lived experience of the dancers. 4) The interconnections between the state and the internationally funded NGOs. 5) The meaning-making potential of the tourism experience for both dancer and tourist. While used here to articulate the complexities of classical dance development, these themes provide a framework for the analysis of cultural development more broadly. The tensions between ideological discourses of cultural preservation and development that result in the

potential commoditization of culture traditions are echoed in many regions. The model proposed in this dissertation could be useful for understanding dance and heritage development elsewhere—particularly in regions with similar traumatic pasts.

The Road to Cambodia

My interest in dance, movement and tourism go back to my adolescent years in New York City. By the age of 12, I was dancing seriously at the Joffrey Ballet School, and I had already developed a fascination with how the body moved, and how it had the potential to transfer cultural knowledge (if imperfectly).⁸ I also was intrigued with tourism. Growing up in New York City, with its museums, shopping, landmark buildings, and double-decker buses careening down busy streets, tourists were everywhere—as were "real" New Yorkers muttering under their breath at visitors creating bottlenecks for pedestrian traffic. I also had the privilege of traveling within the United States and on occasional and much-anticipated international trips. When and where possible on these family trips, I attended and experienced performances of various types: a play in London, a ballet in Paris, a luau in Hawaii, a folk dance show in Greece.

As much as there is enjoyment in the experience of travel and the sensation of being somewhere new, I was aware that to some extent tourists are looking at a veneer, a polish coated over the reality of life in their destination. I also was cognizant of the importance of the performing arts for the display of identity and for increasing cross-cultural understandings. Foreign and domestic visitors imagined tourist destinations through iconic performance events. In New York City this was Broadway, in Italy it was opera, in London it was drama, and in Hawai'i it was the ukulele, coconut bras, and

longhaired women with sinuously moving hips at luaus. In the touristic imaginary of the world, dance and the other arts were symbols of the destination that permeated cultural boundaries.

While pursuing an undergraduate degree with a double major in dance and evolutionary anthropology at Rutgers University, I started to seriously contemplate these visceral sensory experiences. It was in a required class called “Seeing Dance” that I first experienced Cambodian Dance practices. The course professor, Jeff Friedman, invited several artists to give lecture demonstrations during the semester. One of the guest artists was a Cambodian dancer who specialized in the monkey role. After demonstrating movements from the dance genre and giving us a mini lesson, we all sat in on the floor of the studio to listen to his experiences. I was drawn in by his story of leaving Cambodia and the terror and loss he felt at the destruction of his culture.

I went to graduate school certain that I wanted to study dance and tourism, but unsure about a particular location. One evening during my first year of graduate school I was chatting with a fellow graduate student about my interests and my regional focus dilemma when the memory of the Seeing Dance demonstration about Cambodia re-emerged. Follow-up archival research deepened my interest and assured me that tourism and other global forces did indeed play a role in the revitalization of Cambodian classical dance practices. But without having visited the region, I was hesitant to commit. In the summer of 2008 I combined a preliminary research visit to the field with a presentation at a conference in Malaysia. Christina Schwenkel gave me the contact information for Philippe Peycam (then the director of the Center For Khmer Studies), and Philippe

Peycam introduced me to Suppya Nut, who was working on an oral history project about classical dance. I also thumbed through guidebooks (see Chapter One) and attended all the performances I could. Before I left I had even secured a private lesson with a family of dancers working in the tourism industry, an exchange where I gave them a contemporary dance lesson in return.⁹

More pieces fell into place at the conference in Malaysia. Toni Shapiro had organized a panel at the symposium devoted to Cambodian dance that included presentations from Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and one of her teachers, Penh Yom. As a result I was able to spend time talking to prominent classical dancers from whom I received positive feedback about my preliminary research ideas. Within the month I found myself deeply tied to the study of Cambodian Dance and the region of Southeast Asia.

Methods: To Dance, To Watch, To Talk

One of the methodological challenges of my research was deciding how to determine the effects of large-scale phenomenon on dance development and the lives of practitioners. First, I had to figure out if the phenomena (e.g. tourism and national policies) had an effect on the practitioners. If I found that it did, I had to figure out how it was expressed to get at the heart of what the effects might be. The difficulty was finding methodological strategies that would give me insight into two domains that seem miles apart—larger structures of cultural development and the embodied experiences of performers—and find the connections between them (cf. Marcus 1998, 119).

I decided to adapt traditional methodological approaches including participant observation and intensive interviewing in a less traditional field setting (Lofland et al. 2006, 17). Working in the capital city, Phnom Penh, and in Cambodia's main tourist hub, Siem Reap, the traditional approach to fieldwork was not possible.¹⁰ The "cultural object of study" could not be "fully accessible within one site" (Marcus 1998, 117). Within each larger research zone, the project also was multi-sited since Cambodian dance development could not be isolated to just one training and performance location within these larger regions.¹¹

In the early weeks at each research location I designed a preliminary schedule to highlight the "heterogeneity" of Cambodia's classical dance world using a purposeful sampling selection to adequately capture the diversity of dance training and performance activities. I also wanted to be sure to include well-known dance troupes, less-known groups, established practitioners, and younger dancers at the beginning of their careers (cf. Maxwell 2005, 87-91). To locate sites I used guidebooks, online resources and word of mouth. In some cases luck was also a factor.¹² In the end I conducted frequent¹³ participant observation at 15 different performance and training locations, conducted 115 interviews with artists, teachers, administrators and officials, and conducted 32 brief interviews with groups of tourists at performance venues.¹⁴ Using this purposeful sampling selection allowed me to assemble a nuanced understanding of the complexity of classical dance activities in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.¹⁵

George Marcus (1998, 120-123) points to ethical challenges of this type of multi-sited research. Moving between "different kinds of affiliations within a configuration of

different sites” leads to issues “of use and being used, of ingratiation, and of trading information about others elsewhere.” Working with many different organizations and artists, it was vital to focus discussions within particular sites to protect study participants. Marcus also discusses the tendency of the anthropologist working in these conditions to move beyond the “distanced role of the ethnographer” and engage in activism in the field. He argues that the consequences of avoiding this may overpower the difficult ethical questions that come with it. While I do not think that this tendency towards anthropological activism is directly linked to multi-sited research, I certainly experienced the need to become actively involved in the field. These activities included giving advice at organizational meetings, teaching contemporary dance, helping with choreography, and helping with translation at tourism events. In each of these cases I was able to gain deeper insight into the events and activities at the field sites through directly participating.¹⁶

A significant portion of my research is based on the analysis of interviews. I conducted semi-structured and unstructured interviews with those involved in dance production and structured interviews with tourists in Siem Reap.¹⁷ Tourists were all asked the same five questions and answers were documented on site. This approach allowed me to keep the interview time short and rendered responses easily comparable. When tourists had more time to talk then we moved on to open ended questions. Because I generally had more time with interview participants involved in dance production, interview questions were tailored to the participant. This was necessary since respondents were coming from different professions. These participants included dancers, arts

administrators, and government officials who were confident in their role as interviewee, as well as performers who were not accustomed to the interview process. There were difficulties in both of these cases. In the first, participants often did not expect the sort of unstructured, open-ended interview that I was conducting.¹⁸ In the second, some potential participants struggled to find their voices while others were quite excited about participating and having their voices heard. One participant even wrote down the answers to questions when she arrived at the scheduled interview with laryngitis rather than rescheduling (cf. Tuchman-Rosta 2014).

In addition to interviewing and participant observation, personal participation in movement practice was integral to a deeper understanding of how larger processes were embedded in the dancers' lives. Like Shapiro (1994, 14), I practiced dance when given the opportunity.¹⁹ This included steady training in the first months of research with the Children of Bassac troupe without the expectation of proficiency—something quite unlikely given my age—as well as differing levels of participation in dance practice at two locations in Phnom Penh and two in Siem Reap. Practice in a variety of settings allowed comparisons of dancer experiences in locations with a variety of goals. Beyond the standard activities of participant observation such as participating in ritual preparation, helping with costumes, and performance set up (all where appropriate), training gave me insight into how the dancers and teachers experience the classical dance form.

In addition to the methods described above, I also borrowed some techniques from visual anthropology. Photo documentation has historically been an important aspect

of ethnography including in the work of Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead. Photography and video have also been key elements of my methodology.²⁰ Well over 25,000 photos and video clips taken in the field have been nearly as integral to the analysis project as field notes, allowing me to return, if briefly and imperfectly, to the field.²¹ This documentation includes performances and training, administrative and organizational meetings, speeches, lecture demonstrations, birthday parties, weddings, and home-cooked meals.²² These photos were used as more than just a recall tool. Using techniques described by Elizabeth Bird (2007, 136-137) and Sarah Pink (2007, 82-86), I also showed photographs to study participants to elicit their responses. This was done when the opportunity presented itself and responses were documented with the rest of the field notes. Expanding on this idea, I invited dancers from different troupes to view each other's performances (particularly at tourism shows) to elicit their thoughts on the presentation of both classical and folk dance to audiences. Due to the performers' busy schedules this was rarely possible, but when it did occur it illuminated the artists' views on tourism, arts preservation, and dance development.

While I did not use all of my methodological strategies on December 1, the events of that day highlight the methodological strategies and challenges described above. Thursdays were always scheduled for visits to the Khmer Arts Theater outside of Phnom Penh, but the workshop that week shifted my general research plans for the week, requiring my presence at the site for four consecutive days. Even so, I knew I could not miss the opening night performance of the Children of Bassac for the 2011-2012 season so I rushed straight to the National Museum as the workshop participants prepared for a

dinner that I couldn't attend. In each of these locations I ended up participating more actively than I had initially expected. At the workshop, I was involved in discussions about the development of contemporary dance in Southeast Asia.²³ At the Children of Bassac performance I guided and interpreted for a journalist backstage. Each of these experiences gave me a deeper understanding about the power that outside influences have on the artists' lives. At the National Museum I happened upon the Opening Reception of the Groslier photos attended by HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi. Because of this unexpected event I ended up at three different field sites in just one day. This unexpected turn of events highlighted how vital flexibility was in my ethnographic endeavors. I couldn't be in more than one place at a time, but I elected to spread my attention as widely as possible in order to build a nuanced picture of dance development. I worked to find a balance that allowed me to become embedded at the places I considered to be main field sites in a way that allowed for sustained and detailed documentation.

Broader Connections: Literature and Theory

The focus of my current research project—on the interconnections between global heritage, tourism, and the lives of dance practitioners in Cambodia—was inspired by a gap that I noticed while gathering background resources on the current state of dance development in Cambodia. There was little scholarship on Cambodian performing arts, plentiful scholarly material focusing on Angkor (both archeological and sociological),²⁴ a multitude of work exploring the Khmer Rouge Era,²⁵ and some work about cultural rehabilitation and the current Cambodian political situation.²⁶ What research did exist on the arts was mainly focused on historical evolution (often with connections to Angkor),²⁷

government-based reconstruction efforts in refugee camps and in the capital city of Phnom Penh, and the use of traditional arts in diasporic communities.²⁸ No one had considered the significance of the dancers supplying the tourism industry in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in any detail—a phenomenon just as connected to local and global constructions of heritage and economic recovery. This project aims to build on the current literature on Cambodia, and particularly Cambodian traditional arts to expand scholarly understanding of the development of the practice beyond the traditional focus on history, ritual, and recovery (see Chapter 1).

While I use theoretical frameworks coming out of the anthropology of tourism, globalization, heritage, and development in the majority of this dissertation, my work can be nonetheless be contextualized within the anthropology of performance and dance. As detailed by Gertrude Kurath (1960), Adrienne Kaeppler (1978) and Judith Lynn Hanna (1987), while anthropologists from the very start of the field have observed dance practice the detailed analysis of dance from an anthropological perspective has often been relegated to the outskirts of the discipline.²⁹ Hanna (1987, 11) delineates two phases in the anthropology of dance—a gentle progressive interest in the topic beginning in late 19th century and a period of more rapid growth that began in the 1960s.³⁰ This growth is evidenced by the creation of a Dance Anthropology master's degree at the University of Roehampton, U.K. Still, the number of anthropologists focusing on dance is relatively small. This dissertation adds to this body of literature of dance in anthropology, in particular the small subset of work on tourism and dance.³¹

Anthropology of dance and anthropology of tourism share somewhat similar origins. Ness (1992, 238-239) highlights how anthropology's lack of focus on dance practice stems at least in part from "deeply rooted negative attitudes towards bodily experiences in general." Along a similar vein, the anthropology of tourism had a slow start in the discipline because of negative attitudes towards the practice of tourism, an activity that made many anthropologists uncomfortable because they could see their own behaviors mirrored in tourist activities (cf. Salazar 2017).³² The nature of tourism involves the invention of "imaginaries" designed for tourist consumption, the idea of "touring," and the creation of "stages" on which cultural traditions are acted out (Salazar and Graburn 2014, Bruner 2005 and MacCannell 1973). Hence there is little surprise that tourism theory has been deeply linked with performance theory, a trend that I have found very useful in my analysis of the development of classical Cambodian dance (cf. Coleman and Crang 2008). I use discussions of expectation (Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011) and experience (Turner and Bruner 1986) to explore how encounters between tourists and tourism producers in the borderzone (Bruner 2005) create the space for creativity and cultural exploration (see Chapter Five).

This analysis would not be possible without first understanding why classical dance is such a vital aspect of the tourism experience. To address this, I turned to work on international discourses regarding cultural heritage and intangible heritage. The work of Tim Winter (2007a) and Michael Di Giovine (2008) was used to unpack heritage development in the Cambodian context. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (2004) and Marilena Altivizatou's (2012) work were integral to my discussion of the paradoxes

inherent in the classification of the classical dance practice as a representative of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity and how it then became a symbol of the world rather than solely a symbol of Cambodian culture (see Chapter Three).

This designation leads to intense national pride in the country and intense international interest in the dance form simultaneously. The international recognition enhances national ideology developed around the dance form (cf. Hobsbawm 1983, Hutchinson 1994 and Anderson 2006). At the same time, the “international interveners,” parties interested in development from outside the nation, see potential for cultural recovery in the dance practice (cf. Hughes 2009, 1). I propose a web model to understand the complex interconnections between the various stakeholders involved in Cambodia’s dance world including UNESCO, international non-governmental organizations, government divisions, local administrators, and private venues. I draw attention to the “intersections” woven between NGOs, governments and communities in a “fluid web of relationships” called for by Fisher (1997, 450). While Fisher’s web metaphor is useful for modeling the network of stakeholders involved in dance production, the fluidity he implies was missing in the Cambodia case. I mediate this problem by emphasizing the disruptions caused by misunderstandings, resource limitations, and competing desires creating a sticky rather than a fluid web. This is not the same metaphorical stickiness alluded to by Tsing (2005, 1-6), rather it is a cessation of movement, an intermittent period of time when practitioners become trapped, unable to navigate between possible sources of support. The web-based model also emphasizes the empty spaces that disrupt the flow of funds, ideas, and information and skip over entire regions (Ferguson 2006).

This model provides a framework for understanding the network of support available to classical dance practitioners (See Chapter Four).

The constant balancing required for dancers to navigate the tightrope-like threads of the web of dance preservation/development/production takes a toll on the body of the practitioner. The dancers labor in performance, they labor in practice, and they labor to navigate their contacts in order to make a viable living (or when they are younger to contribute to the family income). Following Loic Wacquant (2004, 6), I incorporate economic theoretical frameworks into my analysis of bodily practices to expand his concept of the corporeal economy. While Wacquant does not offer a precise definition of corporeal economy, he uses the term to describe the labor that goes into developing proficiency behind the scenes (in his case in boxing) that must be considered to understand the fully produced spectacle. Here I trace the unfortunate and unrealistic division of body and mind that pervades much economic discourse (cf. Foucault 1980) stemming in part from discomfort about treating the human body as a commodity (Appadurai 1986 and Kopytoff 1986). I expand on Priya Srinivasan's (2012) discussion of the dancer as both producer and product, arguing that particularly in the case of movement practice, the producer/product dichotomy does not hold in the context of performance and that economic theory alone doesn't account for the labor that dancers put into their work without direct monetary compensation (see Chapter Two).

Because the primary benefit of dance practice is not always financial, it is necessary to incorporate Pierre Bourdieu's ([1977] 2013) theory of practice to explore the different forms of capital that the dancers are able to accumulate through their training

and performance. These include symbolic capital, cultural capital, social capital and economic capital. The dancers acquire a level of prestige because of their specialized knowledge of the classical dance form, particularly dancers trained at the Secondary School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, which requires years of training. Additionally, they are able to increase their social networks both within and outside of Cambodia through their work as performers (see Chapter Two). While the dancers do make money for performances, the other forms of capital also factor into the dancers' decisions to begin and continue practicing the dance form.

While the breadth and variety of the literature that frames this dissertation is considerable,³³ a detailed analysis of movement praxis and gender are not foregrounded in this work. An in-depth analysis of the movement praxis of classical dance could be the subject of an entire dissertation, and it was the topic of the dissertation thesis of Lucie Labbé (2016) who conducted research in Phnom Penh on the social, aesthetic and technical aspects of classical dance training. For the purposes of this dissertation, I decided to focus on the social and economic aspects of dance, including detailed movement analysis only when it was demonstrative of how large-scale processes were experienced on the ground.

Women traditionally perform nearly all the roles in classical dance (with the exception of monkeys, a few other animals, and hermits).³⁴ As such, an in-depth gendered analysis of classical dance that explores expectations of womanhood and motherhood, women's labor, and possible implications of gender transgression could also be the subject of more detailed analysis.³⁵ In the dissertation, I decided to focus on other

issues relating to labor, development, governance, and heritage because at the time of research, gender issues were not a major concern of most participants. Where they were of import to the artists, they were integrated into discussions of corporeal economy and the touristic borderzone (Chapters Two and Five).

Discussion of ethnicity and race may also seem to be absent from this framework, yet this appearance is somewhat deceptive. Cambodia is a very homogenous country. The indigenous Khmer ethnic group makes up approximately 90 percent of the population (Duncan 2004, 241). Khmer also is the national language, and while the word for the country of Cambodia in Khmer is *Kampuchea*, most people living in the country colloquially refer to it as *Srok Khmer* or “the land of the Khmer.” The use of the classical dance form, which is so strongly associated with elite Khmer culture, as a national symbol of Cambodian identity has implications for the other ethnic groups in the country, an issue that could be researched further. Indeed, throughout the dissertation, I refer to classical dance as integral to both Cambodian and Khmer identity. These statements are both accurate and in Cambodia they are often conflated. However, since this dissertation is practitioner-centered and practitioners are almost always Khmer, issues of identity politics are not the focus here. Khmer people also tend to view race and ethnicity as equivalent. They might refer for example, to the “Vietnamese race” and say that race and ethnicity are both malleable (Duncan 2004, 241-242).³⁶ While race is closely tied with social identity in Cambodia, skin color and other physical characteristics are used as distinguishing factors. Often this is tied with class and labor issues since dark skin is tied to work in the rice fields. On occasion a dance teacher I worked with would lament the

dark skin of underprivileged students and discuss the ideal classical dancer body type as light skinned with round eyes and a pointed nose (see Chapter Three). They did not categorize these physical characteristics as racial, their students were all Khmer and not considered racially different. When these issues are discussed, rather than analyzing them through anthropological discourse on race, the issues are folded into the framework of the corporeal economy.

The corporeal economy essentially brings together seemingly divergent ideas to create a hybridized theoretical model that explores the interconnections between classical Cambodian dance development activities, national and international discourse, policies, and investment in Cambodia's cultural traditions by isolating how these dynamics are embedded in the environments and experiences of local practitioners. As detailed above, the model incorporates discourses drawn from globalization, tourism, heritage, economics, nationhood and ideology, and the body to draw these connections. Each is an important lens through which to view the events observed in the field. Taking the events of December 1 as an example, both the workshop at Khmer Arts Theater and the photo exhibit at the museum highlight the paradoxes of intangible heritage discourses. Being inscribed as a representative of the intangible heritage of humanity is designed to allow the development of these cultural representatives, but the events of that day show the challenges involved. The photo exhibit demonstrates the pervasiveness of national ideologies about preserving the dance genre as it was in the past, and workshop discussions about experimentation with traditional movement highlighted similar themes. The performative discourses of tourism theory and the concept of corporeal economy also

are vital for analyzing the Children of Bassac performance. While the tourism producers created an experience for visitors that highlighted the complex ritual history of Cambodian arts, frequent appeals for donations during the performance went against tourist expectations at the event. The appeals for funds reveal an aspect of the economic nature of the tourist experience generally kept hidden and point to the labor of the dancing body. These monetary appeals also emphasize the role of international stakeholders without whom none of the events of that day would have been possible.

Chapter Overview

To lay the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation, Chapter One focuses on how classical dance transformed from a ritual practice in Angkor to a global symbol of national identity as it increasingly became commodified into a packaged secular cultural tradition. I argue that this history of commoditization and subsequent secularization is longer than might be expected if evidence of the economic valuation of dance performance even in the Angkorean period is considered. The process through which the dance form was increasingly commoditized, secularized, and promoted internationally is integral to understanding the larger processes examined in later chapters.

The following four chapters guide the reader through major processes that were affecting the development of classical dance and trickling down to the lives and bodies of practitioners. Chapter Two examines the physical and mental work that the dancers engage in and the valuation of their movement efforts. Expanding on the work of Priya Srinivasan (2012) and Loic Wacquant (2004), it proposes that in order to fully understand dance production it is necessary to consider the body as both producer and a product and

consider the corporeal economy of movement activities. This is accomplished by analyzing the laboring work of the dancers. The chapter documents how dancers in Cambodia make strategic decisions about their bodily labor and the commoditization of their own bodies based on their individual goals, their desire to promote larger cultural ideologies, and the possible benefits they receive (financial and otherwise) through their bodily practice.

Chapter Three explores the discourses and policies of intangible cultural heritage by examining the ways that the international directives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are interpreted at the national and local level and how this affects the production of Cambodian dance on the ground. The chapter uses interviews with UNESCO representatives, officials from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, arts administrators and dancers as well as observations from the field to analyze the multiple impacts of UNESCO's recognition of classical dance as a Representative of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Chapter Four proposes the web-based model for understanding the relationships between the various stakeholders: government officials, international agents, arts administrators, teachers, and performers. This model consists of a series of nodes (the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, various NGOs, dance troupes and companies and tourism venues, schools) that support artist training, development, and performance activities. Fragile threads between these nodes weave a net that dancers navigate to support their livelihoods and artistic goals. The threads create an unstable reality for practitioners in the classical dance world even though government discourse provides

verbal support for classical dance endeavors. The chapter focuses on the connections between national and local government entities and NGOs to illuminate these issues.

Finally, the dissertation turns to the relationships between tourists and tourism performers. Chapter Five takes a step away from the ideological discourses and the production of the dance form as it explores how “borderzones,”—fluid boundaries between the tourists and tourism providers, performers included—create spaces in which experience, expectation and performance are negotiated. I expand Edward Bruner’s (2005) concept of the borderzone to take into account the variable expectations of individuals in tourist locales—in this case Phnom Penh and Siem Reap—and examine how these borderzones create imagined spaces of uncertainty, contradiction, and emergent possibility.

In the conclusion, the dissertation demonstrates how the processes addressed above, heritage and tourism development, nationalism and the support of NGOs, the creation of touristic imaginaries in the borderzone, all factor into the corporeal economy of Cambodian classical dance practitioners. It articulates how these processes are intertwined in the Cambodian case, working in tandem to create the conditions under which practitioners struggled, and often succeeded, to continue to dance and to maintain the relevance of the art form. The conclusion also outlines how this amalgamated framework may be applicable beyond this specific Cambodian case because the development and preservation of elements of intangible cultural heritage—like classical dance—encourage a sense of national identity and appeal to foreign investment making the production of traditional culture increasingly important across the globe. This

dissertation brings the sweating and laboring of bodies back into discussions of these global processes.

Conclusion

What began as a study of survival and recovery from war became a study of development and struggle for a new generation of dancers who, through their bodily labor, became the essence of their country and culture on the global stage. In the past few decades, anthropological research has increasingly been drawn towards large-scale phenomenon, the travel of ideas, finances, people, and goods (cf. Appadurai 1996). While there has been research that shows how these processes affect local communities, these studies often focus on one process at a time.³⁷ Rather than beginning with a particular process, I began with the dance form and its practitioners and allowed their experiences to guide me to the large-scale processes influencing their lived experiences through training, teaching, production, performance and everyday practices. As a result, the dissertation traces the connectivity of multiple layers of relationships and processes that might at first glance seem unrelated. My research demonstrates that this model articulates the intricate nuanced complexities and challenges of dance development without obscuring the individuals with the most at stake in the process.

While the connections between heritage policy, national ideology, global capital, tourism, and bodily labor are integral to understanding the complexities of classical Cambodian dance development, my use of each process makes its own contribution to anthropological thought. The paradoxes that I identify regarding intangible heritage policy articulate how national and international politics can affect practitioners of a

tradition as they become carriers of heritage—sometimes losing themselves to the practice and the politics surrounding it rather than being free to explore it on their own. The social web of production that I propose, which demonstrates how the dancers navigate between a series of organizations and institutions to support continued dance practice, has the potential to help explain several forms of development from heritage development to environmental or technological development. The extension of Bruner’s borderzone—the borderzone field—is applicable to other tourism situations and possibly to many forms of social interaction. And finally, the concept of the corporeal economy, doing away with body/mind dualism, takes into account the strategic choices that individuals make regarding the labor and valuation of their bodies. In the case of classical dance, this bodily labor is obvious, but the laboring body is evident in all parts of life, including sitting at a computer for hours and writing, and it should be taken into account more regularly.

In addition to the potential theoretical contributions, this dissertation will expand the literature about Cambodia and Southeast Asia. It adds a new layer to work begun by Paul Cravath (2007),³⁸ Toni Shapiro (1994) and others, bringing intensive research on classical dance beyond the immediate post-Khmer Rouge era. The work also brings practitioners who have generally been overlooked into the discussion of classical dance—particularly the practitioners in Siem Reap who perform daily and yet never have been the subjects of research inquiry. Rather than exploring the dance form itself, its gestures and choreographic meaning, its history, or training and performance practices, this

dissertation delineates the larger forces involved in dance production without losing sight of the individuals affected by the tension and struggle at the top.

² The name of the show was a mouthful and was changed in subsequent seasons to *Cambodia Living Arts Traditional Dance Show*, which is more appropriate considering that the dancers were between 17 and 22 years old in 2011.

³ I was occasionally asked to help with translations: interviews, announcements, and documents, particularly in situations where staff members with strong English capabilities were busy with other tasks (such as the event described here) or a strong English speaker was not in attendance. In part, this was a case of convenience; administrators and artists had a fluent English speaker with some knowledge of the practice on hand and the ability to speak some Khmer. However, while it wasn't my intent, there is no doubt that my privileged background as a white, well-educated American from an upper-middle class family affected my reception in the field. While it was sometimes tempered by my age (29-30) and gender, other aspects of my background increased my status in certain social settings. In certain circumstances I found that my class background, my race, and my nationality allowed me access into certain sites or were used strategically. In others they (or my age or gender) restricted access. I found that my Jewish identity also affected my status. While many Cambodians were not familiar with the religion, there were study participants who were hesitant to work with an American, but happy to work with a Jewish person. All told, my background elicited a complex mix of responses that I am certain affected both my analysis and my data acquisition regardless of my best intentions. For most of the artists and teachers, my main defining characteristic was my background in dance and through this we were able to find some commonality.

⁴ A majority of the performers were current students at the Secondary School of Fine Arts, a public school in Phnom Penh that feeds directly into the Royal Ballet of Cambodia. One performer in the show also performed frequently with the Royal Ballet Company on tour and in the country, another was earning a bachelor's degree at the Royal University of Fine Arts.

⁵ George Groslier was the first French child to be born in Cambodia in 1887 and dedicated much of his life to research in Cambodian history, culture and the arts. He was the founder of the National Museum in Phnom Penh and later founded the *École des Arts Cambodien*, now the Royal University of Fine Arts (Davis 2007, 224-229). In the late 1920s, angst regarding the direction of royal dance prompted Groslier to document what he considered to be the proper dance gestures of the tradition in a series of 900 photos of

glass negatives—86 were developed for the exhibit (taken from exhibit material on a visit February 1, 2012).

⁶ A full Samphea Kru ceremony is a “salutation to the spirits” that is generally performed annually. It is a way of gaining permission from the spirits to perform particular roles and dances (Cravath 2007, 425-427). Now the ceremony has been abbreviated and is sometimes conflated with what used to be called the Tway Kru. The theatrical version performed by the Children of Bassac is similar to what would have been called a Tway Kru in the past, which can be as simple as silent prayers before the bai sei and other offerings, but can increase in complexity to a performance of the four main character roles depending on the goals of the ceremony which range from dancers’ health and musical rhythm to the security of the country.

⁷ The term development has a long and complex history both in anthropological scholarship and in Cambodia (for example see Mosse 2013 and Hughes 2009). The term also is not commonly used to discuss dance. That said, other scholars also refer to the development of classical Cambodian dance (see for example Diamond 2013, 132). I choose to use this term more than creation or experimentation because practitioners generally used the term *aphivordth* “to develop” rather than *bangkeut* “to create” or *bradit* “to be innovative.” In a personal communication with Frank Smith (January 20, 2018), he suggested that the preference for using the term to develop is likely that the term emphasizes a link to the past so it legitimizes any changes that the dancers might make as they choreograph new work or use the dance form in new ways.

⁸ In the late 1990s, the Joffrey Ballet School's administration decided that ballet was a universal language and encouraged international student exchanges. In the fall of 1997 approximately 20 Chinese teenagers came to study at the school, many of whom joined my class. Sitting by the ballet barre and watching the teacher explain through movement how the students had to shave their legs and use deodorant and observing her struggle to correct new students, I realized that the idea that dance is a universal language that can bridge cultures is similar to the illusion of tourism, a veneer that can be scraped off.

⁹ This was accomplished without any Khmer language acquisition. I studied Khmer language in the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Southeast Asian Summer Studies Institute (SEASSI) program in the summers of 2009 and 2010 and with the help of a private tutor in Phnom Penh.

¹⁰ While the performing arts are of importance throughout Cambodia, access to classical dance specifically (both training and performance) tends to be restricted to the regions of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, hence my decision to focus research in these two areas. This is discussed further in Chapter One.

¹¹ I use the term research zone here instead of research “site” because research site implies a more specific area of research.

¹² An example of this taken from my field notes is as follows. January 20, 2011: This morning I rediscovered the ladypenh website which lists exhibits, events, and performances in the city. It is the most comprehensive list of various activities available. It is where I found out about tonight’s performance at the National Museum... After lunch I went to the museum to buy a ticket... There were multiple posters hanging describing the performance from “The Children of Bassac” supported by Cambodian Living Arts, Amrita, the US embassy, and the Ministry of Culture. The young people selling tickets turned out to be performers. I told them I was a researcher and what I was interested in. One said, “Wait a minute, I recognize you. You were at Chayyam last night...and you were writing things down.” (Chayyam was a restaurant that offered free performances several days a week.) The performers introduced me to the assistant manager of CLA who assured me it would not be a problem to go and observe rehearsals on Sundays from 8-11 and 2-5. He also said it would be fine to interview dancers, teachers, etc.

¹³ Fifteen field sites may sound like an unreasonable number, but I remind the reader that these fifteen sites were spread over a period of 18 months in two different cities. It was often possible to visit multiple field sites in one day since training generally occurred in the morning and afternoon while performances were always in the evening. Additionally, while I visited some of these field sites continuously, others were visited only occasionally when, for example, dancers would invite me to a particular set of rehearsals or performances.

¹⁴ The interviews with those involved in arts production and policy lasted between 20 minutes (for busy dancers in the tourism industry) to over four-hours (over multiple meetings). They were unstructured, and most were digitally recorded. Interviews of tourists were significantly shorter, structured, and responses were handwritten. One exception to the tourist interviews was a digitally recorded interview with my parents who traveled to Cambodia for two weeks in January-February of 2012. Per HRRB protocols, interview participants included individuals 16-years and older. Participants were given the choice to remain anonymous, and their choices were respected. All interviews are listed in Appendix B. Pseudonyms are used for individuals under the age of 16 at the time of research to protect their identities, and any information about them comes from participant observation and informal conversations.

¹⁵ While all of these sites of dance production were integral to my analysis of the processes acting on classical dance development, there was no way to include all of the many research sites that framed the analysis in this dissertation. Field sites that are not included were no less vital to my understanding of the dance and the problems faced by

dancers today and will be the source of future analyses on the topic. A complete list of field sites and their general characteristics can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁶ During my time in the field my willingness to actively participate in these activities was questioned by some research colleagues who felt that anthropologists should make every effort not to interfere with the events under observation, a perspective that I certainly understand. However, it was my experience that change was a major component of the events I was observing and to assume that I could be there as the changes occurred and not factor into them seemed unrealistic. I did not actively participate in these activities unless study participants requested my involvement.

¹⁷ Wayne Fife's (2005, 93-106) discussion of interview techniques and the benefits of particular forms of interviewing were utilized in developing my interview strategy. I also used Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack's (1991, 11-26) "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," particularly in the development of open-ended questions for practitioner interviews.

¹⁸ One participant asked bluntly: "I don't understand, why are you asking me these questions, don't you want to know about what I think about classical dance" when asked about the individual's background.

¹⁹ Engaging in physical training has become an increasingly common tool for ethnographers to develop a stronger connection with study participants and their experiences through the body. Several scholars including Toni Shapiro (1994), Sally Ness (1996), Loic Wacquant (2004), Greg Downey (2005), and Tomie Hahn (2007) have employed this method.

²⁰ Ness (2008) and Jacknis (1988) have documented the pioneering work of Bateson and Mead in photographic and video analysis.

²¹ The videos were intended for analysis only; the quality of the videos is not high.

²² Per HRRB protocols, participants gave explicit permission for the taking of video and photography unless the site was considered to be in the public domain.

²³ Prior to the workshop Sophiline and I had many conversations about balancing traditional roots and movement exploration (beginning with our first meeting at the ICTM study group symposium in Malaysia, Chapter Three). At the *Tanzconnexion* workshop, she asked for my feedback on the choreography of the new piece *Stained* and on issues of dance innovation along with the rest of the workshop participants.

²⁴ These include Coedes (1963), BP Groslier (2006), Moore et al. (2007), Unaldi (2008), Coe (2003), Higham (1989) and Freeman (1999) just to name a few. Discussions of tourism and heritage in Cambodia also tend to focus on the country's archaeological sites, see Winter (2002, 2007a, 2007b, 2009), Wager (1995), and Chheang (2008 and 2011).

²⁵ See Chandler (1991, [1991] 1999), Hinton (2005, 2014), Shapiro-Phim (2002), Shapiro-Phim (2008b), Cheam Shapiro (2008), Ebihara and Ledgerwood (2002), Kiernan (2002, 2004), and Mertha (2014). Several journalists also have written about the period notably Elizabeth Becker (1998) and Nic Dunlop (2005). Many memoirs have come out. These include *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields* edited by Dith Pran and Kim DePaul (1997) and the story of musician Daran Kravanh in *Music Through the Dark: A Tale of Survival in Cambodia* by Bree Lafreniere (2000). Arn Chorn Pond's story (see Chapter Four) has also been made into a children's book called *A Song For Cambodia* (Lord and Arihara [2008] 2015) and a young adult book (McCormick 2012).

²⁶ See for example Slocomb (2010), Ledgerwood (2002), Ledgerwood and Ebihara (1994), Zucker (2006, 2013), Chau-Pech Ollier and Winter (2006), Hoefinger (2014).

²⁷ See Cravath (1986, 2007), Heywood (2008), Meittinen (2008), and Sasagawa (2005).

²⁸ See Shapiro (1994), Hamera (2011, 138-171), Lobban (1994, 48-56), Sam (1994, 39-47), Turnbull (2006, 133-149), and Diamond (2003, 2014).

²⁹ Hanna (1987, 11) explains that Franz Boas, Margret Mead, Gregory Bateson, E.E. Evans, Pritchard and others all discussed dance in their work. She also points to the work of Ernst Grosse as a precursor to the anthropology of dance.

³⁰ See for example Williams (2004), Royce (2004), and Spencer (1985). See also Ness (1992, 236-238) for a summary of trends in the study of dance in Anthropology.

³¹ See for example Jane Desmond (1997) and (1999), and Hélène Nevue Kringelbach and Jonathan Skinner's edited volume *Dancing Culture: Globalization, Tourism and Identity in the Anthropology of Dance* (2012).

³² Early work in the anthropology of tourism began in the 1970s with pioneers in the field who include by Dean MacCanell ([1976] 1999), Valene Smith ([1977] 1989), Nelson Graburn (1984), and a bit later Edward Bruner whose *Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel* (2005) is mainly a compilation of articles written in the early 1990s.

³³ Cligget and Wilks (2007, 183-184) use the term "Frankenstein monster" to discuss the mixing of economic theoretical models on a case-by-case basis, sometimes without

thinking about whether these models in fact fit together in any coherent way. Regardless, they argue that human nature is “more complex and variable than any...models can account for.” I willingly admit that I am creating a hybrid model to assess the data collected during my fieldwork, but not without considering the pitfalls of fitting them together.

³⁴ The tradition of women performing most roles began in the mid-1800s. For more on this see Paul Cravath (2007, 113-114). During my research, many men could train in any classical dance role, but few would perform any role expect for the monkey. Occasionally a man would perform the giant role, dancers explained that this was because a *khlang* “strong” giant was needed. A notable exception occurred at Chayyam Restaurant (see Appendix A) where a man performed the male role. He explained that there were only two performers working at the restaurant and a man and woman were needed to perform the folk dances, so he also had to perform the male role in classical dances that the restaurant owner requested. He liked performing the classical dances even though some other performers were not supportive.

³⁵ Toni Shapiro-Phim (2008a, 2010) discusses how classical dancers, particularly dancers of the female role, embody the ideal virtues of womanhood when they are performing. She also discussed how these ideals are contested in their everyday lives. Other scholars who explore gender dynamics, generally issues of womanhood in Cambodia include Judy Ledgerwood (1994, 1995), Annuska Derks (2008), and Trude Jacobsen (2008).

³⁶ Other conceptions of race are integral to the experiences of some international audiences in the classical dance performances that have become so important to the dancers, particularly in Siem Reap. One tourist told me that she came to a show to see something “exotic and oriental.” See the collection by Donald V. L. Macleod and James G. Carrier (2010) for examples in other tourism settings.

³⁷ See for example, Sally Ness’s (2005) discussion of how major tourism development projects affect local communities in the Philippines, Michael Foster and Lisa Gilman’s (2015) anthology about the effects of UNESCO heritage policies on practitioners, Mary Beth Mills’ (1999) work on the influence of the global economy on the Thai female labor force, and Ferguson’s (2007) study of the impacts of global capital on governance in Africa.

³⁸ Cravath’s (2007) book is nearly an exact publication of his dissertation completed in 1985 based on material gathered just before the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh in 1975.

Chapter 1: From Ritual Practice to Secular Global Commodity

Dance has always been ritually associated with temple and monarch in Cambodia and in the modern period it is considered to embody the essence of Khmer culture. In few societies can it be said that dance is so greatly respected as a rite of self-perpetuation (Cravath 2007, 13).

Arrival in Cambodia

My first trip to Cambodia was in 2008. I had not yet acquired Khmer language skills or developed a research plan, but I had two main goals. The first goal was to assess whether or not what I had heard and read about Cambodian classical dance reconstruction and the proliferation of cultural tourism could be feasibly developed into a research project. The second goal was to assess the interest of possible project participants. As mentioned in the Introduction, the results were overwhelmingly encouraging. When I arrived at my hotel, I found the Siem Reap Angkor Visitor's Guide. I was excited that it included a section on "Traditional Dance" outlining basic historical and descriptive information regarding four dance genres: classical dance (*robam boran*), the all-male dance drama (*lakhon khol*), shadow theater (*sbek*), and folk dance (*robam propeiny*). The guide explained: "No visit to Cambodia is complete without attending at least one traditional dance performance." While visitors to Siem Reap might occasionally find a performance at the Angkorean temples, it continued, the main location for performance events was in restaurants and hotels (Cramer 2008, 52-53).³⁹

I visited six of the 12 venues suggested by the guide, and I found that the local community demonstrated interest in my project. Friendly strangers guided me to teachers, schools, and other venues.⁴⁰ Over three weeks, I was given a private lesson, a tour of a

dance teacher's home, and I was guided to the School of Art, Siem Reap. It was evident that Paul Cravath (2007, 13) was correct. Classical dance represented the “essence” of what it means to be Khmer—and as such it was an obligatory tourist experience.

Between 2008 and 2011, the discourse surrounding this narrative of obligation evolved. In the 36th edition of the Siem Reap Angkor Visitor's Guide (July 2011-October 2011), the opening of the “Traditional Dance” section read: “It has been a tradition since the earliest days of tourism in the 19th century to treat visitors to Siem Reap with an Apsara dance performance—a taste of living Khmer culture” followed by the former initial statement that no visit was complete without attending a dance performance (Cramer 2011, 59). Classical dance was now framed as a historical tourist attraction in the context of colonialism creating an ideological link between Angkor (with bas-reliefs of dancing goddesses), colonization, and Cambodia's current cultural practices.

This chapter expands upon existing work on Cambodia and Cambodian dance to engage with the question: How has classical dance evolved from a ritual practice with courtly functions to a symbol of the nation by transforming into a secular cultural product packaged for tourism and other economic endeavors? It explains how the phenomena explored in the coming chapters (the economy, global heritage, tourism, NGOs, and the state) affect arts producers and practitioners.

I argue that the process of secularization and commoditization has a deep history, one that is too often glossed over. Some scholars have written about how *robam boran* perpetuates the spirit of the land through its ritual significance and how the art form has become a part of the nationalist narrative rooting Cambodian culture into the deep past

through its connection with the Angkorean civilization from 802 to 1431 AD (cf. Cravath 2007; Heywood 2008). There has been a thorough examination of the process through which classical dance has moved from a ritualistic practice connecting God-Kings to the world of the divine to a dance practice intertwined with both ritual and diplomatic function in later centuries (Shapiro 1994, 96). Other scholars explore the impact that external influences have had on the ideology and function of the art form (Edwards 2007, 39; Sasagawa 2005, 419).

Researchers have mentioned the changing economic position of classical dance, alluding to the burgeoning tourism industry beginning in the 1960s and to the commercialization of dance practice in the 1990s (cf. Shapiro 1994, 411-420; Turnbull 2006, 143; Diamond 2012, 128). Others point to the commodification of classical dance through its use as a diplomatic tool in the 21st century (Larasati 2013, 127-128). This chapter will trace these economic and social changes through classical dance's history. It will show how the practice shifted from being the provenance of the elite to a secular form in the later half of the 20th century. To accomplish this, I connect historical interpretations with accounts of artists and teachers, particularly addressing the stories of younger artists in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. These narratives might not be silenced (cf. Trouillot 1995, 26-27), but they certainly are unheard.

One narrative that has never been heard, about a private event at a small Angkorean temple, provided inspiration for this chapter: Degraded blocks of moss-covered sandstone created a treacherous path in the purplish-blue twilight haze. Intricately carved *devata*, bas-reliefs of women dedicated to the gods, idly observed the

commotion as preparation for the night's event unfolded. Young dancers were dressing in the small visitor pavilion. In the fading light, candles were produced, strategically placed so that the costumer could stitch the dancers' silk *sampot*, and the teachers could tie the intricate knots needed to keep headdresses in place. Other lights began appearing as the skies darkened, and musicians and dancers turned on the flashlight apps on their cell phones to finish putting on makeup and stitch on jewelry. As I produced my own phone for light, I contemplated the history of the dance form. How did classical dance transform from a ritual practice dedicated to the temple to the main attraction of US\$5,000 activity breathing life into the ruins of *Wat Tanei*—a private dinner for two guests of the exclusive Amansara resort in Siem Reap?⁴¹

With the highest price tag of any performance I witnessed in Cambodia, this event, which took place towards the middle of the main research period, was the impetus that led me to consider how classical dance became a multivalent cultural practice—part ritual, part national symbol, part diplomatic tool, and part commodity—during its 1,000-year-plus history. This chapter will describe archeological evidence of classical dance and how it functioned in the Angkorean Era. It then will trace particular periods in Khmer history—the cultural revival of the mid-1800s, the French Colonial Era, the independence period, the civil war, and reconstruction after the war—to demonstrate how the dance form transformed in response to historical contingencies. Finally, it will look at continued developments in the 21st century from the perspectives of current stakeholders in Cambodia's artistic production.

Angkor as Commodity: A Performance at Wat Tanei

Classical dance in Cambodia is directly linked to the Angkorean temples, an ideology that is supported in part through archaeological evidence and in part through ideological discourse. At festivals, tourist shows, and other cultural events, the dance form was used to promote the idea that Cambodia has a deep history. And while that history was interrupted, a thread connects continued artistic practice from the present back into the past glories of ancient empire. The performance at Wat Tanei for wealthy Japanese tourists reaffirms the national ideology that emerged during the French colonial era simultaneously connecting Khmer culture with Angkor and linking *robam boran* to Cambodia's past. The events at Wat Tanei also speak to the democratization and commercialization of classical dance. Likely, the performers at this event would never have had access to dance training in the past. Similarly, the staff, anthropologist and even the wealthy audience members would have been unlikely to have the opportunity to view classical dance. The event involves connections between present day *robam boran*, international support and commodification and shows how artists negotiate performing for commercial purposes in a sacred ritual space.

I ended up at Wat Tanei on evening of January 13, 2012. That morning, I went to the School of Art, Siem Reap for my regularly scheduled Friday visit. There was a definite sense of excitement on the grassy lawn when I arrived at the dance school. Early December through the end of February was the height of the tourism season, so I wasn't surprised to find a large group of Japanese guests visiting the dance school that day. As I followed the tourists, I noticed that the school's current social worker looked tense and

distracted. I stayed behind to find out why she was upset and inquired about the costumes I saw being prepared on the lawn. In hushed tones, she explained that she was very worried. She was supposed to perform in a *yike* play called *Tum Teav* at the Amansara hotel, but the assistant director of the school requested her help at a second performance for Amansara that evening because of her English language skills.⁴² She feared telling the dance master that she couldn't perform the leading role in the *yike* performance.

Intrigued, I went into the red-painted office/costume building to clarify the situation. The assistant director, Vuthy, also looked slightly worried. He explained that the dance master, Neak Kru Sokham had organized two performances for her dance group for the same night. While it was a private dance group and not directly associated with the School of Art, Siem Reap, she was a master teacher, students from the school were performing, and the private group was borrowing the school's costumes. It would reflect poorly on them if something went wrong at either performance. When I asked about the location of the performances, his face brightened. One was at a temple, *Wat Tanei* and, he explained, it would be a very special event. He strongly urged me to seek the dance master's permission to attend. I located Neak Kru Sokham, who mulled over my request for a few hours and then agreed.⁴³

The performers departed from the school at 5 pm following Sor, Amansara's assistant manager in charge of cultural events. The youthful small-framed man with hair cropped tightly about his round face wore a black shirt and slacks. He noticed me standing with the dancers and after a brief explanation agreed to my presence at the event. I was placed in the cab of the truck, sandwiched between the driver and the

costume maker and her daughter. As we were driving towards Wat Tanei, the truck driver suddenly looked at me and asked if I had a ticket. It was the first time I took note of our surroundings and realized that we were on the road that leads to Angkor National Park and its guard station, just eight kilometers from the provincial center.

Wat Tanei is such a minor Angkorean construction, I had not yet heard of it. Jayavarman VII constructed the temple in the late 12th century (Coedes 1963, 95). He was responsible for the largest building campaign of the period. This included hundreds of temples, hospitals, rest houses, and other public works including bridges, barays (reservoirs), and roads (Chandler 2008, 71-73). Most important to the subject of robam boran, while Jayavarman VII's rule ushered in major change, he retained his position as a Deva-Raja (God-King), perpetuating the need for large numbers of dancers and musicians dedicated to the temples in the kingdom. According to temple inscriptions, Jayavarman VII's reign boasted the largest number of dancers dedicated to the temples during the Angkorean period (Cravath 2007, 51). Bas-reliefs at his temples also contain the only known realistic scenes of dancers; dancers bathing and fixing their hair in a garden are depicted on the walls of the Bayon temple (Ibid, 73).

I had assumed that Wat Tanei was a contemporary Buddhist temple somewhere in Siem Reap town (*wat* simply means temple in Khmer). I told the School of Art's truck driver that I did not have a ticket to Angkor National Park with me, but the costume maker said it wouldn't be a problem. I was working with the school so I would be allowed to stay with them for the performance.⁴⁴ We rode past the guards' station and then beyond Sra Srong, a small village area near one of the old barays. Following the golf

cart, we turned onto a small dirt path overgrown with trees. I could hear the performers screaming from the back of the truck as they dodged branches that threatened to swipe against their cheeks.

When we arrived, lights had already been set up at the front of the temple, and I could hear a continual hum from the generator that was powering the lights, a kitchen brought in to prepare food for the wealthy guests yet to arrive, and the luxurious portable toilets brought in just for the guests. The performers climbed excitedly around the temple grounds while waiting for instructions from the dance master. The aroma of chicken and peanut sauce pervaded the air as kitchen staff prepared the meal in the twilight haze. I helped the performers prepare while watching the hotel staff set up a path made from hundreds of tea candles along one side of the temple. Neak Kru Sokham was shown where the dancers would be performing and discussed the length and order of the dances. When Sokham was satisfied she left with Sor to go to Amansara Hotel, the location of the evening's other performance.

Shortly after, Sor returned with a petite woman in her mid-40s, the manager of Amansara. She was instructing the staff about how to give the impression of a private dinner although there were at least 20 staff members in addition to the artists. Sor introduced me to the manager, who was intrigued by my project. She eagerly agreed to have me work with the hotel in the future and explained: "It's lucky that you found out about the performance tonight. It is rare that classical dance is performed in its original setting." Amansara staff wanted the guests to feel transported in time, to feel like the Khmer royalty that might have experienced performances at the temples. The whining

generator became a major source of contention. The manager disliked this anachronistic element so a compromise was made. The generator could remain on only as long as the dancers performed (so they could be seen) and the food was being prepared. After that, the dinner would take place by candlelight.

The staff hurried the dancers into full costumes so they could photograph them in the temple setting while the light was still good (see Figure 5-7). The photos would be given to the guests but also would capture the dancers at the temple, symbolically connecting present cultural traditions with the past. Things ground to a halt when word came that the guests (from Japan) were exhausted from their tour of the temples during the day and needed to rest before their private event at Wat Tanei. As the hour grew later, the *robam boran* performers (aged 15 and younger) grew restless. It became so late that they were given a meal, something rarely seen at tourist events in Siem Reap, but not enough meals were ordered for the number of artists and teachers. After that, the dancers practiced the spacing for Apsara Dance three times as they waited. Finally around 7:30 pm, the guests arrived. Except for the manager of cultural events and two waiters, everyone disappeared into the shadows of the night as the Amansara ramourk pulled up.

Nestled into cushions placed over a log, the guests were greeted with champagne, a chicken skewer with peanut sauce, and the performance of Apsara Dance as the whirring of the generator pulsed in the background. Ironically, while the generator was seen as breaking the illusion of Angkor, the anachronism of performing *robam tep apsar* (Apsara Dance)—choreographed in 1962—was not a concern.⁴⁵ Twenty-five or so observers surrounded the log in the darkness, watching the performance reverently like

ghosts unseen and unheard. The guests then traveled down the candle-lit path to the sound of a Cambodian flute for a monk's blessing. They entered the central ruins for their main meal while watching *robam nisat* (Fishing Dance).⁴⁶ They exited the temple as *robam chun por* (Blessing Dance) was performed, which ended with the dancers throwing petals on them (See Figure 8).⁴⁷ The hotel manager told me later that one guest said it was the best night of her life.

As I watched the tourists leave the temple after dinner, I was struck by how effective the classical dance form is as a symbol of ancient Khmer culture and by the apparent speed with which it had become a tourist attraction. Later, through interviews, observations, and studying the work of other scholars, I realized that the road to secularization and commodification had emerged much earlier.

Dancing to Balance the World

The young women performing at Wat Tanei in 2012 represented the dancers of ancient Angkor in the imagination of hotel staff members. Their objective was to present the performers as symbols of cultural perpetuity since classical dance has such a long history in the region. Yet, while Jukka Miettinen (2008, 155-158) argues that some temple iconography points to the use of dance for theatrical purposes, scholars generally argue that the classical dance of the present is linked to the ritual dances practiced in the temple (see Figure 9). Evidence of dance in the region predates the emergence of Angkor—as early as the 5th century BCE dance figures serving as ornamentation on bronze kettledrums associated with funerary rights were found in the Mekong River basin.⁴⁸ Still, the roots of *robam boran* are most commonly credited to the Angkorean

period with its monumental architecture and intricate carvings (Cravath 1986, 181). In 802 ACE, the region transformed from a small-scale, trade-oriented, possibly seafaring society, to a massive agricultural society with its capital very close to what is today the center of Siem Reap province.⁴⁹ Around 900 ACE building began in what would now be considered the City of Angkor, at the time known as Yasadharapura. By 1050 ACE it included a complex irrigation system, complete with barays and canals (Higham 2002, 305-316). This supported the agriculture required for more than 750,000 people to live in the area at the height of the empire (Freeman et al. 1999, 2573). The monumental architecture provides evidence of both ritual and entertainment in performance. At least 13 of 26 Deva-Raja of the ancient Khmer empire built large-scale constructions (Chandler 1991, 55-56; Sam 1987, 1-2). Angkorean temples were filled with bas-reliefs of dancing goddesses or apsaras believed to represent the energy or force associated with the earth. Dance played a role in connecting the Kings (often seen as gods on earth who have the ability to control nature if they perform rites properly) to the spirit realm.

The dancers were sacred slaves dedicated to the temples and likely performed rites associated with the *naga* (snake) earth spirit. Dance was used as a rite of worship (Cravath 2007, 52-53, 69). The dancers dedicated to the temples allowed the king to maintain a connection with the divine and “guarantee the fertility of the land” (Shapiro 1994, 96). The dancers also were believed able to communicate with the world of the gods to ensure the safety of the king’s subjects (Sam 1987, 2). Inscriptions indicate that although temple dancers were considered slaves their status was fairly high and they were offered protections. They were expected to perform half of the month, were allotted rice

fields, and were given precious jewelry (Cravath 2007, 52-53). During the Angkorean period then, ritual dance was compensated economically. The performance at Wat Tanei in 2012 sought to recreate this link with the energy of the sacred land, but instead of dancers dedicated to the temple as sacred slaves, the performers were youth from under-privileged communities. Instead of dancing to connect the king with the gods, they danced to connect foreign visitors with the national discourse of a Khmer culture deeply rooted in the past. Instability was inherent in this change. The performers were fed and paid for their work, but the rice fields and jewels of the past were gone as was the connection to royalty in this case.

The Khmer Empire faced conflict, and in 1431 the empire's powerful Siamese neighbors sacked Angkor Thom, the central city. Some 90,000 prisoners of war, including dancers, musicians, and artists, were taken to Ayutthaya (then the capital of Siam). The Cambodian King set up a new capital in Phnom Penh in 1434 and likely brought dancers with him (Sam 1987, 2-3). For the next four-hundred-plus years the capital moved around from Phnom Penh to Srey Santhor, Pursat, Oudong, returning to Phnom Penh in 1866 three years after Cambodia became a French protectorate (Groslier [1958] 2006 and Chandler 2008). Little truly is known about this time period due to a lack of historical records. Cambodian historical chronicles and Spanish and Portuguese records of the era provide some insight but often contradict each other (Groslier [2006], 3). The dancers who were taken to Siam certainly had an impact on Thai court dance, and the reverse is true. Cambodia was a vassal state of Siam, and many Cambodian Kings were raised in the Thai court (Chandler 2008, 128-129). Older dancers,

including Sim Muntha, discuss some of the dance songs being translated from Thai into Khmer and the existence of music teachers proficient in both in the early decades of the 20th century.⁵⁰ The exchange that took place during this period between Siam, Cambodia, and likely other regions belies the illusion of isolation—often associated with national ideologies of Cambodian dance. It is likely that while the best Classical dance was found in elite circles, the dance practice was not isolated to the Khmer royal court (Cravath 2007, 102). Benedict Anderson (2006, 125), for example, alludes to the impact of cutting off cultural exchange with neighboring Siam during the French Colonial period, certainly affecting the development of robam boran at the time.

“Rediscovering” Culture in the Colonial Period?

While traveling through the jungles of Siam in 1860, the naturalist Henri Mouhot "discovered" the magnificent ancient ruins of Angkor Wat. Unwittingly he kindled a French imaginary of a lost civilization, great by any standards, but decimated and destroyed. This discovery added cultural impetus for the creation of the French Protectorate to the economic goal of easy access to trade with China (Chandler 2008, 174). After the founding of the French Protectorate in 1863, French scholar-officials eventually came to the conclusion that the “degenerate” Khmer people were descendants of the great civilization whose citizens had once built those grand edifices, inscribed their columns, and chiseled the thousands of bas-reliefs gracing their walls. They used this to support their “civilizing” program. Of course, Angkor truly never was lost. Henri Mouhot's original sketches, for example, show that the temples and their surrounding areas still housed monks (Edwards 2007, 19-20).

King Ang Duong's reign in the 1840s and 1850s provides evidence of the continuing presence of Angkor in Cambodian cultural discourse. He ignited a period of cultural revival during which he redefined ritual dance. He used new costumes inspired by Thai traditions, he separated the male and female dancers into different troupes, and he codified the gestures and movements "based on his understanding of the bas-relief sculptures of Angkor Wat" (Shapiro 1994, 102). Shapiro argues that it was during Ang Duong's reign that "the connection between Angkor and Cambodia became central" to dance development.

Given this return to Angkorean symbolism just before the arrival of the French, it's no surprise that the colonial administration made a connection between Angkor and court dance that can be seen in the writing of Khmerophiles such as Charles Gravelle, George Groslier, and Roland Meyers. For example, Charles Gravelle (2011, 7) wrote:

Angkor! Its past so very remote, a past to which we hardly dare assign a date, yet a past so near in terms of our choreography! Did you not rediscover there, omnipresent on the flowered panels of the galleries and sanctuaries, the elder sisters of our *lokhon*, though devoted as they were to purely religious dances? ... And there you show us, evidence in hand, the absolute differences in costumes and intentions, though the gestures remain the same.⁵¹

Bruce Trigger (1984, 363) discusses how colonial archaeology was used to "denigrate native societies and peoples by trying to demonstrate that they...lacked the initiative to develop on their own" or, in the case of highly developed ancient civilizations, that the local people had "willfully destroyed" them (Ibid, 361). The later case is true of Cambodia, but Khmer literati subsequently used the French ideology to create a sense of nationalism focusing on preserving ancient arts and performance that still exists today.

According to Penny Edwards (2007, 26) the development of the concept of the nation during the colonial era had a major impact on the way that Cambodians understood Angkor and by extension, I argue, court dance. She uses inquiries made by Henri Mouhot and others about how the Khmer felt about Angkor to argue that at the beginning of the colonial era in Cambodia, the temples had religious significance for locals and were connected to popular belief systems that celebrated monarchs and mythical figures. They had caretakers and modern Khmer names, which serves as evidence for this. Prior to the French colonial era, Khmer people certainly had a sense of ethnic unity through traditional cultural practices—religion, arts and language—but this was not the same as having a concept of nationhood or national pride. The complex associations that Khmer people made with their cultural patrimony were subsumed under French discourses of abandonment and disappearance (Edwards 2007, 11). The way Amansara management discussed the organization of the performance at Wat Tanei harked back to themes of loss and disappearance originally suggested by the French Colonial government. Bringing classical dance to the temple at Wat Tanei was seen as bringing the dancers back where they belonged, if only temporarily. The photo documentation was an important means of memorializing the endeavor.

Eric Hobsbawm (1983, 1) argues that many traditions associated with contemporary nation-states have a fairly recent history and are really an attempt to root nationhood in a “suitable heroic past,” particularly the creation of European traditions between 1870-1914. The development of nationalism in colonial Cambodia echoed this. Khmer intellectuals and French scholar officials feared that Khmer culture was fading

away as traditions associated with Angkor (i.e. dance) disappeared. They believed it was their job to save what was left of these cultural practices (Edwards 2007, 7). Kent Davis (2010, 243), Paul Cravath (2007, 124-145) and others documented that court dance was actually flourishing throughout the colonial period. Large portions of the King's personal allowance went to furnishing dance performances and a new dance hall, and while the numbers of dancers in the royal troupe fluctuated by ruler, they were generally in the hundreds. Colonial scholar-officials interpreted this change as disintegration.

In colonial Cambodia, "French scholar-officials and native literati" actively sought to "produce icons of Khmerness" that harkened back to Angkor (Edwards 2007, 11). Classical dance was perhaps the most potent of these icons as evidenced by the insistence on its performance at major diplomatic events and exhibitions. The creation of an "official" dance troupe of the colonial administration separate from King Norodom's troupe—after he became concerned about how the dancers were being used—and later the brief yet complete takeover of the dance troupe by the colonial administration in 1927, provide evidence of this (Cravath 2007, 137; Davis 2010, 247). In 1904, after the death of King Norodom, the French began to intervene at court. Dancers began to receive salaries and were expected to perform at banquets to honor guests. The French also had a hand in modifying dances to make them more understandable to French audiences. While there are indication that classical dance troupes existed outside of the court, often organized by dancers who left the palace after the death of the King, these traveling troupes became more prominent in the early twentieth century due to the tensions between the royal court and the colonial administration.⁵² By 1941, fewer royal dancers

were from prominent backgrounds because the king's political power was decreasing (Jacobsen 2008, 155-159). The examples above indicate that the secularization and commercialization that now has become fully developed began much earlier than often recognized.

Yet the dancers themselves did not feel much change. Some came from less wealthy families, but most were introduced to palace training through relatives. They rarely were allowed to leave the palace, and though performance events and audiences changed, they were still fairly rare. Sim Muntha recalls performances only once or twice a month in the 1940s at special events for dignitaries with larger ceremonies only twice a year at the water festival and Pchum Ben, a festival honoring the dead.⁵³

The Jewel of the Golden Age: (Independence Period)

The ideology of a glorious past pervaded Cambodian nationalism through the middle of the 20th century and the court dancers became Cambodian ambassadors to the world. During King Norodom Sihanouk's rule and his subsequent leadership as Cambodia's Head of State (1941-1970), the artistic director of the Royal Ballet, Queen Kossamak Neariroth (Sihanouk's mother), made substantive changes to the classical dance form (Phim and Thompson 1999, 40-41). It was under her guidance that classical dance flourished as a political tool. Dance played a very important role after independence from France in 1953 as the newly formed country attempted to negotiate a position of neutrality in a politically tense Southeast Asia. Friendship Dance might be performed for visiting diplomats at state events. The lyrics of the song were adapted to the situation and at times the dancers used the flags of the visiting country in the dance to

show their commitment to peace. Additionally, the dancers were used as ambassadors during foreign tours. The King's willingness to share his private dancers, some of whom were family members, indicated his desire to cooperate internationally (Cravath 2007, 162-165).

In the 1950s and 1960s, dances were shortened to fit better in concert-length programs and costumes were modified. Dance gestures also became more precise and geometric. This was all at the behest of the Queen, who had a good eye for the subtleties of court dance and also understood that to be a symbol of the nation, classical dance had to be more accessible.⁵⁴ Some observers of the period noted that the dance form was focused in the palace and that the general Khmer population only rarely had a chance to view performances. Others observed that the dance form had already become an important tourist attraction, but that everyday Khmer people were more interested in other forms of popular theater (Diamond 2012, 128).

However, some members of the royal dance troupe from that era—including the classical dance master at the Siem Reap School of Art (Kim Boran)—remember viewing performances more frequently on TV. She was inspired to come to weekly open practice sessions at the palace and later was invited to join the royal dance troupe.⁵⁵ Restrictions on the dancers decreased. Marriage was allowed, and dancers no longer lived in the palace. Instead, they were employed as civil servants and earned salaries (Shapiro 1999, 40). The ability to view classical dance more readily, and its treatment as a profession (if still a somewhat obscure one) continued the secularization and commoditization process that would eventually lead to the performance at Wat Tanei.

Destruction and Death

The proliferation of court dance ended abruptly in 1971 when the Head of State Prince Sihanouk was exiled and Lon Nol (the former army Chief of Staff) became Prime Minister (Chandler 2008, 249-250). The artists continued on as civil servants, but their ritual role in the royal courts was severed (Cravath 2007, 169-170). On the whole Cambodia was in turmoil, farmer unrest coupled with bombings orchestrated by the U.S. government as part of the war effort in Vietnam ignited civil war in Cambodia and increased the support of the radically socialist Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) often called the Khmer Rouge (Chandler [1991] 1999, 184).

On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh. A new ideology emerged. Angka (the organization) told city dwellers to leave on foot for the villages.⁵⁶ They were going to erase the last 2000 years of Khmer history and begin again at Year Zero (Tully 2006, 173-199). Everyone was to become a peasant while the elite and educated were actively dismissed. Angka ideology pointed to Angkor and the roots of the Khmer civilization. The great public works of the temples and barays were likened to mass construction projects of dams and irrigation systems that the people were forced to build (Slocomb 2003, 25). Elites and intellectuals were executed; and many starved or died from diseases in a country with too little food and no real health care. An estimated 90% of all artists perished, in part because of their connections to the royal court. All traditional performing arts were outlawed (Heywood 2008, 10).

That is not to say that there was no dance during the Khmer Rouge period or that robam boran no longer existed.⁵⁷ Toni Shapiro (2002, 184-189) documents stories of

dancers who practiced in secret, and in some cases, dancers who were asked to perform rituals for Khmer Rouge soldiers. Regardless, during the four years of the Khmer Rouge Regime, *robam boran* vanished almost completely. Instruments were destroyed. Costumes and lyric books were piled and left to rot on the palace grounds. Crowns were broken and jewels went missing (Shapiro 1994, 183-184).

A Dying Flower? Dance Reconstruction in the People's Republic of Kampuchea

At Smile of Angkor, classical dancers emerge from the upstage wings and lure the demons away from the elixir of life through their subtle movements—reenacting the epic battle of gods and demons in the Sea of Churning Milk, a mural at the Temple of Angkor Wat.⁵⁸ They become part of the gods' struggle to gain immortality and through this emergence enact their primary role, that of restoring the land and people to the harmony and happiness they enjoyed prior to a devastating war (the battle of gods and demons). This scene, re-imagined by a Chinese choreographer (see Chapter Three), evokes the symbolism deployed in the discourses of *robam boran* in Cambodia's post-civil war era (see Figure 10). After the immense effort to recreate dances and document dance gestures in the wake of the Khmer Rouge Regime (Blumenthal 1989, 62; Shapiro 1994, 16), Cambodian dancers today share a symbolic function similar to that of the Apsaras created in the churning of the Sea of Milk. They are bringing balance back to Cambodia.

On a psychological level, the events of 1975 justify the deep nostalgia for a seemingly perfect past experienced by Cambodians who lived through the four years of Democratic Kampuchea (Slocumb 2003, 19). Tim Winter (2007a, 7) points out that “Pol Pot's brutal attempts to erase much of Cambodia's past...left a deep-seated anxiety over

what actually constituted “Khmer, culture, identity and history.” Because of this, redefining the markers of “Khmerness” involved a strong desire to recover glories of the past. In 1979, when Vietnamese troupes liberated—or invaded depending on the perspective—Phnom Penh from the clutches of Khmer Rouge, the new government, the Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Council lead by Heng Samrin, were in a tight spot. Espousing socialist ideals in a country that had just been ravaged by a socialist despot, the council attempted to instill faith in its new form of government by supporting the renewal of cultural traditions that had been banned during the Khmer Rouge period (Tully 2006, 202; Bit 1991, 57).

In the early 1980s, 30 classical dancers—many of whom had been in refugee camps or forced labor camps—out of an estimated 300 trained before the war returned to Phnom Penh. These artists faced the painstaking task of recreating the entire repertoire that was traditionally passed on through oral knowledge (Heywood 2008, 83). Others started dance troupes in Pursat Province, Siem Reap, refugee camps along the border with Thailand, and in the rebel headquarters (Shapiro 1994, 204-207). The political climate had changed and so had the meaning of dance practices. The movements and the music were reconstructed as well as possible, but the message of dance was different in the Vietnamese-supported People's Republic of Kampuchea.

Sophiline Cheam Shapiro⁵⁹, now an established choreographer living near Phnom Penh, and Ieu Sopheakagna⁶⁰ were classmates at the newly reconstituted Royal University of Fine Arts in 1981. They began performing as soon as they knew enough dance gestures to get by—in 1983 for Sophiline and 1984 for Sopheakagna. They

remember traveling throughout the provinces to show Khmer people around the country that the arts and Cambodian culture had survived the war and to perform *buong suong* ceremonies to break the cycle of war.⁶¹ They also remember that the words to songs, even to the iconic Apsara Dance, were changed to reflect Vietnamese communist ideology. Sophiline, for example, choreographed a dance for her graduation exam from the equivalent of junior high school. She described it as a very political piece—a battle staged between capitalism and communism. Both Sophiline and Sopheakagna performed internationally in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Sophiline was sent on tour to the United States and Sopheakagna performed in Vietnam and other socialist countries. In both cases, the artists were there to demonstrate how the cultural traditions of Cambodia remained strong after the turmoil of the 1970s.

It was during this period that the secularization of the art form was experienced in full. Under the PRK, dance training became feasible for a swath of young Cambodians who never would have been eligible to practice the art form before (Bit 1991, 57). In refugee camps, any young women and children were invited to train on makeshift stages. In diasporic communities, classical dance practice became a way for Cambodians to stay connected to cultural roots. In Cambodia the classical dancers performed throughout the country allowing the general population to connect with the genre on an intimate level (cf. Diamond 2012, 129). The commodification of classical dance may have occurred prior to this period, with the increased use of classical dance for international diplomats and wealthy tourists, but it was during this period that it became accessible to Khmer people throughout the country. The adolescent Khmer girls performing at Wat Tanei

would not have been able to seek training had it not been for the proliferation of the dance practice during this time.

The PRK was vital to re-invigorating Cambodia's cultural traditions. Isolated from the international community and with no foreign aid, at times up to 50% of Vietnam's budget was poured into the "occupation" (Tully 2006, 203, 216). In 1991, after agreeing to the Paris Peace Accords, Vietnamese troops dispersed from the country to be replaced by the United Nations Transition Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC).⁶²

Dancing in the New Democracy: Tourism and Commercialization

The UNTAC peacekeeping mission ushered in Cambodia's dependence on foreign aid—which continues to this day—and brought tens of thousands of foreign workers to the country. The influx increased commercial opportunities for classical dancers to perform for tourists and photo-journalists. At tourist events, artists felt that both they and the dance form were being disrespected. Audience members would eat, drink and not pay attention to the performance. Yet these performances were tempting because of the financial difficulties of many of the dancers (Shapiro 1994, 411-420). This process of commercialization continued into the present as Cambodia became more politically stable. In the mid-1990s, there was growth in international investment and international interest in supporting cultural traditions grew. But it was—and during my research period continued to be—a time of instability for classical dancers. The government performing arts schools were relocated or disbanded, livable steady salaries for artists were rare, and international funding was uncertain. In Phnom Penh, dancers working in the ministry generally received small salaries (these could be lower than

US\$40 a month) supplemented with bonuses performance opportunities, which did not measure up to the steady livable wage with additional gifts that they would have received as court dancers in the early to mid-twentieth century.⁶³ Those outside of the ministry were paid by performance (ranging from US\$2.50-10). In Siem Reap, dancers could be paid as little as one dollar a night for a performance with no compensation for rehearsal (see Chapter Two for detailed wage data).

The shift from government support to support from international agencies and NGOs evolved in part due to increased political stability leading to foreign interest. This coincided with the end of government training in Siem Reap and the flourishing of NGOs even in Phnom Penh where government arts education still exists. Reliance on foreign investment has also has affected training locales. Immediately after the civil, war dance troupes popped up in several provinces, wherever the former dancers happened to be after forced relocation. Some dancers began to migrate towards Phnom Penh when the national dance troupe was reconstituted while others moved to Siem Reap to take advantage of tourism opportunities. This move fits in with the national ideologies that were developed during the colonial period and have remerged today, Phnom Penh as the modern center of Khmer culture and Siem Reap as the ancient cultural center. Dancers found that there were no incentives to stay in the other provinces, so for the most part people living outside of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap lack access to training in classical dance or the ability to view live performances.

Nearly all artists in Siem Reap and a growing number in Phnom Penh trained at NGOs (sometimes in conjunction with government training). In Siem Reap, aside from a

few workshops and festivals for which dance masters went to the area, the government had few resources to offer artists. According to some artists, the government and some NGOs promoted tourism as the future of artistic development and conservation. For example, the NGO-run School of Art, Siem Reap, replaced any source of government training in the region. While the school provided good training, administrators often catered to tourists to increase revenue and financial opportunities for the children—such as the Japanese tour group visit and the Wat Tanei performance for Amansara.

Artists rely on international support (tourism, NGOs, private donations, and UNESCO) to assure both continued preservation and development. Outwardly the arts are being used as a symbol of Cambodia's strength, but some feel this is a veneer (cf. Turnbull 2006, 145). The arts also are used to spark interest in financing projects in Cambodia (beyond artistic development projects). Artists work to maintain the integrity of robam boran even when international and national interests are at play, and in many ways they are successful. The situation causes tensions, however, that I will explore in the following chapters.

Intangible Heritage and Economic Development

In 1992, Angkor National Park was inscribed as a World Heritage Site, and a decade later, in 2003, robam boran followed as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, strengthening the position of these icons in narratives of identity construction (Winter 2007a, 8; Diamond 2012, 130). This acknowledgement often “encourages governments, NGOs and local communities to identify, safeguard, revitalize, and protect their oral and intangible heritage” (Seeger 2009, 114). In

Cambodia, the combination of the fear of vanishing cultural traditions and the recognition by UNESCO streamlined resources towards heritage and preservation. The inscription also encouraged economic development in post-war years through the growth of tourism. Along with this international recognition, new insecurities emerged. HRH Princess Buppha Devi (2010, 12) expressed concern regarding the influence of foreign cultural practices on dance development, citing fear of “the wrong outside influences.”

Dance Development in Phnom Penh

Recent decades were a time of upheaval for dance practitioners in Phnom Penh. The National Summarit Theater was the main home of artists returning to the city in 1980. Unfortunately, the theater burned down in 1994 (Turnbull 2006, 136). Artists continued to practice there on the charred stairway landing until 2007. With promises of a renovation, the Ministry of Culture made a deal with a private investor in 2005. They agreed to rebuild the theater in exchange for some of the surrounding land. However, the renovations never took place, and in December 2007 the theater was demolished.⁶⁴

The nearby artist community at *Sambok Chab*, also called *Bassac*, experienced similar difficulties. Children began learning dance there with a group that became affiliated with Cambodian Living Arts (Children of Bassac). Many other dancers and their families lived in this community, some in the building designed by the architect Van Molyvann and some in shanties surrounding it. This land was given to a telecommunications developer, and the 1,500 residents were forced to leave in 2005.⁶⁵ Some of the younger people who were training as dancers and musicians decided to move

in with arts teachers and friends so that they could continue regular study in Phnom Penh, but others left with their families making continued practice difficult (see Figure 11).⁶⁶

The main campus (north campus) of the Royal University of Fine Arts met a similar fate. In 2006 the Ministry of Culture gave this land to a telecommunications financier in exchange for building a badly needed new campus. Owners of the repossessed land were compensated with approximately 70 USD for the trouble of relocation (Turnbull 2006, 145). The new campus is located in Toul Kork on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. After the move, enrollment dropped by around 30% (see Figure 12). The area was not considered safe, particularly for young girls traveling alone. Teachers working on small government salaries also were forced to cut hours in part because of the cost of petrol.⁶⁷ As a result the quality of training was diminished.⁶⁸

While *robam boran* is seen as a symbol of the nation, the national government seemed capable only of verbal support at the time of research. However, international interest and support continued to flourish. UNESCO and partners have funded research, reconstruction and teachers' workshops in Phnom Penh and technique workshops in Siem Reap.⁶⁹ The opening of arts-oriented NGOs (beginning in the late 1990s) provides additional evidence. In 1996, Sovanna Phum opened followed by Apsara Art Association in 1997, Cambodia Living Arts in 1998, Amrita in 2003, and Khmer Arts in 2007. All the NGOs received international funding to support the arts. There has been little fiscal support for the arts originating inside the country.

Khmer Arts, established by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and her husband John Shapiro, is an excellent example of the intersections of cultural conservation and

international support (see Figure 13).⁷⁰ Sophiline trained in *robam boran* in the 1980s, and in 1991 she married and migrated to the U.S. She studied dance ethnology at UCLA and began the Khmer Arts Academy in Long Beach, CA, to pass on her knowledge of *robam boran* to Khmer youth. In 2006 she returned to Cambodia and officially established the Khmer Arts Ensemble, the first private professional-level classical dance company in Cambodia.⁷¹

Sophiline Cheam Shapiro struggled but succeeded in promoting her company to local Khmer audiences. At the time of the field research, most funding and performance opportunities were international. At the same time, free performances at the Khmer Arts Theater just outside Phnom Penh—built by Sophiline’s uncle Chheng Phon, the former Minister of Culture and Fine Arts—were becoming more frequent and filling up with an audience mixed of expats and art enthusiasts from Phnom Penh plus a growing local Khmer audience.

Since the early 1990s, Phnom Penh’s classical dance development has been two-pronged. There is a focus on the national government and nationalist discourses, but there is an equally powerful movement away from the government as dancers seek avenues for financial support. While classical dance is no longer directly connected to the royal courts, there is still a royalist element to dance production in Phnom Penh.⁷² HRH Princess Buppha Devi is the Artistic Director of the Royal Ballet, a network of dancers that is called upon for most diplomatic tours and performance events involving political dignitaries.⁷³ That said, the majority of dancers are not able to support themselves with the income provided from these performances and seek additional work. Many dance for

NGOs including Cambodian Living Arts and Amrita in addition to government performances, and some perform at restaurants in Phnom Penh that offer dance programs for tourists and locals.

Dance Development in Siem Reap

The picture of dance development has been quite different in Siem Reap, where the government has taken on much less active role and the tourism industry reigns supreme. As dance developed in Phnom Penh after the fall of Democratic Kampuchea, surviving artists also began training dancers in several provinces. But in the 1990s, after UNTAC organized elections in Phnom Penh, these troupes disbanded fairly quickly. Most of the former court dancers still living in Cambodia migrated (sometimes with their troupes) to Phnom Penh. Siem Reap Province, home of the ancient ruins of Angkor Wat, was the only province to consistently maintain dance troupes from the 1990s onward. Unlike Phnom Penh, dance in Siem Reap is primarily supported through private tourist enterprises with few government connections.

Like all provinces, Siem Reap has a Department of Culture and Fine Arts, the local branch of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Until the early 2000s, the Department of Art offered courses in folk dance, *lakhon kohl*, and *robam boran*.⁷⁴ By 2002 the classes became unsustainable and former students were busy performing for various private troupes or teaching for higher salaries elsewhere.⁷⁵ New students trained at NGOs or in private lessons at dance troupe leaders' homes.⁷⁶ Now the Department of Culture and Fine Arts acts mainly as a monitoring branch, although it does help organize special events when necessary.⁷⁷

From 1990 to the early 2000s, another primary institution for learning was the dance school at Wat Bo. Many of the current teachers and artists in Siem Reap trained at Wat Bo under the tutelage of Neak Kru Kim Boran.⁷⁸ Trained in classical dance at the Royal Palace in the late 1950s, Kim Boran began performing regularly just before Lon Nol executed his Coup D'état in 1971. Kim Boran tried to return to Phnom Penh to help reconstruct the performing arts but was ultimately unhappy and relocated to Siem Reap. She still wanted to pass on her knowledge of the court dance tradition, and in 1990, the Buddhist monks at Wat Bo allowed her to use one of their buildings to house artists. Her dance troupe frequently performed at Preah Khan, an Angkorean Temple, for donors of the World Heritage Fund throughout the 1990s.

Kim Boran eventually relocated to the School of Art, Siem Reap, which began offering classes for underprivileged children in 2000 (see Figure 14). At the time of my research the school provided a four-year program in *robam boran*, music, and folk dance and had approximately 200 students.⁷⁹ The school also worked closely with the Department of Arts in Siem Reap.⁸⁰ They were called upon several times during my research period, once to perform at an International Buddhist Festival, once to perform at a dinner in honor of the Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment, once to perform for a UNESCO delegation, and once to perform at the royal tree planting ceremony.

Throughout the 1990s, tourism was an increasingly major factor of the Cambodian economy, and dancers both in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap were lured by the potential economic benefits of dancing for tourists. Many dancers in Siem Reap began

teaching in their own homes with the goal of creating private dance troupes for hotel and restaurant performance.⁸¹ This became one of the most common methods young performers used to learn to perform in the province. Some dancers who trained at more formal arts schools reported that even though they knew the other performers were wrong, troupe leaders and teachers criticized their technique because it didn't match that of the more poorly trained dancers.⁸² The newest trend has been to study *robam boran* and folk dance through YouTube and other training videos further distancing students from the training approved by the arts authority.

The official administrative position on tourism at the School of Art, Siem Reap, was that the tourism industry could create dangerous situations for young students at the school. They were concerned about the bodily safety of young female students working late at hotels and about labor issues—that working late would decrease their students' quality of life and their ability to complete schoolwork. Given these concerns, they did not support an official school dance troupe for the tourism industry. They did, however, open the school up to large tour groups (such as the Japanese tour group), funneling donations into the school budget. The administration also was pressured by the real needs of the students, many of whom came from more disadvantaged families. Most young dancers needed to contribute to the family income, and in some cases they were the primary income earners. Several teachers, including Neak Kru Sokham, ran their own dance troupes using students and recent graduates.⁸³ Performances like those at Wat Tanei were rare, but they were highly desirable, giving the young performers a meal and a good salary.

Conclusion

The whirring generator was silent and blackness permeated the stones of Wat Tanei. Five young women sat on bamboo mats that were laid out on the uneven temple terrain waiting patiently in their crowns (see Figure 8). The message was relayed across the temple grounds—“*Ke mork, riebcham* (They are coming, get ready).” In the dark the dancers stood up and, barely visible in the candlelight, began throwing flowers at the unsuspecting dinner guests. Afterwards, Amansara staff encouraged the tourists to take pictures with the dancers. The adolescent female performers shied away from the tourists’ touch and barely contained giggles as the tourists attempted the dance moves they had just seen. After hours of waiting, the performance was over. Within five minutes the dancers transformed from ethereal beings into school children out far later than their normal curfew. Crowns and jewelry were untied, t-shirts and pajama pants went on, and the dancers were loaded back into the truck and deposited at the dance school to wait for parents. The next day, perhaps similarly to the dancers of the Angkorean period, they would likely be caring for animals or working in their parents’ rice fields while they waited for the extra income the Wat Tanei performance would bring for their families.

The role and meaning of classical dance has changed dramatically as has the demography of classical dancers. This chapter shows that this has been a much longer process than is often recognized. The historical process that led up to the performance event described traces back to the origins of classical dance. Some scholars worry about commercialization, citing concerns about technique and respect. I acknowledge and share those concerns, but I demonstrate here that the commercialization process is not a current

phenomena. The instability of war and the financial distress of Cambodia after the isolation of the PRK period facilitated exponential growth in tourism and promoted classical dance as a tourist attraction. In the diplomatic performances and tours of the 1950s and 1960s, classical dance already was being commoditized. In the late 1800s to mid 1900s, classical dance was a tourist draw for French visitors. Even during the Angkorean period, dancers were given plots of land and jewels, indicating an economic valuation of ritual dance practice.

Changes to the demography of dancers and the classical dance audience are actually more recent than the commodification of classical dance on a global scale. While dancers during the colonial period began to come from less privileged families, indicating a move towards secularization, the genre was still intricately linked with the royal courts and other elite Cambodians until at least the 1950s. At that point, the general public was able to view classical dance on TV and training opened to the public once a week. Of course, in the 1950s and 1960s, few Cambodians had access to televisions at home, so the effects of this change likely were not too far reaching. Real change came after Cambodia's Civil War. Many dancers fled the country and training occurred in refugee camps and diasporic communities around the world. After the war, the ideological communism of the Heng Samrin government in the 1980s demanded public access.

Cambodia's recent history of reconstruction after the war has attracted international interest both in culture and in development projects to an extent that was unimaginable before the war. The immediate cause of the rise of tourism that led to a group of adolescent dancers from the poorest regions of Siem Reap performing at Wat

Tanei may be found in UNESCO's recognition of the art form and the development of cultural tourism sectors, but the seeds for commodification and secularization were apparent much earlier. Regardless, these processes have increased exponentially in recent years, transforming dance development and ideology in ways that have major impacts on current practitioners. This issue is taken up in the following chapters, beginning with an in-depth analysis of the bodily labor of dance practitioners and the different kinds of value that are given to their work.

³⁹ The Siem Reap Angkor Guide, written by Kenneth Cramer and edited by Kenneth Cramer and Debra Groves is updated and released tri-annually. The edition described above is the 27th edition: April-July 2008. While publication began in 1997 and continues to the present, the section on Traditional Dance remains largely the same although there are frequent changes in the listed venues due more to whims of advertising than to actual changes to the venues available to visitors in Siem Reap.

⁴⁰ In a total of about 17 days in Siem Reap I visited 10 different places with dance activities of various kinds (four were not in the guide). At one of the locations, the performances were cancelled.

⁴¹ The five thousand dollar figure is an approximate value given by hotel management. It includes only costs associated with the private dinner event for two at Wat Tanei —the permits for use of the archaeological site, the performers, the hotel staff, the food, the generator, other necessary equipment, and overhead for Amansara Resort. It doesn't include any other elements of travel such as hotel, airfare, or other activities in Cambodia.

⁴² *Tum Teav* is a classic tale that is often referred to as the Romeo and Juliet of Cambodia. Amansara is an exclusive resort that is part of the Aman resort group.

⁴³ This was my first request to attend one of the performance events of Neak Kru Sokham's private troupe. She was concerned about the reaction of her employers. After she found them to be open to my attendance, she welcomed my presence at subsequent events.

⁴⁴ The truck driver wasn't completely sure about this and encouraged me to hide my face with my curly hair (a common texture in Cambodia). In the end, the costume maker was

right. The guards at the Angkor National Park frequently let me enter the grounds for events and observations of dance groups.

⁴⁵ The Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts listed this date of choreography for robam tep apsar in *Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia* (2004, 26). Professor Hang Soth supervised the inventory of arts practices.

⁴⁶ Robam nesat is a folk dance that is inspired by traditional Khmer methods of fishing and crabbing.

⁴⁷ Only the end of the dance was performed here. As the dance comes to a close, flowers are tossed at the audience to wish them good luck (Cravath 2007, 273).

⁴⁸ See Paul Cravath (2007, 13-35) and Miettinen (85-103) for more on dance in the region prior to the Angkorean Period.

⁴⁹ Through the span of the six centuries of the Angkorean civilization, the power center shifted to different locations, but all were located near modern day Siem Reap. Charles Higham (2002, 299-350) provides details regarding these shifts in power.

⁵⁰ Sim, Muntha. 2008. Interview with Suppya Nut. Video Recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia. July 24. New York Public Library Digital Collection.
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/fcd8d6a0-0380-0131-43d9-3c075448cc4b#6:54>

⁵¹ This quote comes from the preface of George Groslier's *Cambodian Dancers: Ancient and Modern* originally written in French in 1913, translated in 2011 by Pedro Rodríguez.

⁵² For more on the classical dance troupes in the colonial era see Paul Cravath (2007, 136-146). Troupes led by former palace dancers maintained a high level of technique and performed for tourists (sometimes at Angkor). Other troupes traveled throughout Cambodia and were often influenced by other popular performance forms such as yike (the oldest form of popular theater). These dance troupes should not be confused with the yike troupes or other popular genres like bassac (1940s onward) (see Diamond 2012, 132-142).

⁵³ Sim, Muntha. 2008. Interview with Suppya Nut. Video Recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia. July 24. New York Public Library Digital Collection.
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/fcd8d6a0-0380-0131-43d9-3c075448cc4b#6:54>

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Kim Boran. 2012. Interview with author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. June 4.

⁵⁶ Angka (the organization) is how the governing body of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) often referred to themselves in public policy announcements (Hinton 2004).

⁵⁷ Toni Shapiro (2002) and Sophiline Cheam Shapiro (1997) document songs and dances that were created by the Khmer Rouge to serve their agenda.

⁵⁸ Smile of Angkor is performed nightly at the Siem Reap Exhibition Center (Angkor CO-EX). The show provides an interpretation of Angkorean Civilization through a hybrid medium using folk dance, classical dance, various types of Khmer music, circus arts, contemporary dance, and a laser light show. For another interpretation of the Churning of the Sea of Milk see Jukka Miettinen (2008, 145).

⁵⁹ Shapiro, Sophiline Cheam. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Preah Ho, Cambodia. September 27.

⁶⁰ Ieu, Sopheakagna. 2012a. Interview with Author. Digital recording Siem Reap, Cambodia. June 28.

⁶¹ The buong suong ceremony is comprised of dances that are considered to be the most sacred in the genre. Some argue that these dances formed the core temple dances of the Angkorean era and are still important in Cambodia at the national level. The buong suong is a ritual that requests help from the divine in exchange for future offerings. In this case it was for healing from the wounds of the past (Cravath 2007, 288-289).

⁶² The United Nations Transition Authority Cambodia (UNTAC) was an operation set up by the United Nations (UN) to guide the ceasefire, to demobilize enemy factions, to supervise administrative structures and to organize elections. After the UN helped political factions develop a peaceful agreement, dance troupes that had been supported by political leaders in different parts of the country coalesced in Phnom Penh (Shapiro 1994, 426).

⁶³ Salaries could also be much higher, between US\$160 and US\$400, but wages in this range were hard to come by. Some dancers working in Phnom Penh could also make a significant amount of money from international performance opportunities, but there was no guarantee of inclusion on these tours.

⁶⁴ The theater fire, renovation rumors, and eventual demolition were well documented in Cambodia's English Language Newspapers, The Cambodia Daily (shut down by the

Cambodian government in the fall of 2017) and The Phnom Penh Post (cf. Berthiaume 2005; Kimsond and Berthiaume 2005; Nariddh 2008).

⁶⁵ The Bassac community's removal was documented in the Phnom Penh Post on December 16, 2005 (Sokha and Usbernsen).

⁶⁶ According to an interview with Nop Thyda (2011), some young artists decided to continue living in Phnom Penh and moved into rooms used as practice studios in what is known as the White Building, the last of Van Molyvann's constructions to survive into 2012. What remained of the White Building was demolished in July 2017. The demolition was documented in the Phnom Penh Post, see, for example, Muong (2017).

⁶⁷ Figures from "Classical dance in the spotlight: Is the country's cherished art facing neglect?" Phnom Penh Post (Emily Wright, 18 October 2013).

⁶⁸ Even more dramatic figures were described by Rady Nget (Interview by the Author November 19, 2011), a specialist in Lakhon Khol who was an advanced student at the time of the move. He said that of the 40 students who began with him only four continued to train regularly after the move and 5 or 6 graduated, indicating a drop in enrolment of almost 90% in his specialty. He also mentioned that the teachers were paid a higher sum than area residents as added incentive for the move.

⁶⁹ Japanese Funds and Trust as supporting partner of UNESCO has provided a good deal of support for the reconstruction of *robam boran* and Cambodia's performing arts in general.

⁷⁰ Shapiro, Sophiline Cheam. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Preah Ho, Cambodia. September 27.

⁷¹ The company is now called the Sophiline Arts Ensemble.

⁷² It can be problematic to discuss a royalist element in dance practice in a post-court context like Cambodia, where much political authority has been taken away from the royal family. Yet the historical connections with the royal courts have created a situation in which the provenance of the classical dance form is to some extent linked with the royal family. Some performers and dance enthusiasts feel that a royal patron of the arts is necessary for the perpetuation of the classical dance form. At the time of research HRH Princess Buppha Devi was the Royal Parton of the Arts (and the artistic director to the Royal Ballet Company). Her cousin HRH Prince Tesso Sisowath was also becoming increasingly involved in classical dance preservation and development. In addition to the practical role of the royal family in classical dance practice in Phnom Penh, international discourses surrounding the

dance also bring connections with royalty into the foreground. The dance practice is presented to tourists in a fashion that emphasizes its role in the royal courts and the practice is listed as the Royal Ballet of Cambodia on UNESCO's representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. At the same time, the national government sometimes seeks to separate the practice from its royalist roots. For example, a dancer reported that during the funeral procession for the late King Norodom Sihanouk, few classical dancers were selected to participate, a departure from previous ceremonial rites where the King was surrounded by his entire troupe of dancers.

⁷³ While often referred to as the Royal Ballet Company when touring internationally, this is really a misnomer because the dancers work on call and there are no regular rehearsals.

⁷⁴ Phat, Khoeuy. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. July 2.

⁷⁵ Dancers preferred to learn and perform with dance troupe leaders because of the possible employment opportunities associated with these troupes. In Siem Reap, most dancers earned a living through tourism performance, and the Department of Culture and Fine Arts did not offer many opportunities of this nature. Just after the war, the department provided small stipends of US\$2.50 a month, a good amount during the tumultuous period. But the salaries never changed so dancers moved on to private dance troupes where there was higher earning potential (of at least one dollar a performance).

⁷⁶ Arn, Sophearika. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. May 17.

⁷⁷ Sun, Sovanny. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. August 28. According to Sun Sovanny, the Director of the Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Siem Reap during the research period, the department was supposed to visit tourism venues to make sure that the stage was elevated to a certain height above the audience, check the quality of costumes and technique, and observe the performances to ensure that the dances were presented in an acceptable manner. If changes needed to be made at a venue, they were supposed to host meetings between the venue staff and department representatives. Sovanny explained that because there was so little funding and few staff members, most tourism venues were not monitored on a regular basis.

⁷⁸ Kim, Boran. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. June 4, 2012.

⁷⁹ The School of Art, Siem Reap closed in March of 2014, a topic detailed in later chapters. Now Siem Reap does not have any schools dedicated to dance training.

⁸⁰ Ouk, Sothea. 2012. Interview by the Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. May 18.

⁸¹ Neak Kru Sim Sina (interviewed by the author June 9, 2012) is an example of an artist who has been training students (with her family) at home and working at other commercial institutions.

⁸² These individuals will remain anonymous as a precaution.

⁸³ Dance troupes generally function in a hierarchical organization. The leader of the troupe, usually a dance teacher (and sometimes also the singer), would find performance opportunities and negotiate a lump sum fee for the performance. He or she divides the proceeds among performance participants. At the time of research, the leader would take the largest cut, then the costumer, then musicians, then classical dancers, then folk dancers, but this could change as the leader saw fit. Generally, performers who performed more challenging roles were paid the same amount as everyone else. Troupe leaders made significantly more than performers, they were often taking care of large families and had a larger output for the purchase of costumes. The troupe started by Sarun and Sokun attempted to do away with some of this hierarchical structure. They paid all performers equally and created transparency in troupe operations.

Chapter 2: Laboring Bodies: The Economy of Cambodian Dance Production

I waded through ankle deep puddles with classical dancer Seng Sophea toward a gas station nearby on Airport Road 6. Sophea was originally from Phnom Penh and lived with her husband and young son in the staff dormitory of the Cambodia Cultural Village so she rarely got to explore the Siem Reap area.⁸⁴ She was excited to drive me home after work even though it was 10 o'clock at night, and the gas tank of her family's motorbike was empty. It was August 22, 2012, I was returning to the United States in just over a week, and we were almost out of opportunities to spend time together. We trudged through the rain under a single umbrella to buy a liter of gas. As water bathed my flip flop-clad feet, I thought about how without Sophea's insistence on taking me home, I wouldn't have observed the cultural village staff meeting after-hours or the unexpected rehearsal that lasted into the night.

At 7:30 pm, darkness had descended on the walkways and manicured lawns that connected the model villages that give the tourist destination its name. The evening staff meeting was about to come to a close when an announcement startled the performers into action.⁸⁵ Sophea turned to me apologetically as she began changing back into her dance clothes (her *kben* and her button-up silk shirt). She explained that we were heading over to the Floating Village for an after-hours rehearsal.⁸⁶ Around me, nearly all of the 116 members of the art staff at the Cultural Village were changing as well. Using our cellphone flashlights, we navigated our way to the concrete platform and bleachers that were designed to allow the ethnic theme

park's audiences to view the occasional performances that occur there. Staff members explained that a regular show there is too expensive to maintain. But for the Cambodian Cultural Village's ninth anniversary celebration on September 24, 2012, several rarely performed shows would be inserted into the performance schedule including a "Fishing Performance."

A temporary stage for the anniversary event had been assembled over the water during the previous week. The dancers crossed a small bridge to access the wide platform and got into their starting positions for what was supposed to be the first spacing rehearsal. Just as the dancers were in place to rehearse, sheets of rain began to pour from the sky. The stage quickly became slick and dangerous, and all but five of the staff promptly left the platform. Amid screams and shouts, umbrellas and ponchos emerged from bags that were then quickly placed with costumes, props, masks, and around seven huddled dancers' bodies under a large umbrella advertising a cellphone company (see Figure 15). On stage the Artistic Director Nuo Sokha attempted to continue a rehearsal of bokatao with the help of one of the male teachers who struggled against the rain under a floppy, broken umbrella. Regardless of the dangerous conditions posed by the weather, the rehearsal continued until the rain affected the power in the outdoor area and the music stopped. Dancers groaned when they were instructed to return to the mini-theater, where all but six performers were allowed to take off the wet practice attire and change into street clothes to observe. The six continuing to rehearse were given time to change into dry practice clothes and then ushered onto the small stage to continue preparing the bokatao piece for the

anniversary event. All the artists remained in the dry shelter of the mini-theater for the next hour and a half watching and commenting on the rehearsal in front of them, they often poked fun at the male dancers' lack of prowess in their mock fight. Looking back on it, the joking felt rather unfair given that their day had started at 9 am, that they hadn't had dinner, and that they had just been soaked. The artists were finally released at 9:45 pm, when Sophea's husband told her the bad news that their motorbike had no fuel, and we found ourselves trudging to the gas station.

I did not go to Cambodia planning to research economic issues, but this day at the Cambodian Cultural Village was one in a long series of events that sparked my interest in the topic. As my research progressed, I could not ignore artists' concern with the valuation of their own bodily labor. Both the classical dance form and the dancers' laboring bodies were being commoditized both for tourism and commercial use. For example, tourists purchased tickets to view the physical moving bodies of the Cambodian Cultural Village arts staff along with entrance tickets to the ethnic theme park. Staff members maintained a self-awareness of the monetary, cultural, symbolic and social value of their corporeal labor and the impact that the long hours of labor (on and offstage) had on their bodies. Here I am using Bourdieu's ([1977] 2013) concept of capital which expands valuation beyond the purely economic to take into account the value of being a bearer of cultural resources, the prestige inherent in the years spent attaining cultural knowledge, and the social benefit derived from this type of production.⁸⁷

This chapter expands on the work of Loic Wacquant (2004), who articulates the importance of the behind-the-scenes bodily labor that goes into performance, and Priya Srinivasan (2012), who demonstrates how the body simultaneously becomes the producer and the product in performance events. It argues that to fully understand the choices made by dance practitioners as they balance their own bodily labor, the economic valuation of this labor, and the other potential benefits of their participation in Cambodian dance production, it is necessary to look at a corporeal economy of dance production. By taking the corporeal economy—Wacquant’s (2004) term for the bodily labor that goes into preparation and performance—into account, it is possible to identify the varying degrees of control that dance practitioners have on their own bodily production and the degree to which they become alienated from their own bodies as the dance form and thus their bodies become commoditized.

Following Appadurai (1986) and Stone et al. (2000, 19) this chapter will “follow the commodity,” in this case both the performance of classical dance and the bodies that are producing the dance, to understand how the value of the laboring body is shaped by social, cultural, and economic systems. To do this I will put the laboring dancer’s body in the context of scholarly discourse on economy and commoditization. I then will discuss the value of dance in Cambodia’s economy at the time of my research. Finally, I will explore performance and performer experiences in two specific dance production settings, the Cambodian Cultural Village in Siem Reap and the Children of Bassac Dance Troupe in Phnom Penh. These two sites provide insight into different methods of dance production and offer contrasting cases of bodily

economics. Using the case studies provided, the chapter demonstrates that a theory of corporeal/bodily economics can explain the strategic decisions that dance practitioners make regarding the valuation of their laboring bodies.

E[valu]ating the Laboring Body as Commodity

During my research, an art enthusiast in Cambodia compared the dance NGO to a metaphorical factory churning out “automatons” with just enough skills to perform the three or four dances required for a tourism show.⁸⁸ This is a metaphor strikingly similar to notions in “scientific materialism” in the 1800s that there is a leveling between human and machine, a connection that Karl Marx among others found to be questionable because of the “vital” essence of humanity (Wendling 2011, 80-81). Regardless of its criticisms, the proposed assimilation of bodily labor into the “model of work done by...machine” does echo the process of classical dance commodification in some tourism and commercial contexts in Cambodia (cf. Wendling 2011, 81). Several dancers, for example, commented on the fact that they learned and performed a few stock dances in a rather mechanized fashion, the trend toward commodification discussed in Chapter One apparently meeting its fullest expression in these tourism shows.⁸⁹ This perceived connection between bodily labor and machine necessitates an exploration of the relationship between the body and production and the body and economy as a whole.

According to Stephen Bates (2015, 128), there has been a “sustained reflection” on the body in the global economy in many recent scholarly endeavors. This trend can be seen in the writing of anthropologists who have worked in

Southeast Asia such as Aihwa Ong (2010, 151-153), who discussed the stereotype that Malaysian female bodies and minds are more properly designed for hours of factory labor because of their quick and nimble fingers, eyesight, and their ability to withstand un-stimulating work, and Mary Beth Mills, ([1999] 2012) who traced the migratory paths of rural Thai women as they began working in a variety of urban settings.⁹⁰ Annuska Derks' (2008) work aligns with this corporeal trend documenting how women migrating from rural to urban settings in Cambodia face contradictions between their ideals of bodily purity, behavior and proper movement style. She articulates the realities of sex work, factory work and street vending that they face in their new city lives.

Ara Wilson (2004, 83) comes close to unpacking a corporeal economy—particularly in her chapter on “The Economies of Intimacy in the Go-Go Bar.” Wilson discusses the varying “degree of commitment or energy” displayed by the dancers in Thailand as well as explicitly detailing erotic scenes from the sex shows. But the focus does not remain on the body; her goal is to explore the interconnections between various forms of intimacy and the material economy. As such, her focus moves to the “nonrationalized mode of labor and contract” that occurs as Thai sex workers sell their services to their customers (89).

While these scholars address the importance of the laboring body in their respective explorations of the transformation of women's work, I argue that they maintain the commonly held division between the corporeal and the mental; a division which is untenable particularly in an analysis of physical endeavors.

Although recent literature in academia has pointed towards the importance of the body, a certain “bodily-blindness” that echoes the history of economic theory and theories of value remains (Smith and Lee 2015, 64). For example, Foucault ([1977] 1980, 58-59) points out that Marx’s writing does say interesting things about the body, but the discussion is overshadowed by an emphasis on the mind. In his early work Marx distinguishes between the spiritual and physical elements of man when he explains that alienated labor “estranges man from his own body as well as...his spiritual essence” (Marx [1844] 1964, 112-113).⁹¹ Similar to Marx’s theoretical insights, most models for understanding economic systems begin with ideological divisions: the separation of mind and body, the separation of the means of production, the products, and the consumption of those products; or the separation of ideology and materiality.⁹² For example, while Stephen Gudeman (2001, 1-19) critiques the tendency of economists and anthropologists to “emphasize dyadic ties” as opposed to connections between what he calls economic “realms.” He argues that the “economy consists of two realms...community and market,” seemingly falling back into a dualistic view of economic process.⁹³

I argue that this doesn’t make sense, particularly when contemplating the “commoditization of services” as opposed to goods—services that according to Arjun Appadurai include “sexual, occupational, ritual, and emotional activities.”⁹⁴ Here I am taking a broad view of commodity as a thing that satisfies human needs and that can be exchanged for other things. This combines Marx ([1867] 1990, 136) and Stone et. al.’s (2000, 9) definition of the concept using the word “thing” instead of object or

good because it leaves room to consider non-traditional commodities like the performing arts. In order to understand the social, cultural and economic meanings of a commodity, production, exchange and consumption must all be considered (White 2000, 34).⁹⁵ This form of commoditization of services, while particularly important in complex societies, is often glossed over in Western scholarly discourse because there is discomfort with the thought of the commodification of human attributes on moral grounds (Kopytoff 1986, 84). Yet, in the tourism industry and beyond, waiters, maids, receptionists, and performers are indeed service commodities. The members of the Cambodian arts staff at the Cultural Village, for example, are providing a service. They are producing the commodity; dance, which cannot be produced without their physical labor. This requires the development of a theory of a bodily or corporeal economy.

In the case of dance as commodity, production, exchange and consumption occur simultaneously and thus provide a unique frame for looking at the meaning of the commodity and its sensuous nature.⁹⁶ This simultaneity inherent in dance production also challenges standard Western models of economic understanding that tend to separate these different spheres of economic activity. As argued above, the commodity (dance) and the producer (the dancers/performers) often are intertwined and in some cases are one and the same, so the chapter seeks to explain this corporeal economy by looking at dance production through the lens of the producer. The body always is connected both to the labor done in advance and to the labor of producing the final product. If, during a performance, the dancer is both the producer and the

product, then the line between person and commodity begins to fade and attention is drawn to the transformative nature of commodities (Kopytoff 1986, 65, 86).

Take the Cambodian Cultural Village as an example: the performers are workers and they are simultaneously—if fleetingly when under the gaze of the viewers—the thing being produced. At 2:45 pm on Monday May 21, 2012, five members of the artistic staff donned the appropriate attire for Apsara Dance and emerged onto the stage with their hips, knees, toes, wrists, and fingers bent in ways that stretch the boundaries of natural movement. They filed forward executing familiar steps and transforming into the characters of the dance. During the performance, the laboring bodies of these five dancers engaged in classical dance practice transformed into a commodity purchased by international consumers who paid US\$15 and Khmer consumers who paid US\$1.25 for entry to the village. This points to the material commodification of dance and the dancers' bodies (cf. Lambek 2013).

The consumer had immediate access to this product (the museum, the show, the gift shop), but the dance product in particular was ephemeral. Souvenirs, photos and videos will provide a reminder of the visit, and the site can be visited again for another fee, but the specific performance of “The Immortal Life of the Khmer Soul” that began at 2:30 on May 21 and ended with the performance of Apsara Dance (at 2:45) will never happen again (see Figure 16). This sets the commoditization of dance apart from the other arts. Sculpture and painting are durable, music can be recorded with more success, but the three-dimensional quality of dance and the full kinesthetic

experience of the performance are ephemeral. Many other commodities—food and beverages—are equally ephemeral and live on in the social relations that they produce. They are incorporated “into the personal and social identity of the consumer” (Gell 1986, 112). As a product, dance may be fleeting, but it lingers with the people who experience it—both artists and viewers.

In his study of boxing in Chicago, Loic Wacquant (2004, 6) explains that rather than “the all-too-brief appearances in the limelight,” (such as the moments of evanescence above) it is the “minute and mundane rites of daily life in the gym that produce and reproduce...this very peculiar corporeal, material, and symbolic economy that is the pugilistic world.” This draws attention to the need to take the labor of both preparation and performance and its toll on the body (whether in the gym or in a dance studio) into account. Yet while the labor of the pugilist’s body is thoroughly described in Wacquant’s work, the connections between these forms of economy are not elaborated.

Priya Srinivasan (2012, 12) doesn’t use the term corporeal economy but she argues for the importance of accounting for dancers’ bodily labor “in politico-economic terms.” She explains that dance is unique in that “the labor of dancing cannot be separated from its means of production, the dancer’s body” and that in the case of dance the “labor is equivalent to the product.” The division between labor, production and product is thus erroneous. This echoes Raymond William’s critique of “traditional Marxist understandings of the act of labor, the means of production, and the product” when considering the conditions of artistic production (Srinivasan 2012,

11-12). Equating the process of production with the product itself applies in many dance performance contexts discussed in previous chapters, but it does not take into account the bodily labor that goes into preparation for a performance. You can't separate the labor, the means of production and the product as Srinivasan says, but in addition, you have to take into account that there is great deal of labor done in advance that is equally important in the creation of the product as argued by Wacquant (2004).

Traditional Marxist understandings separate labor, the tools necessary for production, and the product. However, Marx ([1867] 1990, 1038-1049) did account for the possibility that the product and act of production might be inseparable in certain conditions. He discusses two forms of “non-material production” (1047) in the appendix to *Capital Vol. I*. He considers one of these forms to be when “the product is not separable from the means of production” (1048). Marx uses teachers working in teaching institutions as an example to demonstrate what he considers to be the unproductive nature of this labor in the sense that it doesn't lead to the accumulation of capital. Performers in Cambodia could easily be substituted for the teachers in this example—the Cambodian Cultural Village would be the institution and the arts staff the teachers. Marx ([1867] 1990, 1048-49) argues that this is a peripheral form that can be “ignored when considering capitalist production as a whole.” Since this form of non-material production isn't considered an important aspect of capitalism, it doesn't factor into traditional Marxian analysis. However, given the discussion of the

role that commoditized services play in complex economies, I argue that the dismissal of this form of production limits our understanding of the economic reality.

Although Marx did not feel the need to include the mode of production wherein the laboring body and the product are equivalent in his analyses of capitalism, his discourse on estranged labor in his earlier work still brings up an intriguing question: What are the material consequences that result from the intertwining of labor and product (cf. Marx [1844] 1964, 106-112)? I see two alternatives.

1) A counter-argument to Marx's concept of estranged labor: If the body is the laboring entity and the laboring body is the product, the dancer is not estranged from the dance when it becomes a commodity because the labor, product and body cannot exist in isolation. In other words, the estrangement caused by the production process never occurs.

2) On the other hand, following Marx, the dancers' estrangement—from both the bodily product and from their sense of humanity— may intensify as their own moving bodies are commoditized. The dancers may become alienated from their own bodies as they dance when the dance is being commoditized in the complex capitalist market.

Perhaps each of these alternatives is true depending on the dancers and on the degree to which commoditization has occurred, or the degree to which the transactions have been separated from the dancers themselves. For example, the Cambodian Cultural Village works more like a capitalist institution in the Marxian

sense where dancers are provided monthly wages. In many other dance troupes like the Children of Bassac (discussed later in this chapter), dancers are paid at a rate determined by the performance organizer for participation in particular events. The first example would seem to lead to increased alienation between dancers, their bodies, and the dance practice since the dancers' control of their own bodies and the value of their labor is regulated (harkening back to the mechanized nature of human labor).

This lack of control has been noted in the commodification of the performing arts. Bob White (2000, 48) noted this trend in the global music industry in his work on *soukous* music in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where musicians lack control over how the music they produce is “marketed and distributed on a larger scale” and, as a result, they feel that live performance as opposed to selling on the global market is their true source of livelihood. Jane Desmond's (1999) work about bodies on display takes this discourse further into the realm of dance and the body. She explores the impact that bodily display has had on creating the symbolic value of the female hula dancer and speaks to the results that the interconnections between body, labor, and commodity have on various forms of capital. Her work focuses on the touristic side of these body displays and on the body itself—via her comparisons between “people tourism” (i.e. shows in Hawaii) and “animal tourism” (i.e. zoo's and aquariums) as opposed to the dancing, moving, laboring body. Desmond documents a change in bodily commodification that occurred in Hawaii in oral histories of older dancers. One recalled that the audiences before WWII “ ‘were good...[That there

were] no package deals like we have today” (Desmond 1999, 107). This indicates that as the commercialization of dance becomes more streamlined and prescribed there is an increased alienation from the laboring body for performers.

I propose that Wacquant’s (2004) focus on the everyday labor involved in physical pursuits, Srinivasan’s (2012) insights into the nature of labor and production in dance activity, and Jane Desmond’s (1999) evaluation of the commodification of bodily display and the values that it produces have to be combined to fully explore the interconnections between bodily labor, decision-making, and commoditization. In the following sections, I explore each of these elements in turn to examine the corporeal economy of Cambodian dance in commercial contexts, beginning with an analysis of the monetary value of dance in Cambodia.

Dance in Cambodia’s Economy

The documentation and comparison of dancer (performer and teacher) salaries in both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in conjunction with statistical economic data from Cambodia at the time provide insight into the economic realities of life for Cambodia’s dancers as well as a monetary valuation of dance as a commodity. This analysis shows how dancers’ everyday labor and bodily production were valued in relation to other aspects of the economy. According to UNESCO’s Cultural Development Indicators (CDIS) analytic brief for Cambodia (2013), cultural activities (not including private functions or cultural tourism) accounted for 1.5% of Cambodia’s GDP in 2012, of which classical dance production is a part. The brief indicates that approximately 41,500 Cambodians were employed in cultural professions, (likely an underestimate due to a

lack of data). My research indicates that these numbers are in accordance with the numbers of dancers employed in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh's public sector at the time, given that it is only one of several cultural professions.⁹⁷

In 2012, government salaries were very small. As mentioned in Chapter One, most performers who were employed by the Ministry of Culture in Phnom Penh had regular salaries of around US\$40 a week. They either taught at the one of the government-run schools or served as consultants with extra money earned per performance and for tours. Even with government employment, artists found it necessary to work outside of the government. In Phnom Penh, some NGOs like Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) offered small stipends to students and limited internships along with performance opportunities. The Children of Bassac dancers, for example, earned US\$8 each month attending class and had the opportunity to earn up to US\$10 each for performances that their troupe booked outside of class time.⁹⁸ A payment of US\$5-10 per performance was fairly standard in Phnom Penh at the time. Rates for performances depended on two factors: the performer's experience and the lump sum of cash received by the troupe leader. Teachers and troupe leaders would receive the highest payment and artists were not generally compensated for rehearsal time. When there were many scheduled performances or the dancers were invited on an international tour, they made a good amount of money, but when there weren't, they made very little. Some Children of Bassac performers also performed with the national company, with other NGOs, and in tourist shows emerging by the popular riverfront.⁹⁹ An exception to these general trends

was the Khmer Arts Ensemble where the performer salary was generally US\$200 each month (see Chapter Four).

In Siem Reap there were more than 500 students studying dance in orphanages, NGO-run schools, and teachers' homes in 2012, and many more performers who no longer trained. Frequently, students would train for between one month and two years before starting to perform; few continued to train beyond four years. Children often began to perform around age 12 to contribute money to the family, making about US\$5-10 a month, the amount that they were expected to contribute to the household income.¹⁰⁰ Children's rights organizations pointed out that children were allowed to work at 15 as long as it didn't affect their education or their emotional state. While troubled that the age cut off was largely ignored by some dance troupes, members of the rights' groups acknowledged that performing dance was better than some of the other occupations open to youth who must contribute to family income. Other sources of income included scavenging, shoe polishing, being trafficked by parents, begging (with the use of infants), construction work, and digging potatoes.¹⁰¹

There were approximately 30 private dance groups in Siem Reap in 2012.¹⁰² Smaller groups ranged in size from 4 to 20 dancers and musicians. Larger groups that perform at multiple locations nightly had as many as 60 full-time performers and another 40-50 younger alternates. New dancers did not struggle to find places to work. They were in high demand, although not highly compensated. Like Phnom Penh, employment opportunities in Siem Reap followed a hierarchical system based on a dancer's training and experience. At the bottom level were the youngest dancers with little experience,

trained at the NGOs in Siem Reap. Those without steady jobs were sometimes affiliated with multiple private groups and were often called two to four times a month to work for about US\$2 a performance. Next were regular performers at the markets and restaurants who performed every night for a monthly salary of US\$25-45.¹⁰³ Performers who worked at dinner dance buffets made US\$45-80 per month. At the top of the pay scale were performers and teachers at the Cambodian Cultural Village who worked full time for a salary between US\$85 and US\$630 per month. Also, at *Smile of Angkor* (see Chapter Three), the spectacle that includes a waterfall and laser light show run by a Chinese company, the performers are on stage every night and earn US\$160-200 a month.¹⁰⁴

An empirical discussion of performer wages becomes more relevant in the context of the overall economic situation in Cambodia. In 2012 the GNI per capita was US\$2,095 annually, an increase of US\$17 from 2011 (UNDP 2013). This is not an adequate measure of the economic situation in Cambodia because the top 10 percent of Cambodians control 65% of the nation's economy and these figures vary dramatically between rural and urban areas according to the Cambodian Socio-Economic Survey of 2012. In 2012 the median disposable income (DI) per capita per month was around US\$80 in Phnom Penh and US\$57.50 in Siem Reap. In rural areas—where some of the dancers performing in Siem Reap live—this figure was as low as US\$33.25. Meanwhile average monthly consumption for individuals in this same segment of the population was over US\$100 per month in Phnom Penh and US\$80 a month in Siem Reap. The average cost of living in both areas was higher than the income level that most individuals could hope to achieve (CSES 2012). Interviews and discussions with dance teachers and artists

indicate that per capita consumption figures were misleading. In Siem Reap town an individual needed around US\$200 a month to live independently, while this figure rose even higher in Phnom Penh. Several artists could regularly earn the average income and some artists well above it. But few were able to afford living on their own.

A comparison of the statistical analysis of Cambodian income levels to the data collected during my research about the wages of dancers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap highlights their economic position. In Phnom Penh, dancers generally receive small monthly wages, but depending on their training and experience they can make a relatively good amount on performance engagements in busy months. One young dancer, for example, made around US\$300 a month in a busy month but saw that figure drop to US\$108 a month when work was scarce. A dancer with less experience was lucky to make US\$100 a month during a busy month and frequently made US\$50 a month or less. With experience and strong technique a performer in Phnom Penh could make an upper-middle class salary, but this was contingent upon many variables including the availability of work. In Siem Reap, most dancers had much more stable work due to the influx of tourism, but were often paid five to ten times less per performance. At the Cultural Village, a performer with a salary of US\$120 a month was actually making around US\$1 a performance compared to the Phnom Penh rate of US\$10. Rehearsal and preparation time, which varied drastically depending on the performance group, were not included in any of these figures.

The disparity in the fiscal worth of the dancer's work indicates a complex layering of values associated with performance. Various forms of capital in the sense of

Bourdieu's practice theory ([1977] 2013, 171-197) inform this valuation, complicating a Marxist or Neo-Marxist model of analysis. Symbolic capital, the prestige associated with training at the government-sponsored schools in Phnom Penh, experience traveling internationally, or invitations to perform for the royalty can increase the value of the dancers' performance. In Siem Reap, hailing from Phnom Penh regardless of actual training may be enough to achieve this level of prestige. Cultural capital, the level of training that a dancer has acquired through years of intensive study has a similar potential. This may seem to support Marx's dismissal of dance as peripheral to capitalist production because the degree to which the dancers bodies have been commoditized is limited in that there is no standard valuation that can be applied to them. However, while some troupes like Children of Bassac maintained a degree of control over their own cultural production, dance production in Siem Reap's cultural tourism industry was becoming increasingly standardized as evidenced by the tiered performer salaries and standard sets of dances. This variation supports my argument regarding the potential of alienation in the Marxian sense ([1844] 1964, 106-112). For the dancers who maintained some control over their own production, the bodily labor allowed some freedom from increasingly alienating forms of work. For those employed by strict institutions, this control was waning, leading to possible alienation from their own bodies.

The economic atmosphere for dancers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap is quite different. In Phnom Penh a performer's ability is mirrored in salary—increasing the emphasis on skill, training and technique, but artists live with the feeling of constant insecurity regardless of experience.¹⁰⁵ They have more control of their own laboring

bodies, but this results in a decrease in control of other aspects of their lives. In Siem Reap, there is a stable and constant flow of work that appears at odds with the lack of value given to artistic ability. Some Siem Reap performers disparage their own abilities when comparing themselves with those in Phnom Penh. They reason that their salary per performance is lower than that of Phnom Penh because their dancing is of a lower quality. In each setting these economic realities affect the experiences of the dancers as they continue to perform and produce. The next sections explore corporeal economics, how bodies and labor are connected to dance production and consumption in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap respectively by looking at one troupe or institution in each area. This will sharpen the distinction between the corporeal economies of dancers in different parts of the country and explore the contrasting impacts of the valuation and control of bodily production on young performers.

Commercialization of Classical Dance in Phnom Penh

Dance in Phnom Penh remains more closely tied with the creative, spiritual, and ritual traditions of the art form—particularly classical dance—but it is still deeply engrained in Cambodian economic endeavors. Teachers, performers, and organizers need to survive in this developing urban landscape and their material necessities require a “flexible” economic approach.¹⁰⁶ In 2011-2012 flexibility was required to navigate international touring, government-sponsored performance, creative work in cooperation with NGO’s, tourism opportunities, and the growing avenue of corporate work as dance troupes and individual performers searched for support (see Chapter Four). The corporate commercialization of dance practice was leading to new and sometimes uncomfortable

forms of bodily labor while simultaneously creating opportunities for new, if controversial, choreography and the acquisition of performer capital of various types. The Children of Bassac troupe was one of the major beneficiaries of this commercial trend, in part because of their rather famous troupe leader, Ieng Sithul (see Chapter Four). November of 2011 was busy for the Children of the Bassac, so much so that they had to engage several extra dancers from the city. They performed at a few weddings and at major events: the launch of Cambodia Beer, a Dengue Fever concert, a military dinner hosting the Philippine Navy, and the ICBC Bank branch opening in Phnom Penh. The first and the last of these performance events weaved together diplomacy, national ideology, labor and commodification.

The month kicked off with the opening celebration for Cambodia's newest beer distillery, "Cambodia Beer," on November 1, 2011. Preparation for the event began in earnest two weeks earlier and required several hours of additional rehearsals to put together, mainly because of the centerpiece of the event, a new folk dance commissioned by the beer company. During these rehearsals I watched as the male folk dancers transformed into the operational machinery of the distillery—or at least how machinery looked in the imagination of the dance troupe choreographers (see Figure 17, 19). The piece began with the men forming two lines on either side of the small practice area. They marched forward towards each other swinging their shoulders front and back while keeping their forearms parallel to the floor. They met in the middle of the stage and, following the beat of the drummer, brought their up stage arms into a fist above their heads and extended their downstage arms to the side, hands in fists. On the drummer's

cue the machine began, men on stage right moved their downstage arms forward and those on stage left moved them back. As the rhythm sped up, their arms moved more quickly and they began swinging like pendulums until they were moving in full circles. As the dancer-machines moved into high gear, the downstage legs kicked forward and back. Throughout the dance, the men continued to portray various parts of the distillery machine while the women took on the role of distillery workers. First the women entered the space pretending to hold baskets of ingredients that they threw into the machine. Next they returned with chemical flasks and droppers to test the product. Finally, when they found the perfect formula they congratulated each other with a mug of beer while everyone chanted about a series of things that are integral to Cambodian culture, such as the religion and history. It all ended with a resounding “Cambodia Beer is number one,” implying that Cambodia Beer would be added to this prestigious list.

At the performance, the connections made between Cambodian history and the Cambodia Beer became even more apparent (see Figures 18 and 19). Several well-known Cambodian actors were also part of the performance although they didn’t rehearse with the dancers until the dress rehearsal. A spoken theater piece was added to the beginning of the beer dance that connected the construction of Angkor to the discovery of the perfect beer through the intervention of the ancient deities. In this section of the performance, the male dancers were dressed as the stone-workers depicted on sections of the Bayon temple, laboring to construct the towering edifice, while the actors portrayed the royalty. The actors also stepped in to play the distillery owners in the beer dance itself. Some performers told me that they found the symbolism in the piece confusing and

somewhat nonsensical. In the dance Jayavarman II, the founder of Angkor in 802 AD, orders his soldiers to build the temples knowing that it will lead to the creation of the perfect beer. The dance ended with the final realization of the perfected beverage centuries later. At the very end of the dance a giant inflatable beer bottle popped up and subsequently classical dancers performed *robam chun por* (Blessing Dance, see Figure 20). In front of the giant inflatable bottle the performers offered blessings to the guests and the new beer.

The beer company also had requested a full *buong suong* ceremony to start off the day (see Figure 21 and 22). This ceremony requires the preparation of complex offerings made of *bai sei* (made from bamboo and banana leaves), eggs, and jasmine; trays full of betel nut, fruits, perfumes, puffed rice, chicken, and a pig's head. Incense, string bracelets for blessings, and jasmine water also are required. The beer company asked for a *buong suong* to be performed to request strength, luck, and success from ancient deities. Each dancer and student received personal blessings in addition to the general prayers to the ancestors. The addition of the *buong suong* ceremony emphasizes the symbolic capital of these dancers' bodies. While their bodies may become commodities in the launch performance context, when they transformed into stone laborers and then machines in the beer dance, their dancing bodies maintained prestigious ritual importance because of their ability to connect with the ancient spirits. The beer company hoped this connection would ensure the new product's future success.

Artists had varied reactions to the event. Dressed in an open blue shirt lined with red ribbon and matching shorts, a costume designed to be reminiscent of the servants who

carved the bas-reliefs of Angkorean temples, some male dancers looked distinctly uncomfortable, and a few felt that they were showing far too much skin (see Figure 18).¹⁰⁷ Neang Visal noted that the event in totality, even the *buong suong* which carried a much more serious note than the performance itself, was disrespectful of the dance tradition. He told me that he worried that if the Ministry of Culture found out that they were dancing about beer, ministry officials would be upset. He was worried in particular about the newly choreographed piece that connected Angkor Wat to the beer distillery.

Most of the artists were not overly concerned about this. Nor were they concerned about the commodification of their bodies. Many dancers laughed their way through long rehearsals in cramped spaces. The men told me that they enjoyed portraying a machine because it was something different, that they only hesitated about the costumes meant to represent the ancient Angkorean attire. However, some performers were concerned about whether the quality of the dancing (as opposed to the content) would impact their symbolic capital. For example, Srey Penh, a 21-year-old graduate of the Secondary School of Fine Art who trained in classical dance, danced in the front row during the *buong suong* ceremony. At the launch itself she performed in the "beer dance." Unlike Visal, Srey Penh felt that as long as the artists are qualified, as long as they have good training, the content and context of the performance are not as important. She was more troubled that two of the performers, dancers who had been brought in just for the event and who participated in the dance portion of the *buong suong*, didn't know the proper steps. For Srey Penh, the symbolic and cultural capital of the dance troupe was weakened by the lack of ability of particular dancers.

The ICBC Bank Branch opening on November 30, 2011 provides insight into the potential of this commercialization to increase the symbolic capital of the artists. Preparation for the event began ten days before the performance. I arrived at the Sunday dance class to find students and troupe members intensively practicing a dance that was not a part of their normal repertoire at the time (see Figure 23). I was surprised to find several young women who trained in classical dance at the secondary school of Fine Arts (they had also performed the Blessing Dance at the beer launch) in the classroom at Sala Sothearos. They were sitting in the front row leading the regular female dance students—those not yet members of the troupe. This was the beginning of hours of intense physical labor, strained muscles, and blistered feet that resulted in the performance for the opening ceremony of the first Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) branch in Phnom Penh. This was a much more serious rehearsal process than that of the beer launch because the cultural prowess of the nation was to be read through the dancers bodies.

The dancers were sitting on their knees with their weight resting on their feet, toes together and curled under their heels. Their palms were resting on their thighs, fingers gently curved upwards. The teacher clapped her hands together and told the students to begin. Troupe members walked up and down lines of students meticulously correcting every position. I practiced with this troupe every Sunday and seeing them learn a dance I wasn't familiar with, I eagerly joined the line of students, toes aching, arms going numb from being held in place for lengthy intervals. "*Mtornng tiet pi taem* (Again from the beginning)," the teacher called. And we promptly began

again singing “*Neary chea chour...* (Girls In a Line)”—the title of the dance. At the end of the first word we were stopped and repositioned: “hands straight up, head tilting to the right...the other right. *Chhorpp, chhorpp, chhorpp* (Stop, stop, stop).”

We stayed in the position for a minute or two until each person was physically adjusted, our muscles burning and fingers tingling. Finally told to move on we were stopped after two more words in the song and the same process repeated, but this time our heads were tilted to the left, our left hand and fingers held close to the middle of the chest and our left legs inched ever so lightly to the side. This slow deliberate lesson continued until we had perfected the sequence of the first 20 movements, repeating them over and over again to ensure unison. Once we finally mastered the first verse of the dance, the teacher and more advanced troupe members moved very quickly through the rest, so while we were all finally together at the beginning, the whole piece fell apart shortly thereafter.

The following Sunday, rehearsals for the special performance were in full swing, with *neary chea chour* again taking the center since the other dances being performed were familiar to the troupe. A great deal of rehearsal time was allocated to perfecting both the gestures and the proper staging. The performers (a mix of troupe members and advanced secondary school of fine arts students and recent graduates) rehearsed in the center of the classroom.

The movements were slow and graceful. The dancers seemed to float through rehearsals with ease. But the strength and control required to endlessly keep their shoulders pinched together, heads lifted, and chests open still produced little beads of

sweat along their shoulder blades and caused the tendons in between the neck and chest to pop out with strain giving away the intense labor required to make it through the hours of practice. This is the labor that the body must undergo to produce classical dance. Labor that is often unrecognized and rarely compensated, and labor that can cause serious joint damage to the body as time passes. The labor that produces the product—the five-minute dance performed on November 30 at 8:10 pm—is just the tip of the iceberg. More than five hours of labor—enhancing the artist’s symbolic capital—went into this dance before an audience of Chinese and Khmer entrepreneurs and diplomats consumed it as a performance.¹⁰⁸

According the folk dance teacher, Neak Kru Nop Thyda, the goal of the performance was “to make a cross-cultural experience. They [the Chinese Embassy] brought famous Chinese artists who perform traditional arts and they asked us to show Khmer traditions. This way we can come to understand each other’s cultures more clearly.”¹⁰⁹ The dancers were thus both commoditized for the bank opening and transformed into cultural diplomats representing the nation in a new international economic enterprise.¹¹⁰ To the artists and organizers it was an event of prestige that increased their symbolic, social and economic capital.

The event was of economic importance to the artists both because of the immediate cash return and because the prestige associated with it had the potential to lead to increasingly high-end performance opportunities. It was so prestigious that one of the performers had called a board member of Cambodian Living Arts and urged him to attend the event as well. Even so, these opportunistic elements did not

detract from the spiritual nature of the dance performance. Behind the ballroom stage, in a long white hallway where the dancers put on costumes and practiced dances one last time, an offering containing an opened bottle of water, incense, bananas, and longan berries was placed on a large brown tray next to the vessels that contained jasmine petals for use in Blessing Dance and the *m'kot* (crowns) for the dancers (see Figure 24). Though not as elaborate as the beer launch *buong suong*, the symbolic elements of the performance were maintained.

At 7:00 pm the classical dancers performing *robam chun por* (Blessing Dance) entered the stage for the first performance of the evening. After Blessing Dance ended, the Chinese solo artists and the Children of Bassac Troupe alternated performances. The CLA board member explained to the dancers that in China there was something similar to the Khmer Rouge. They lost all of their arts and they created new traditional dances after their cultural revolution that didn't match the beauty of the originals, "that is why preserving Cambodian arts is so important."¹¹ This highlights prevailing thoughts about Cambodian dance and the work of the artists performing that night. As they practice and perform, they simultaneously labor to preserve Cambodian culture and carry it into the future and (now that they are no longer supported in the royal courts) they labor to keep themselves sheltered and fed.

The second-to-last dance was *Neary Chea Chour*, the culmination of all of the hard work of the weeks before (see Figure 25). Dressed in red silk sampot and gold embroidery with long pink scarves covering their bodices, the dancers entered the stage. They moved in the complete synchronicity attained after hours of repetition.

Their labor finally producing the commodity that was given a monetary value by the Chinese Embassy, and the bank it represented. But monetary gain was only a part of this exchange. After the performance, the dancers posed in photos with the Chinese artists and then in various dance positions for the Chinese artists and their troupe leaders (see Figure 26). The artists' reputations increased through their bodily engagement in the bank opening ceremony. They were paid well for the performance in money, but also in the recognition they would receive by performing in the international event and demonstrating the power and beauty of Cambodia's cultural tradition. The dancers were able to expand their artistic network without leaving the country and gained experience that could help improve employment opportunities later, both enhancing their social capital (cf. Bourdieu ([1977] 2013)).

The performances of the Children of the Bassac discussed here indicate a trend toward the commercialization of Cambodian folk and classical dance through the support of corporate entities (with ties to the national government). They also allude to the potentially mechanized nature of classical dance. While a significant amount of the labor of performance creation is still tied to symbolic and cultural capital (the prestige of performing well and the cultural knowledge to do so), there is a certain element of routine involved. Rehearsals consistently begin about two weeks before a major performance, for example. At the beer launch, it might have seemed like the dancers were further embodying this mechanization, as they became the machines and their attendants. However, much of this mechanization was an illusion. Becoming a machine was a creative and engaging experience for many of the dancers

and the beer launch rehearsals were more play than work. In contrast, when symbolic capital was at stake in the performance of classical dance, the seriousness of bodily dancing labor became apparent. In each of these cases artistic control remained with the troupe and generally dancers maintained control of their own bodily production and labor (with the exception of the beer launch costumes).

The Cambodian Cultural Village: Mechanized Dance Production?

The laboring body had become more tightly controlled in Siem Reap through the regulation of set performances to increasingly structured performance schedules. In fact, a better argument could be made for the mechanization of dance in Siem Reap than in Phnom Penh. This stems from the fact that tourism provides foundational support for the arts in the region, and the tourists expect a set performance schedule. As classical dance becomes embedded in the cultural tourism industry, it becomes increasingly commodified. In the previous section I discussed how particular dance performances in Phnom Penh shed light on the flexible nature of bodily labor, dance production, and the acquisition of capital in various forms. In discussing Siem Reap, I explore how the hyper-commodification of Cambodian dance in the cultural tourism industry has influenced the lives and bodies of two dancers employed at the Cambodian Cultural Village.

In 2012, life at the Cambodian Cultural Village was almost otherworldly. On a typical day art staff employees (as they were officially designated by the Cultural Village) would participate in four of the scheduled shows—a total of between two and three hours of performance time. They also frequently rehearsed throughout the

day, provided free dance and acrobatics instruction for children, sewed and repaired costumes, practiced musical instruments, and worked on lighting and sound issues (see Figure 27 and 28). The teachers and choreographers employed in the same division guided rehearsals, monitored show quality, and some performed when an older character was needed (a parent or chief). They worked at least as many hours as performers. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, most of the dancers live, work, and eat on location and as a result they often are physically isolated from the rest of Siem Reap. Through work at the Cultural Village, they are in some ways losing control their bodies. While I was welcomed into the Cultural Village, and dancers like Sophea would happily join me in town, only employees were allowed in the staff quarters—no brothers, sisters, parents, friends, or ethnographers could visit. The Cultural Village is an isolated community with long hours of work sometimes in dangerous conditions and staff members receive only one day off each week.

This control was directly connected to economic choice.¹¹² From the perspectives of dancers outside of the community, the art staff employees exchanged their bodily freedom to have a steady salary, free housing, and inexpensive utilities. A teacher from another organization explained this succinctly: “At the Cultural Village they make between US\$50 and US\$150 based on seniority so if you have no money, you can go there. But you really have to work all day, and there is no time for anything else.”¹¹³ The dance teacher was off about the salary range but was correct about the constraints on the dancers, an impression confirmed by acquaintances employed at the village.¹¹⁴

Others saw the Cultural Village quite differently. I ran into a dancer employed in Phnom Penh when visiting the Cultural Village on May 26, 2012. She was on holiday with a friend and happy to run into me. We went from performance to performance as a group and discussed employment at the village. She knew the dance teachers were paid a high salary, and she asked what I thought of the potential for her to be employed there as a teacher. I told her it was true that teachers could make upwards of US\$300 a month, but that the teachers have to perform as well. She added “and I would have to work every day.” Her friend responded, “Yes, but it might be worth it for the money.” The reality of higher wages and the possibility of advancement push against the constraints inherent in the work environment. For many of the dancers, work at the Cultural Village is an ambiguous experience. Many of the artists vacillate between feeling that they are being released from other much more controlling situations and feeling trapped by the stifling circumstances.

The majority of the dancers at the Cultural Village come from either Phnom Penh or Siem Reap. Most of the dancers from Phnom Penh were trained at the Secondary School of Fine Arts and often became teachers after working at the Cultural Village for several years. For some, the Cultural Village was like a noose strangling them with endless days of performing and rehearsing the same dances over and over, but the stability of the position and the lack of available work in Phnom Penh made this employment a good option. Other Phnom Penh artists, like Sophea, were self-taught, making employment at the Cultural Village more highly desired. Many performers from the Siem Reap area, like Kea, had trained at the Siem Reap School

of Art and other village dance schools, the Cultural Village dance classes, and the homes of dance teachers.¹¹⁵ The personal experiences of Sophea and Kea provide some insight into the corporeal economy of dance at the Cultural Village

Sophea found working at the Cultural Village to be freeing regardless of the admitted boredom she felt due to the repetitive work. A month before the rainstorm and surprise rehearsal at the Cultural Village, Sophea and I sat in the same mini-theater after a different long meeting about the ninth anniversary celebration.¹¹⁶ She began to tell me how she ended up in Siem Reap and her thoughts on work at the cultural village. She was born in Phnom Penh on November 2, 1987. When she was young, she trained at the Apsara Art Association, an NGO that teaches classical and folk dance to under-privileged youth. When she was twelve, her mother stopped letting her attend classes because it was too far away.¹¹⁷ After that she had little organized training, but was able to perform because she had friends at the Secondary School of Fine Arts who would practice at her house. Inspired by the beauty of the dance gestures, she imitated the movements and learned how to dance.

She began performing in Phnom Penh when she was seventeen years old. The group of eight people was given US\$500 a month to perform at a club in the city.¹¹⁸ The dancers had a teacher, what she called a *me krom* (troupe/group mother) who kept more of the money. Each month Sophea earned around US\$60. Sometimes she performed at multiple locations and made more money. Since she lived at home, her mother was in direct control of her income so she wasn't sure entirely how much her own work brought into the family's household income.

Sophea explained: “*Khnhom cholchet samteng neou Phnom Penh chraen cheang ke* (I preferred to perform in Phnom Penh). We would dance disco, folk, classical. But here we don’t really dance. Only a little bit of classical. It is always the same. It is boring. We dance no matter what. If it rains we dance, and then I get a cold. I liked Phnom Penh better, but here I can make money.” At the Cambodian Cultural Village Sophea and her husband were making US\$90 USD a month each. They lived with their daughter in the staff housing. As a result, they were able to leave her extended family home. While the work schedule was difficult, particularly in the rainy season where the damp sometimes drained her body and energy, Sophea felt trapped in Phnom Penh because even though her work experience was better, her mother controlled her and her husband’s lives.

She explained further: “*Neou ti nouh khnhom min rorksa brakk ban* (There I can’t keep money [for myself]). There when I have money I have to share it with my family, I can’t use it for myself. There I had food, but no salary. Here I have to pay for food but I control my own earnings.” Even with salaries on the lower end of the cultural village’s range Sophea and her husband are able to save enough money that they travel to Phnom Penh every other month to visit family. For Sophea, the most difficult part of work at the Cultural Village is childcare. She said: “*Kaun khnhom aayu muoy chhnam dapp khe haey* (My daughter is 1 year and 10 months old). She lives with us at the staff housing at the Cultural Village, but we are not allowed to bring her to work. This makes things very difficult.” But for all of its problems, moving to Siem Reap and working at the Cultural Village gave Sophea the ability to take control over her own finances and to regain

control of her bodily production—concepts that are very modern and influenced by newer western economic ideals.¹¹⁹

Kea, a performer from the Siem Reap area, lived outside the cultural village with her family and provided a contrasting experience. Although already acquainted, Kea and I became friendly on May 8th 2012 when I went on a hunt for the Classical Dance training offered free to area children. Located toward the back of the Cultural Village, the studio was a large open-air space covered in green carpeting with a tin ceiling (see Figure 29). There were no fans, and on dry season days the tin roof always radiated heat. It was much hotter in the practice area than outside. Kea was teaching the class and she invited me to sit on the bench next to her.

Kea (28 years old at the time) said that she usually performed, but since she was six months pregnant her boss told her that she could take over teaching responsibilities and sewing. Just after 10 am, the time when the Folk Dance Class is scheduled to start, she got ready to leave for the sewing room and asked if I wanted to join her (see Figure 30). We walked backstage through a door to a small room. It was much cooler because there were several fans pointed towards the small circle of seamstresses. They were sitting on mats sewing sequins onto fabric bracelets. All four of the women in the circle (including Kea) were performers and all four were pregnant. Rather than a pregnancy leave (since they couldn't perform), human resources had them sewing costumes and preparing sets and props.

After teaching me to sew sequins onto wristbands, two of the women left to help prepare for the first show of the day, and I stayed with the other two (Kea and Sothea)

and chatted about their lives and experiences. Neither of the women lived in the staff housing. They both lived quite a distance away. One had to take a boat to work during the rainy season. We talked about performances at different locations and looked at a few photos stored on my camera. Kea was excited to see that I was also doing research at Kulen II where her sister performed classical dance for US\$60 per month. They told me their salaries were very small—US\$100—even though Kea had been working at the Cultural Village for nine years (likely because she was trained in Siem Reap and not Phnom Penh). Kea was not making enough money to meet all of her expenses and believed that the same was true for other performers not living in the staff residence.

In this case, the women who were pregnant were given the opportunity to continue to work, teach, sew and prepare sets before performances. As I found out later that day when I saw Kea in one of the shows at the Cultural Village, they even could continue to perform as long as there was an appropriate role. That day she performed as a mother in the performance at a model village. In Cambodia pregnancy is often seen as the end of the woman's time in the workforce, particularly for artists. I have talked to many women who say they will not perform after having children because their bodies won't be the same or because significant others/families won't approve, but at the Cultural Village the women are "allowed" to continue. Allowed is in quotes because the word used by the staff members, *aoy*, in Khmer, can mean "to grant/allow" and "to give." The same statement in Khmer could equally indicate that the women were allowed to continue working or that the women were not being given time off. I was encouraged by the surrounding contexts to translate it in a more positive light because the women with more

advanced pregnancies did in fact go on leave a few weeks later and many families with children like Sophea were working at the venue. Kea, Sothea, and the others were ambivalent about stopping work. Productively contributing to family finances was empowering, but they were also tired and concerned that after leaving work for a few months they might not be able to return.

Sophea and Kea's experiences highlight important aspects of bodily economics. For both, work at the Cultural Village was empowering and exhausting. They became controlled commodities while simultaneously achieving financial and employment freedoms that weren't possible for many other young Cambodians. By bearing the increased labor hours, and the colds when working in inclement weather, and the boredom of performing the same dances over and over, Sophea was able to disentangle herself from her family network. Kea was given opportunities to continue working even though her pregnancy changed her body and her value as a performer. In both cases their bodies were involved in production, integrated into the commodity that is the cultural village, their labor given financial value and then put on display for consumers of Cambodian culture. Regardless, they were able to keep individual control over their bodily production. Sophea was able to free herself of the control that her extended family in Phnom Penh had over her labor while Kea was able continue in artistic production as her own body changed due to her pregnancy.

Conclusion: Towards a Corporeal Economics

In this chapter I have argued that to fully understand the economy of dance in Cambodia it is necessary to take into account the laboring body, the commodification

of that corporeal labor, and the many possible forms of value that this labor can produce. The chapter articulates the decisions that dancers make regarding their own bodily productions. I demonstrate that is necessary to address body and mind as inseparable entities that are interconnected, working together to address biological, social, spiritual, and individual needs—a step away from mainstream economic literature that tends to separate body and mind.

The body appears in Karl Marx's ([1865] 1983, 404-407) writings about labor, alienation, and commodities. He discussed the wear of labor on the body and how it must eventually be replaced, but the body has struggled to maintain its place in discourse about the economy. Farquhar and Lock (2007, 20), for example, wrote "It has been a long struggle in the human sciences to rehabilitate the body as something other than an appendage to the mind." In this chapter I brought life back to the body, attempting to chip away at the mind/body dualism. Dance production in Cambodia demonstrates the flaws in this sort of binary thinking because as Srinivasan (2012) articulates, in dance practice the body, mind, producer, and product are not so easily divided from one another. When dance is performed, it simultaneously incorporates a laboring and producing body and an image body that is being consumed since the product is the dance itself. Since this product cannot exist without the labor, the body itself becomes a commodity during performance. This interconnectedness has the capacity to alienate the dancer from his/her own body, particularly where it becomes more mechanized, for example in Siem Reap. Control over bodily production is tied not only to economic institutions, but also to familial institutions, educational

institutions, and political institutions, requiring flexible decision-making strategies to support dancers' livelihoods and other desires.

In Cambodia, dance production is linked to both international markets, as discussed in Chapter One, and the life cycle of the dancing body. Thus it is inherently unstable. Statistical analysis of the cultural industry sector and the GNI per capita in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap indicates that performing dance in Cambodia can be a lucrative career. Tying in to Bourdieu's ([1977] 2013, 180) description of symbolic capital, years of intense bodily labor and discipline are required for a dance practitioner to achieve the highest levels of success. In a slight departure from his assertion that the symbolic capital accumulated through the dedication of this time to training detracts from the potential economic capital achieved by the dancers, practitioners rarely reach the highest levels of income without years of training at the Secondary School of Art in Phnom Penh—although the pay off in fiscal capital is by no means guaranteed. In this context, becoming a performer may seem a rational endeavor (to borrow from the self-interested model).

The dancers navigate different degrees of valuation and control of their dancing bodies. Even without training in Phnom Penh, performers in Siem Reap can achieve a middle-class income if they are willing to give others more power over their bodies. A highly skilled performer in Phnom Penh can frequently control their work schedule and make a fairly good salary, while this may not be the case in Siem Reap. There also is a trade-off in stability. The performers in Siem Reap may endure constraints on their physical bodies, but they can secure regular employment through

the tourism industry. This is not the case in Phnom Penh, where performance opportunities at the time of research were varied and included international and local events but also were sporadic. In keeping control of their bodies, Phnom Penh's dancers sacrificed control of their finances.

Since dance is not solely an economic enterprise, the attainment of fiscal capital is not the only thing at stake. Dancers, particularly in Phnom Penh, pour hours and hours of labor into performances and sometimes receive seemingly little in return. This was apparent at the Children of Bassac performance for the ICBC branch opening. At this event, it became increasingly apparent that while the money was important, other forms of capital were at least of equal import. The performers enhanced their social and cultural prestige by performing at an event organized by the Chinese Embassy, where they shared the stage with international performers. Through displaying their bodies on this stage they increased their exchange value as performers. International tours have a similar effect. While the performers at the Cultural Village may not gain prestige through government connections, they also increase their cultural capital through their connections with people from all over the world, something that Cambodians living in rural areas do not often get to do. Experiences and encounters between tourists and the dance practitioners at venues like the Cambodian Cultural Village give the practitioners access to different worldviews and give them the opportunity to function as culture-bearers, enhancing their cultural capital (a topic discussed in more detail in Chapter Five).

These interactions have shifted practitioner attitudes about the body, its labor, and economic production. Derks (2008, 178-183) discusses how Cambodian youth, and in particular young women, are expected to contribute to the family household income. She also explores the desire to be “modern,” something mediated by young people’s understanding of the “modern world” (Derks 2008, 14). Sophea’s experiences and choices are an extreme example of this. In her desire to embrace modernity and independence, she pushed away from the familial network that she helped support, and through practicing dance was able to set up what she considered to be a modern and independent nuclear family, the neoliberal ideal (see Chapter Three). Kea’s story also provides an example of shifting perspectives of the gendered body and its impact on economics. By continuing to work and perform at the Cultural Village until she was about seven months pregnant, Kea questioned traditional Cambodian values about the reproductive female body. Several dancers at the cultural village challenged these notions of the body, performing and working during pregnancy and returning to work after having children (like Sophea).¹²⁰

Looking at the work and labor of the body and the decisions and rationales of the mind allows for an integrated and more holistic understanding of dance production and development in Cambodia. Some dancers endure the alienation of their bodily production to free themselves from the alienation of losing their financial capital (like Sophea at the Cultural Village). Some endure economic instability and maintain control of the bodily labor and symbolic capital (like many dancers in the Children of Bassac troupe). Regardless, the dancers use their body capital and cultural capital strategically to meet

their desires. They make economic decisions and endure labor conditions that only make sense within a larger framework of social, cultural, and bodily values. The subsequent chapters focus on external pressures that dancers face from international and national policies, tourist expectations, and the various organizations that provide support for their endeavors. These are factors guide some the choices that the practitioners make about their bodily labor. Chapter Three begins this exploration with a analysis of how UNESCO directives for the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity are interpreted by government officials, classical dance teachers and dance practitioners and how these interpretations impact dance production.

⁸⁴ The Cambodian Cultural Village is an ethnic theme park similar to many others found in Asia and Africa (cf. Bruner 2005). It includes model villages of the ethnic groups present in the country and diaspora (an “American Village” is included). Many of these villages host performances designed to represent the ethnic group.

⁸⁵ Most of the staff, with the exception of performers at the dinner dance show, came together to hear notes on the multiple shows performed each day, a meeting designed to ensure quality, which performers were required to attend. These occurred just after the last performance of the evening. Some dancers expressed doubts about how useful the quality control meetings were, but they provided a centering moment after a long day.

⁸⁶ This is a model of a floating village on the Tonle Sap tidal lake where community structures from baseball courts and medical offices to schools and homes are all built on rafts and barges that float along the lake’s surface accessible to residents by small canoes (Kuenzen 2013, 29). The model at the village features house structures built on stilts and connected by bridges over a man-made pond that give the illusion of living on the water. Generally there aren’t any performances at the Floating Village.

⁸⁷ See Pierre Bourdieu ([1977] 2013, 171-183) for a more detailed discussion of social and symbolic capital.

⁸⁸ Taken from field notes March 1, 2012. Digitally recorded and typed.

⁸⁹ One example of this comes from an interview with Kong Srey No, a performer at Kulen II restaurant, interviewed August 19, 2012 in Siem Reap (digital voice recording). She said, “They do not support us (referring to economic support). If they did they would pay us more. Now they pay us so little. If they thought dance was important they would support us fully.”

⁹⁰ While I have chosen examples that speak specifically to anthropology and Southeast Asia, literature on the body/dance and economy also appears in other regional contexts and related disciplines. Mark Franko (2002, 167) explores how the modern dance movement of the 1930s created a corporeal economy that disrupted the connections between production and exchange. Lena Hammergren (2009, 18) explores the possibility of the bodyscape, the transnational movements of the body across transnational borders and boundaries. Anthea Kraut (2009, 89) and Susan Leigh Foster (2009, 99) explore the labor and ownership of dance choreography. From a historical perspective, Edward Slavishak (2008) interprets how the laboring bodies of men working in steel plants were displayed through artwork at the turn of the 20th century. Michael Herzfeld (2004) analyzes how the bodily work of Greek artisans is valued globally. Lesley Sharp (2000) and Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2002) offer explorations of how body parts are transformed into commodities in biotechnology more generally and in organ trafficking (respectively). Ann Anagnost (2004, 192, 201) uses the Chinese concept of *suzhi* to analyze how “bodies can be read as expressions of value” or human capital and how the body can be used to expand neoliberalism. Margret Lock and Judith Farquhar’s (2007, 489-583) edited volume *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life Part VIII* provides several further excerpts that pertain to capitalism, commodification, and the body.

⁹¹ Giddens (1971, XV) argues that the debate concerning the dichotomy between idealism and materialism in Marx’s work is misplaced, that he was actually arguing against these dichotomies, but while Marx may have taken issue with dichotomies present in the work of contemporaneous economists, he always differentiated the role of the body and the mind.

⁹² Wilk and Cliggett (2007) provide a good overview of the various theoretical models for understanding the economy from the formalist and substantivist debate of the 1950s and 1960s to neoclassical economic theory, from the political economy of Karl Marx and the Neo-Marxists to what they call the “cultural economy” of Max Weber and his followers.

⁹³ Stephen Gudeman’s (2001, 15-20) discussion of the separations between community and market embedded in economic discourse traces the historical patterns of the promulgation of binaries and categorization from Aristotle to Marx to Weber to Polanyi and toward the more contemporary theories of Appadurai and Kopytoff. While this chapter doesn’t focus on the issue of the relationship between community and the market,

the discussion provides one example of the artificial divisions made in economic discourse.

⁹⁴ Arjun Appadurai (1986, 55) argued that the commoditization of services is dominant in post-industrial society and encouraged further discussion on the topic in his work on the commoditization of goods. The commoditization of dance, as a tourist attraction and in other contexts explored in this chapter should be considered a commoditization of services thus an expansion of Appadurai's discussion here.

⁹⁵ David Harvey (2005, 165-172) critiques this neoliberal trend. He argues that it is inappropriate to give things like "culture, history, heritage" a monetary value because they were not produced as commodities.

⁹⁶ Karl Marx's discussion of commodity fetishism ([1867] 1990, 163-178) points to the metaphysical nature of the commodity and how it is both sensuous and social. This is useful for thinking about the commoditization of the arts and how this can strengthen, rather than de-value, artistic practice.

⁹⁷ By public sector I am referring to dancers who work in some official capacity for the government. This figure would not include the dancers working at private enterprises such as the Cambodian Cultural Village.

⁹⁸ Chamroeun, Sophea and Cheychanrith Hou. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, March 22.

⁹⁹ The Khmer Arts Ensemble was the only non-government company in the country at the time, and it was the only company with regular rehearsals.

¹⁰⁰ This estimate is based on conversations with Nguon Vuthy, the former assistant director of the School of Art, Siem Reap.

¹⁰¹ Child's Rights Worker, Anonymous. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 19.

¹⁰² Figure based on documents provided by the Department of Art, Siem Reap.

¹⁰³ These dancers made little more than a dollar a performance, but had stability and more assurance of timely payment.

¹⁰⁴ Many dancers preferred work at Smile of Angkor to working at the Cultural Village even though the salary might be lower (depending on experience) because the work was

significantly less demanding. At Smile of Angkor there were no days off, but the performers work only about two hours a day (see Chapter Three).

¹⁰⁵ Connections to teachers and government officials could be a very important for gaining critical experience.

¹⁰⁶ The dancers must be physically flexible in order to execute the unforgiving movements of the dance genre, but they also must use a strategy of flexibility similar to that suggested by Aihwa Ong in *Flexible Citizenship: Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (1999, 19) when she discusses flexible families and “flexible capital.” While the flexibility required for transnational mobility affects only a few lucky dancers, nearly all must move flexibly between government, NGO, and private performance opportunities to survive at some point in their lives.

¹⁰⁷ Neang Visal and Uon Oun voiced their discomfort to me that day. The bodily discomfort showed through their constant readjusting of both their vests and their short wrapped skirts in an attempt to make them cover as much skin as possible.

¹⁰⁸ Bourdieu ([1977] 2013, 180) describes how “symbolic labor cannot be defined without reference to the time devoted to it.”

¹⁰⁹ This conversation comes from field notes written on November 30, 2011, I have taken some liberties with translation to portray the essence of the teacher’s words. The term “cross-cultural” was not used but implied.

¹¹⁰ The use of dance for diplomatic purposes has been documented cross-culturally. For example, Claire Croft (2015) has explored how this process occurs in efforts to spread democracy by the United States. As discussed in Chapter One, Toni Shapiro (1994) explored similar diplomatic pursuits made by the People’s Republic of Kampuchea in the 1980s. The ICBC branch opening demonstrated how these diplomatic pursuits also are connected to transnational economic development.

¹¹¹ These comments come from a video recording of the event taken by the anthropologist November 30, 2011, Phnom Penh.

¹¹² My use of the word “economic choice” is inspired by Michael Chibnik’s (2011) exploration of the topic in *Anthropology, Economics, and Choices*. He complicates the economic approaches to choice by taking into account the cultural norms and social structures that profoundly influence decision-making, see for example pp. 24-35.

¹¹³ Taken from field notes April 27, 2012, Siem Reap.

¹¹⁴ In 2012 most of the art staff reported that starting salaries for full time work were US\$85 monthly. Artists reported making between US\$90 and US\$140. Teachers reported making US\$180 to US\$680 with the median at about US\$230. Part time employees (mostly children in training) made 60,000 KHR the equivalent of about US\$15.

¹¹⁵ Several of the employees mentioned learning dance in Catholic schools in the area.

¹¹⁶ Seng Sophea. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia July 7.

¹¹⁷ This means that Sophea only trained there a very short time. The Apsara Art Association was founded in 1998.

¹¹⁸ It seems that Sophea is including the group leader here, so while the performers would get US\$60 each, the leader received US\$80. Sophea did not seem overly confident about these figures, but they did seem in line with ongoing rates for that size of a group.

¹¹⁹ Most Cambodian families gather the money earned by all family members and share it. They will for example invest in one child to become a tour guide or go to school with the understanding that the child will take care of parents and siblings.

¹²⁰ See Judy Ledgerwood (1994, 1995) for a more detailed discussion of the traditional role of women in the family structure.

Chapter 3: A Universal Heritage: UNESCO, Dance Preservation and Development¹²¹

Questioning Intangible Heritage: Innovation, Conservation, Development

At the international symposium I attended in Malaysia (see Introduction), there was a panel called: “Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH): Mediation of knowledge or nationalistic competition?” This symposium was the biennial meeting of the Ethnochoreology Study Group of the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM).¹²² ICTM consults formally with UNESCO and scholars associated with the organization frequently review applications for placement on the intangible heritage lists. As a result, cultural heritage is a frequent topic of discussion at council and study group meetings. During the question-and-answer section of the panel, Sophiline Cheam Shapiro mentioned that classical Cambodian dance was a representative on UNESCO’s Intangible Heritage list. She then asked, “Does that mean the dance form cannot change?” She explained that in Cambodia, some officials the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts believed that the art form’s placement on this list meant it should now be preserved exactly as it is— turning it into a static, unchanging form. This perception of the inscription was making it more difficult for her to choreograph new and innovative works in the genre. Adrienne Kaeppler, a dance scholar who worked tirelessly to aid Tonga’s Lakalaka a representative of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity addressed this question. Kaeppler said that to be recognized as intangible heritage, a tradition has to be living, and to be living, it has to be changing, evolving, and adapting to new ways of life. She said

that this was miscommunicated in Cambodia and added that she observed that the same was happening elsewhere—an issue that should be addressed further.

This chapter uses interviews with dancers, teachers, ministry officials and UNESCO Phnom Penh staff and other material collected during fieldwork to examine the concept of intangible heritage, and UNESCO's role in legitimizing the intangible on a global level. It argues that the localization of the directives put forth by UNESCO in Cambodia and Classical Cambodian Dance's position as a representative of UNESCO's Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity has created several paradoxes for the producers and transmitters of the dance practice—ideas that seem to oppose each other and yet work in concert with one another. Here I expand on the work of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004, 59) who argues that while heritage is conceptualized as deeply historical it is in fact embedded in modernity, and the work of Mareli Alivizatou (2012, 15-19) who explores the tensions between the preservationist emphasis of UNESCO safeguarding directives and the recognition in the 2003 Convention that intangible heritage is constantly being recreated.¹²³ At first glance, these paradoxes seem to create an impossible task for practitioners of intangible heritage, the requirement to preserve traditions while simultaneously innovating them (as discussed by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and Adrienne Kaeppler). In fact, these paradoxes arise from the multitude of different views about what defines intangible heritage and how it should be protected coming from varied culture perspectives that were joined together through debates at the UNESCO convention. I examine the diverse responses to the paradoxes in the context of

classical Cambodian dance production with a particular focus on how they impact the work of dance practitioners.

UNESCO's Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible heritage of humanity are only one result of a very complex process to address the importance of cultural traditions at an international level. As noted by Stefano et al. (2012, 2), scholars have published work regarding the historical development of heritage initiatives and the strengths and weaknesses of UNESCO's approaches. More recently, case studies have emerged that investigate how UNESCO's Cultural Heritage instruments are embedded in local community understandings of heritage. Yet while several studies examine heritage and preservation, there are few studies that focus on intangible heritage, particularly studies that focus on tourism and innovation (González 2007, 808).¹²⁴ This chapter seeks to help fill this gap.¹²⁵ It asks: how are directives from internationally based organizations like UNESCO influencing the decisions of Cambodian dancers, dance educators, and dance students? Are the goals and needs of artists disconnected from the goals of this international organization? In particular, how do the artists deal with paradoxes inherent in the directive, particularly the tension between the prioritization of preservation, the perceived dangers of particular types of development (tourism, contemporary art) on symbols of intangible cultural heritage and the importance of creativity and sustainable economic development?

To address the impact that international intangible heritage ideology has on the development of classical Cambodian dance, this chapter looks at how UNESCO's

directives are embedded in the heritage concept in Cambodia and the symbolic power that international recognition has given robam boran. It explores the tensions that developed for the creative desires and economic realities of “community beneficiaries” that result from the recognition of classical dance as a representative of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.¹²⁶ The chapter then provides case studies both in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap illuminating these challenges and how working through them has the potential to be both detrimental and beneficial to practitioners. For example, an Arts+Society workshop in Phnom Penh demonstrates how the creativity and originality inherent in cultural transmission can be hidden in the emphasis on preservation. A New Years Festival and a nightly performance production in Siem Reap demonstrate the challenges that practitioners face when balancing conservation and development, particularly in the tourism industry. Then, towards the end of the chapter, the creation of a new association of artists in Siem Reap with the help of seed money from UNESCO (now called TlaiTno) demonstrates how UNESCO directives can be negotiated in ways that provide direct benefits to practitioners. Finally, the complications that arise when the heritage being protected resides in individuals are presented in the chapter to explore how the very lives of these performers can become entangled with the representation of Cambodian national culture.

Intangible Heritage on an International Scale

Whereas like tangible heritage, intangible heritage is culture, like natural heritage, it is alive (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 53).

In UNESCO’s attempt to help preserve the cultural diversity of the world, it has developed three different world heritage initiatives: natural heritage, tangible cultural

heritage, and most recently, intangible heritage. Natural heritage refers to outstanding features of the environment and animals that are in need of conservation on aesthetic or scientific grounds. Tangible cultural heritage refers to monuments and buildings of historical or anthropological value (Lowenthal 2005, 81-82). Intangible heritage was designed to encompass items of cultural value not included in the other lists (Ahmad 2006, 298-299).¹²⁷

Imbued with ambiguity, the term “intangible cultural heritage” refers to cultural expressions that strengthen communities and groups of people. These incorporeal aspects of heritage are dependent on the people who create and promulgate them, and they are as slippery as their relatively new term (cf. Stefano et al. 2013, 1). The “intangible cultural heritage” as defined by UNESCO includes:

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO 2003, Article 2)

In this definition, UNESCO was attempting to highlight the importance of oral traditions and language, the performing arts, craftsmanship, rituals, and general cultural knowledge. The convention was the culmination of decades of work, beginning after World War II, when there was increasing concern about how damage to cultural property was affecting the world’s culture, a concern that shifted toward the ephemeral in the 1970s with a broadening awareness that focusing on monuments and movable objects was too narrow (Brown 2005, 41). Advocates for cultural heritage tried but failed to protect these resources through legal concepts such as copyright and patents. But with the realization that these works cannot be traced to individuals, UNESCO’s focus moved to

the importance of supporting people who held the knowledge of these forms, whether they were performers, artisans, or teachers (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 53). They are "practices and skills embodied in people" (Logan 2007, 34), and they become difficult to safeguard when the heritage being protected resides in an individual.¹²⁸

The goal of UNESCO's intangible heritage policies is to focus on the traditions as living entities kept strong through the practitioners, yet when a cultural form becomes a representative of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity it is guaranteed a place on one of two lists—the general list of intangible heritage or the list of those in need of urgent safeguarding (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 53 and Matsuura 2004, 19). The creation of a list is the least expensive way symbolically to do something about cultures that have historically been marginalized, but while it assigns value to the tradition, inscription alone does not aid in its continued practice. UNESCO also supports certain projects related to preservation, education, artistic activities and more for representatives on the list in developing countries (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 57). The monetary awards are available each year, but are limited. The symbolic gesture of being placed on the list the primary benefit of the arduous process of applying to UNESCO to become a representative (UNESCO website and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 57). As a representative of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Classical Cambodian dance has benefited from more than 80,000 USD in funding from UNESCO and its partners.¹²⁹ The money has supported archival research, the reconstruction of full-length classical dances, mentorship, teacher training, and technique training (MCFA 2002 and MCFA 2009). While the government did develop plans to continue the work started

during these projects, the money wasn't utilized in a way that would become self-sustaining. The amount was not enough to support the needs of artists and performers in Cambodia as the convention states is necessary.¹³⁰

Preservation and Development: Safeguarding Intangible Heritage

Preservation and conservation are key ideas in intangible heritage, and the focus on ensuring the viability of these traditional arts has been called "safeguarding." This involves making sure that the cultural forms continue to be practiced today and that they will survive into the future to benefit the community (Proschan 2008, 19). These safeguarding policies at the international level have taken away the power to decide what should be regarded as important aspects of cultural heritage from the individual countries and local communities. This has had two contradictory results. It has given people who have been marginalized an ability to gain control over their heritage, but at the same time it has given an international agency control over these same practices (Francioni 2004, 17). While ideally the people invested most in the practice itself, the transmitters of the knowledge, would be part of the safeguarding process, this is often not the case.

The need for safeguarding comes from the idea that intangible heritage is fragile and that without proper care and preservation, these ephemeral cultural representations will waft away. As Sophiline Cheam Shapiro alluded to at the conference in Malaysia discussed above, the Cambodian government shares this concern about loss. Many feel that standardization stemming from globalization, tourism, conflict, and urbanization is threatening intangible heritage. Because they are a living fabric of people's identities and history, not a stable, constructed, tangible piece of cultural heritage designed to outlive

their creators, some argue that intangible traditions are at much greater risk of being destroyed. These advocates thus urge safeguarding the integral aspects of cultural identity as formulated by the UNESCO convention (Galla 2003, 4). Advocates have good intentions, but the reality of safeguarding doesn't always match this idealized vision.

It is certainly important to help intangible heritage thrive and enrich the lives of people, but it is also possible that these practices will produce what could be called “cultural zombies,” traditions hanging on after outliving their usefulness and meaning to their cultures. The problem with these traditions being forced to remain alive is that intangible heritage is by definition living heritage, and living things are constantly changing. Culture is not static; it is constantly transforming as it is influenced by both external and internal factors (Van Ginkel 2004, 24). Some fear that methods of preserving and safeguarding intangible heritage risk “freezing” these practices because of their disconnect with the nature of cultural change (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 58-59). This concern is echoed throughout UNESCO conventions. The documentation of oral traditions, for example, can be seen as freezing a cultural practice. This has prompted calls to be thoughtful when choosing a particular safeguarding measure (Bouchenaki 2003, 4). This is the problem Sophiline Cheam Shapiro worried about in her questions at the ICTM conference, and it is the cause of much conflict over the continued development of dance in Cambodia. The inscription of robam boran on the Representative List of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is vital to national narratives of identity construction, but it has been something of a double-edged sword. As a meta-cultural phenomenon, classical dance is not only part of Cambodia's

long and fraught heritage, it is now part of the heritage of the world, giving it a place on the global stage (cf. Halbertsma 2011, 7). At the same time, the dances and by extension the dancers have in some ways become a commodity, frozen in time and vastly undervalued (see Chapter Two). The growth of heritage tourism has helped strengthen the country, providing the impetus for improved infrastructure and employment opportunities in the service industry including hundreds of classical dancers, yet it has permanently altered the relationship that the artists have with the ancient artistic practice and altered the practice itself.

Classical Dance as Intangible Cultural Heritage

The process through which Cambodian classical dance was inscribed on the Representative List for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and what this actually means for the country provides a richer understanding of how these conflicting ideas localize themselves in a single setting.

In 2001, after UNESCO named its first 19 intangible heritage practices, Cambodia went to work to provide the appropriate documentation to be instated on the intangible heritage list. Robam boran was proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003 winning the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan al Nahyan Prize to help revitalize the art form.¹³¹ In 2005 robam boran received an additional US\$80,829 in funding from the Japan Funds-in-Trust.¹³² This allowed the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to conduct research on the genre and document dances, publishing the data in a freely accessible format on the Internet. This 126-page document discusses the importance of maintaining the strength of the art form and making sure it remains

authentic as directed by UNESCO.¹³³ At the time of research, there were no major projects specifically for classical dance funded by UNESCO. However, a representative at the UNESCO office confirmed that UNESCO was working with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to develop a second inventory of arts forms and to create a Living Human Treasures program.¹³⁴

According to the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, while classical dance had "regained much of its former splendour," it still lacked fiscal support, proper performance and rehearsal space, and was "at risk of becoming a mere tourist attraction."¹³⁵ The masterpieces were recognized as cultural practices of "outstanding value," a concept that in the years following the inception of the program was heavily criticized because it implied that some practices were more valuable than others, giving way to the formulation of the current intangible heritage program. The current iteration of the program, ratified in 2003 and put into effect in 2008, with its focus on "representatives" takes away the hierarchical implications of the former masterpiece list (Aikawa-Faure 2009, 39-40).¹³⁶

Tourism, and more broadly the dangers of globalization, has been a central concern of UNESCO representatives in the formulation of instruments to preserve and protect ICH, sometimes in ways that can be seen as contradictory. The Convention (2003, Preamble) recognizes that globalization allows for the conditions to create dialogue, but at the same time it gives rise to the threat of the destruction of ICH practices. This contradiction is echoed in the Operation Directives (2016).¹³⁷ On one hand they urge State Parties to ensure that awareness-raising activities do not lead to the "over-

commercialization or unsustainable tourism development” of ICH (UNESCO 2014, IV.1.1.102e). On the other hand they acknowledge that:

116. [Commercial activities] can contribute to improving the living standards of the communities that practice the heritage, enhance the local economy, and contribute to social cohesion... 117. Particular attention should be paid...to managing tourism in a sustainable way...and ensuring that the commercial use does not distort the meaning and purpose of the intangible cultural heritage concerned (UNESCO 2016, IV.1.2.116-117).

These directives indicate the layers of ambiguity in UNESCO discourses on tourism and ICH. Tourism has the potential to increase the viability of ICH by increasing financial support to the communities where it is produced, yet at the same time it can irrevocably damage ICH when it affects the nature of the practice.¹³⁸ While these ambiguities allow for flexibility when making decisions about the use of tourism for the promotion of heritage promotion, local practitioners do not typically make these decisions in Cambodia.

Critics of UNESCO’s heritage instruments suggest that the depiction of the past via construction of heritage may be “nothing but nostalgia” creating a simulacrum of the past in the present day (Pellegi 1996, 433-434). This idea is potentially applicable to robam boran. After the fall of Angkor in 1431, there is little documentation of what happened to the sacred temple dancers (Sam 1987, 2-3). While there is certainly evidence that robam boran has been transmitted from the Angkorean period, what happened in intervening centuries is unknown (see Chapter 1). This is to be expected for the ICH given that it is “constantly recreated by communities” (UNESCO 2003, Article 2.2).

Being on the intangible heritage list was considered a great honor, the ultimate achievement of the art form after a toiling process of revitalization and documentation

that had taken place in the previous two decades. Unfortunately, the listing also created confusion about where to take the art form next and how to keep it true to itself (Frumberg 2006, 146-149). The Cambodian government is concerned that classical Cambodian dance is seen purely as entertainment and that it has lost its sacred and ritual meaning, especially with its popularity among tourists. They fear that the sacred values of the dance are diminished, and that this could affect the viability of robam boran and their ability to transmit the dance practice (a requirement of UNESCO's list of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity).¹³⁹ But this idea appears to contradict the policies laid out by UNESCO: If the art form's current popularity is through entertainment, isn't this what is keeping the tradition alive today? In the localized setting of Cambodia, UNESCO's formulation of intangible heritage and its safeguarding policies may contract the market and create difficult realities for dance practitioners and their families who depend on public performances for tourists and local communities in addition to government sanctioned performance events.

Some local interpretations of the intangible heritage directives include the assumption that ritualistic practice and entertainment are incompatible, and that performance for entertainment dilutes the cultural tradition and the dance form (MCFA 2009). This is problematic because young dancers and choreographers trained in classical Cambodian dance are trying to take it in new directions and bring it to new audiences. At the moment, about 90% of the classical dances performed before the Khmer Rouge Regime took power in Cambodia have been revived. The fact that there is reconstruction and preservation work yet to be accomplished and the misconception that "creativity and

innovation contradict tradition” lead to tensions between practitioners of different ages (Frumberg 2006, 148). Dancers trained in the 1980s and 1990s are often interested, like Sophiline, in incorporating new ideas and themes into choreographic work, while their teachers often resist these moves, fearful that they will not be able to bring back all the dances that existed in previous decades (cf. Frumberg 2006, 146-147). The guidelines for safeguarding intangible heritage put forth by UNESCO have complicated these matters by emphasizing both the importance of authenticity and historical origins, and adaptation to changing cultural contexts. At the time of research, this tended to result in the prioritization of preservation that was encouraged by government officials and the older teachers in Cambodia. It made it more difficult for younger dancers who were also interested in the exploration of new movement ideas to feel supported in their efforts, particularly because they were trying to be respectful of older mentors and teachers concerned with conservation.

UNESCO’s concept of intangible heritage has influenced several, often conflicting, viewpoints concerning the future of Cambodian dance development. There has been scholarly discussion about how intangible cultural heritage as meta-cultural production (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 58 and Halbertsma 2011, 5) helps communities and countries take a place on the world stage through their inclusion as part of UNESCO-recognized intangible heritage. Similarly, UNESCO’s cultural heritage has been seen as creating a heritage-scape—a concept promoted by Michael Di Giovine (2009, 67). When discussing World Heritage (tangible heritage) Di Giovine argues that the sites "are potent mediators, constructing a cohesive sense of community by bringing individuals from a

variety of competing societies” together, creating a scape beyond geographical boundaries “in the minds of men.”

While in Cambodia I discussed these issues with ministry officials, teachers and artists. Many older dance masters, the Director of Intangible Heritage at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, and Khmer UNESCO officials shared the belief that it was more important for the future of the art form to conserve dance practices of the past than to promote its creativity and development. The Director General of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ok Sophon, said that the role of the general department was to both preserve and develop Cambodian dance, but “we lost our heritage so preservation and conservation are our main duty”—referring to the cultural loss of the Khmer Rouge regime.¹⁴⁰ This was echoed in country reports from UNESCO meetings and in ministry documents. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts publication discussed above (MCFA 2008, 102) went as far as stating: “Khmer classical dance was inscribed on the list of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, so there should be no further development.” The duty of the ministry, according to the document, is to preserve the dance form for the future. The concentration of research efforts should be on the disappearing “meaning and picture of the dance (Ibid, 102).” A few officials such as Proeung Chhieng, the Artistic Director of the Royal Ballet, did acknowledge that there is also room for the evolution of the dance form.¹⁴¹ He said that “some of the teachers think that the young [dancers] are using the classical dance gestures incorrectly but they are wrong,” and explained that classical dance gestures are the “foundation of all Cambodian performing arts” including yike and bassac. Thus there is space for the innovative work

of Sophiline Cheam Shapiro. He said, “It’s like having two legs, a left leg and a right leg. You have to preserve in order to develop (*aphirorks daembei aphivordth*) and you have to develop in order to preserve.”

Government officials link UNESCO intangible heritage and tourism development. In fact, UNESCO has specifically funded tourism related programs in Siem Reap. The UNESCO/Japanese Funds in Trust Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, for example, included a training component for private troupes in Siem Reap. This included sessions for dancers between the ages of 12 and 28 from 19 troupes that regularly perform at tourist venues (MCFA 2009b, 19-24). Even so, some officials express concerns about the tourism dimension. Ok Sophon, for one, said, “tourism *ban chuoy nracheachorn ney piphorblok ban skull aampi robam boran Khmer* (has helped the people of the world become familiar with classical Cambodian dance)” on UNESCO’s List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and “they want to see the classical dance performed.”¹⁴² However, he noted that there are at least 40 dance groups and over 1,000 dancers in Siem Reap “all with a very low technique level.” He added that the only performers with adequate technique are in the national troupe in Phnom Penh. While dance technique is an ongoing issue, Ok Sophon acknowledged that the government “can’t afford to send dance masters from Phnom Penh to teach students in the provincial centers.” Technique problems and the lack of comprehension of the gestures plague many tourist troupes. UNESCO studies discuss questions about the survival of the spiritual underpinnings of robam boran at tourist performances, but this no longer seems to be as much of an issue (cf. MCFA 2009a, 2). The Chief Director of UNESCO Cambodia at the

time, Philippe Delanghe, concurred that training was the major problem facing the dance tourism industry. He said, “[tourism] can help sustain cultural awareness, it can help alleviate poverty.” However, he also felt it had to be done properly, “not...proper in the sense of the conservative or the classical way,” but with dancers who have proper training.¹⁴³ Sun Sovanny, Director of the Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Siem Reap, discussed problems with dance technique.¹⁴⁴ She said, “*Soriya doeng haey...khnhom teou borngat se* (you [Soriya] already know that I go teach young students) trying to correct technique, we don’t have good teachers, that is one problem.”¹⁴⁵ Because of the absence of a government-sponsored dance school in Siem Reap and few available teachers “*ke riem tam knea* (they often just imitate each other).” Sun Sovanny was not concerned about the potential for spiritual degradation as a result of tourism production. Rather, she explained that the benefits of tourism create the regulatory problem. She said, “there are so many dance shows that the dancers go from one performance to the next, and this really helps them contribute to the family income, but results in a lack of supervision.” It also allows the dancers to participate in “cultural exchange” between Cambodia and other countries.

Preservation and Innovation in Phnom Penh

As indicated by OK Sophon, UNESCO projects in Phnom Penh have focused on conservation, documentation, and reconstruction. The Rehabilitation Program for Cambodia's performing arts supported workshops on the process of reviving lost art forms including forgotten dances in the robam boran cannon.¹⁴⁶ The Action for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia mentioned earlier focused more on

training, management and organization.¹⁴⁷ The focus on maintaining and preserving cultural tradition has created some tension between younger artists who are interested in innovation and experimentation and older masters and teachers.

As a graduate of the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA), Sophiline Cheam Shapiro¹⁴⁸ is one of the pioneering artists slowly transforming the art form to adapt to changing times and to make it more accessible to a wider audience. Her first major choreography, "*Samritechek*" (Othello), is actually featured in the 2002 Project Report (32) as an example of the future of the art form. Othello inspired Sophiline because she related to Desmonda, who was in an interracial marriage and left home to live with her husband. She also choreographed "Pamina Devi: A Cambodian Magic Flute" which tells the story of a young woman's struggle to find the strength to forge her own path and "Seasons of Migration" which deals with the stages that people go through as they grow accustomed to new living situations. She founded the Khmer Art Ensemble in 2007, which trains in both the classical cannon and develops new work.

Sophiline has three choreographic styles. The first looks similar to traditional classical dance. It "uses the traditional costumes" but it features some "new approaches, both choreographic and thematic." This style would include the dances described above. The second is quite different, "transforming both gesture and costume to create a new genre." The third "uses a contemporary look to push the envelope" by incorporating new instruments and melodies and experimenting with movement and emotion in new ways. It is not surprising that Sophiline Cheam Shapiro asked whether or not the dance form could change after it became a representative on UNESCO's intangible heritage list, or

that she feels that the Cambodian interpretation of this designation tends to align with the idea that the form should not be changed.

Government artists have welcomed some of the small changes that Shapiro has implemented to the themes and gestures of the dance practice. An innovation to the standard set that allows the dancers to create three-dimensional images, for example, is now a common feature of the dance performances of many troupes. Rather than using a flat pedestal or *kre* (bed) she developed a three-tiered pedestal that allowed the dancers to perform on multiple heights, and she introduced the use of triangular and diagonal spatial arrangements for the core dancers. However, other innovations have been strongly discouraged. Proeung Chhieng, while he respects her work, at the time he felt concern that “kanleng khlah katt teou pek (there are places where she goes too quickly)... classical dance is solid, but soft, boys cannot do it”¹⁴⁹ it is unclear here whether he was referring to the way that she allowed young men to train, or to her former male student Prumsodun Ok who trained and performed in the United States.¹⁵⁰

In August of 2012 I was asked to lead a workshop called Arts+Tradition, Modernity, Originality organized by the Arts+Society group in Phnom Penh. The group’s activities had been geared towards the visual arts and the organizer wanted to incorporate artists from different genres. I was invited to lead the discussion on the topic to draw more dancers and because of the relevance of issues surrounding tradition and originality in Cambodia’s dance world. The workshop organizer also helped with the preparations. The general structure of the workshop was to include three segments: 1. Introductions; 2. Group work; 3. Presentation followed by discussion. At this particular workshop the

results of the group activity were so intriguing that the presentation almost didn't take place.

Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, her husband John, and several dancers from the Khmer Arts Ensemble attended, along with a handful of expat artists and other members of the Arts+Society Group. The group succeeded in bringing dancers into the fold, but fewer visual artists than normal attended. During the group exercise, workshop participants were divided into groups based on language ability, because the workshop organizer decided that the planned activity would flow more smoothly without the need for translation. As a result the dancers ended up together in a Khmer-speaking group, some of the expats, John, and myself were in an English-speaking group, and the remaining participants formed a French-speaking group. Each group was asked to come up with definitions of tradition, modernity, originality, and authenticity and then categorize different art forms using these definitions. We then brought the groups back together to discuss the definitions. The perspectives of each group were quite telling. The French, English, and Khmer-speaking groups all had different definitions of these concepts. While the English-speaking group connected modernity with the industrial revolution and modern painting, the Khmer group connected modernity to appearance and a way of being. These fundamentally differing views also emerged in our discussions of originality. The dancers frequently stood to demonstrate what made a movement original or different, and Sophiline explained that the reason that people think there isn't originality in tradition is that "they can't see what is original because they do not know enough about the tradition." Yet while Sophiline sees her work as an extension of robam

boran, she distinguishes between her preservation and archival work (the reconstruction of the classical dance canon) and her new choreography, which highlights innovative movement. By distancing her more contemporary work from reconstruction efforts, she created a safety net. If challenged she explains that while her company maintains the old robam boran canon in their rehearsals, her choreography is a slightly different form of dance, thus the innovation does not interfere with the goals of preservation and conservation.

Presenting Intangible Cultural Heritage: The New Year's Festival

Unlike the conservation and preservation plans in Phnom Penh, in Siem Reap robam boran has frequently been used as a teaching tool. Dance festivals and events offer the opportunity to increase would-be performer technique, to educate the general public about their own cultural traditions, and to educate foreign visitors about the distinctive qualities of Cambodian culture. The New Year's Festival (2012) is a poignant example of this endeavor.

On December 28 2011, in the blazing heat of the midday sun, 40 girls and young women struggled to perfect the intricate floor patterns that exacting ministry consultants set for *Tep Monorom*,¹⁵¹ the dance that was performed during the opening ceremony of a performing arts festival honoring Classical Cambodian Dance's place on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (see Figure 31, 32). Srey Neang,¹⁵² an 11-year-old dance student ran to where I was sitting with the teachers from her dance school, picked up the jacket that I brought for the breezy cool morning, threw it on to shield herself from the intense sunlight, and ran back to her place without missing any instruction. It had been

several hours and the 12 participating students from the School of Arts, Siem Reap, were both miserable and excited. During momentary breaks the 11- to 18-year olds searched for slivers of shade, looked for any remaining water, and kept their eyes open for unused sweaters, scarves and hats to keep the bright sun from their shoulders and faces. Yet they were thrilled to have been selected by representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh to perform in the front row and listened intently to the advice of the ministry teachers about proper arm and hand placement as they sorted out radiating spatial patterns modified for the large number of performers.

The eyes of 15-year-old Nita grew wide when Neak Kru Mam pulled her and Phea to the center of CCV's large stage during the rehearsal of Tep Monorom. Being chosen by dance masters from Phnom Penh for the role of the god in Tep Monorom, to lead the other 38 performers, was a high honor. She blushed and ducked her head respectfully as Neak Kru Mam gripped her upper arm and dragged her forward. During the break she rushed over to the teachers from the School of Art, Siem Reap. She effusively described her experience to anyone who would listen. "*Bang khinh reu te* (Did you see it)?" She asked a student teacher who just arrived on the shaded steps. "They asked me and Phea to dance the lead." She went on to explain her surprise to me. She identified as dark, with cracked lips and chipped teeth—a self-defined limitation. She was from a poor family living in the Angkor National Park area and had to do a lot of work in the rice field and carrying water. As a result, her hands are rough and hard, and she didn't have much flexibility in her wrists.¹⁵³ She was aware that she was well versed in the *kbach* (gestures) and that her technique—the positions of her arms and legs—was quite good. Still, she

was surprised that regardless of what she described as physical limitations, ministry officials recognized her five-years of dance training. Her successful representation as the lead in Tep Monorom in the opening ceremony and the exam portion of the festival validated her as a qualified performer, negated her limitations, and changed the quality of her corporeal economy. In the weeks and months after the festival she was given an increasing number of lead roles and was nominated to represent younger artists in the newly formed artist's association (TlaiTno).

Neak Kru Mam was one of the few dancers who survived the Khmer Rouge. A specialist in the male role in the classical dance, Mam was in charge of spacing the dances for the opening and closing ceremony and was one of three judges for the event. She insisted that I sit with her during the opening ceremony on December 30 and took it as an opportunity to explain her take on the festival (see Figure 33).¹⁵⁴ She told me that it was really quite difficult to stage the opening and closing ceremony because performers in Siem Reap were not up to the technical standard required by the ministry. She chose Nita and Phea to lead because although they are really too dark to perform the roles and Nita's hands are not flexible enough; they have mastered the correct body positions. She pointed to the two youngest dancers with embarrassment. They had only been dancing for two weeks and didn't know the gestures at all. She tried to hide them in the back, but they stood out in the wrong color of costume (red instead of blue.) On the other hand, Mam commented that the young performers were eager and she appreciatively noted that they were very quick to pick up on the corrections given to them during the rehearsal, lamenting that the ministry did not have the funds to support more steady involvement

with training in Siem Reap. She hoped that the exam and subsequent comments would also help the performers develop their artistry.

The New Year's festival in Siem Reap, advertised through leaflets, banners, Khmer TV, and radio as "The Classical Dance Festival," took place from December 30, 2011, through January 1, 2012, at the Cambodian Cultural Village, an ethnic theme park. It demonstrated the impact that the placement of classical dance on UNESCO's intangible heritage list, in conjunction with intensive tourism development, has had on dance performance in the region. Also, it brought out tensions that have developed between dancers in tourism-heavy Siem Reap and older dance masters mainly working for the ministry in Phnom Penh.

There was no concrete connection between the festival and the UNESCO office in Phnom Penh, yet speeches throughout the event explicitly referred to the festival as a celebration of the proclamation of *sbek thom* as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005. While there were discounted tickets offered to both Khmer and international visitors, the only advertising material was written in Khmer. Each dance troupe registered with the department of culture in Siem Reap was required to participate and pay an entrance fee. Troupes had to present both folk and classical dance pieces and were judged by representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh on the quality of their dancing and the level of technique. The participants from the dance troupes referred to the event as an exam (*bralang*) as opposed to a festival (*morhasrap*). Each troupe also had to provide some dancers for either the performance of

Tep Monorom in the opening ceremony, or of Apsara Dance during the closing ceremony.

Participating in the festival

Students from the School of Art took their exam on January 1. They slept at the school that night, and at 7 a.m. half-dressed performers quickly ate bowls of rice-porridge and then applied makeup. After they were fully sewn into their costumes, the classical dance performers prayed to the spirits of dance in the large studio (see Figure 34). Nearly an hour late, the dancers were loaded into their truck. Upon arrival at the Cambodian Culture Village, the teachers rushed to put m'kot (headdresses) onto the *samphea*-ing performers before they were called onto the stage. A judge's table was set up in front of the stage featuring five teachers and consultants from the Department of Performing Arts in Phnom Penh (see Figure 35). The ministry judges were almost as much of an attraction as the festival performances. As they scribbled notes throughout the day, several individuals from the large Khmer audience would sneak up to the judging table to take photos of these officials.

Srey Pich was chosen to play Apsara Mera, the lead dancer in Apsara Dance (see Figure 36). After the performance of Apsara Dance, I ran backstage to see them and help get them out of m'kot. I was surprised to see that Srey Pich was crying uncontrollably. The teachers were surrounding her, telling her it was all right, the performance was over, she could let it out. The assistant director of the school told me the spirits had taken over her body, an event that he said took place with some regularity. Srey Pich continued crying for hours until she finally fell asleep on the floor of the costume room.¹⁵⁵

Preserving tradition

While billed as a festival for the public, for the students of the School of Art, Siem Reap dancing at this event it was quite spiritual. Students provided offerings and prayed to shrines of their ancestors before their performances, and one of the lead dancers may have been possessed. For the representatives from the Ministry of Culture it was more of a combined training workshop and monitoring event with an emphasis on technical perfection. The representatives from the ministry, however, delivered a mixed message. They diligently watched all the performances taking notes and judging the dancers. But they gave every group a grade of satisfactory or above (in part as a public demonstration of success) even though, during the closing ceremony, they lectured the community about the importance of improving dance technique to better demonstrate Cambodian culture (see Figure 37). They gave this lecture after allowing two young performers who obviously didn't know the steps and didn't have the correct costumes to dance in the opening ceremony, thinking that if they put them in the back no one would notice. This decision seemed to contradict their policies that emphasize the preservation of technique. It left some of the Khmer audience confused. One spectator commented, "*Khnhom sealant selpak Khmer* (I love Khmer arts), but I don't understand why we are being lectured about caring about our culture, it feels condescending."

A special meeting to discuss problems of technique was called two weeks after the event. Representatives from each group were required to attend. Even though the ministry representatives gave all groups satisfactory or higher grades in public, troupe leaders were told that dancers had to work harder on technique. They were also told to correct the

names of the dances they were performing to ensure that tourists would be given an authentic experience. For example, they were told that in the future Apsara Dance had to be called robam tep apsar—a correction mentioned by Ok Sophon during our interview. This was unrealistic given the nature of the tourism industry and the new rule was never implemented. With the departure of the Ministry teachers from Phnom Penh, no one was left to continue supervise training and the use of terminology aside from Sun Sovanny at the Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Siem Reap.

For officials from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the closing ceremony was a smashing success. There were so many people in attendance that security had to be called to keep the crowd under control. From the ministry's perspective the festival served to encourage interest in traditional arts and to educate the younger generation of Cambodians about their cultural heritage. For example, officials went into great detail about the dates when specific temples were built, when certain dances were choreographed, and when practices were inscribed on the intangible heritage list. The festival also provided the ministry with an opportunity to monitor the technique level in Siem Reap—something that is technically required by the Department of Performing Arts, but that is often overlooked due to budgetary considerations.

For participants in Siem Reap, the festival empowered the local dance community. It gave students and dancers an opportunity to interact with and learn from older dance masters. It also validated individual performers, who doubted their connection with their heritage and their value as performers, but who now felt that they were very much in tune with their heritage. Additionally, although ministry officials were unaware, behind the

scenes festival preparations at the School of Art, Siem Reap, showed that the spirituality of the art form doesn't diminish as a result of its use for entertainment purposes such as tourism.

UNESCO Intangible Heritage and Cultural Tourism

August 29, 2012: Hoy Sovan¹⁵⁶ sat next to me, relaxing in an ancient window frame at the Bayon. With six years of dance training specializing in Folk Dance at the School of Art, Siem Reap, she performed nightly at a popular tourist oriented restaurant and worked as a maid at a mid-budget hotel. On her day off from the hotel, Sovan decided to accompany me on my last trip to the World Heritage Site of Angkor.

As we relaxed, taking a break from the heat of the day, we noticed four young women dressed in traditional dance costumes sitting to our right. Two wore Peacock costumes, one was dressed as Apsara Mera, and one was dressed as Ream Eyso (see Figure 38).¹⁵⁷ They sat on chiseled stone stairs with shoulders hunched, faces drawn, and lips pressed tightly together. In the baking heat the two dressed as peacocks used their plumes of green, yellow and red feathers for shade. The other two tucked their bodies into the shelter provided by an intricately carved doorway. They waited with a photographer for tourists interested in paying for a photo-op. "*Khnhom min skull ke* (I don't know any of them), *ke min men neak roam te* (those aren't really dancers)," Sovan explained when I asked about the young women. "Well maybe one of them is. She will tell them how to pose properly in the photos. The photographer must know a dance teacher who he gives some money to. That's how they get the costumes. The photographer and the teacher, they split the money. They [the young photography

subjects] maybe get a dollar if they take a lot of pictures. They are not real dancers, they just dress up."

Along with the bas-reliefs of thousands of apsaras, young women (and occasionally men) dressed in performance attire stand in the ancient temple halls of the Bayon and Angkor Wat each day. Sitting on the main levels of Angkor Wat and the Bayon, these individuals dressed as apsaras, peacocks, mermaids, and demons sit in some of the most scenic areas. Some argue that these individuals are creating a pseudo-event, a tradition that is not at all linked with the reality of the site (Lloyd and Sokrithy 2013, 245). This interpretation assumes that the authenticity of the site is determined by past use, echoing the previously mentioned paradox that the very concept of heritage is modern (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 59). It could be argued that these costumed individuals, with the tourists they inspire, are creating meaning for the heritage site through their interaction with it (cf. Silverman 2015, 102). These individuals have become a part of the intangible heritage site. Yet, they are not, for the most part, actually dancers. They dress up, pose, and are rewarded with some small compensation, but they are not part of the community of practitioners that create and recreate intangible heritage. They represent the biggest fears of national and international officials who believe that intangible heritage could be completely consumed by commercial enterprise.

They bring the nostalgic notion of ancient performance traditions alive for the tourists viewing the stone edifices, merging the UNESCO- recognized tangible and intangible heritage of Cambodia. While it may bring recognition to robam boran, this practice, along with Siem Reap's dance tourism industry more generally, often are

criticized regarding the preservation, dissemination, and sustainability of Cambodia's intangible cultural heritage (MCFA 2009, 3). Sovan's response highlights this critique. As a comparatively well-trained performer employed at a dinner-dance show, she was aware of the problems that come with that type of performance practice. When faced with the young faux dancers at Angkor National Park, she echoed the views of other performers and arts workers: Individuals dressed for performance who are not genuine dancers degrade the tradition. This explanation, often given by tourism producers, mirrors the discourses of authenticity, threat, and viability in heritage tourism discussions at the national and international level.

Heritage on display: Tourism and dance at Angkor

The living presence of dance at Angkor is not limited to the highly contested individuals participating in photo-ops. As the sun sets at Angkor National Park and tourists funnel out the main gate, on certain occasions some might glimpse a small caravan of golf carts followed by a large open truck packed with young Khmer performers like those who performed at Wat Tanei on January 13, 2012.

This event discussed in Chapter One brings up many issues relevant to the discussion of the performance of intangible heritage traditions for tourist consumption (see Figures 5-8). Amansara Resort tries very hard to work with artists to enhance cultural traditions. They asked this particular dance troupe to perform because the dance teacher is a master teacher of Yike who also learned folk dance and robam boran in Phnom Penh before the Khmer Rouge Regime. The dancers in her troupe are fairly well trained, all with at least three years of training at a formal school, and the costumes are

fairly good as well. The dancers who perform robam boran are trained in that genre as opposed to folk dance, and the dancers were paid US\$5 for the performance as opposed to the customary rate of US\$2 a night. All of these things are in line with UNESCO and National Government desires to protect and sustain the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

On the other hand, the artists were very young, a possible infringement upon international children's rights, and were made to wait hours due to the adage that the tourist is always right.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, while much fuss was made about the generators seen as detracting from the authenticity of the event, in many ways this was just as much a “pseudo-event” as the daytime photo-ops (cf. Lloyd and Sokrithy 2013, 245). Wat Tanei would never have been used for a private dinner in Angkorean times, and all of the “staged” elements were taken out of different cultural contexts and cobbled together to create the image of an authentic Angkorean experience (cf. MacCannell 2013, 98). For example, Apsara Dance and Fishing dance were performed, one a classical dance choreographed in 1962 and the other from the folk dance that was also developed in the 1960s (cf. Phim and Thompson 1999 and MCFA 2004, 26).

Staging heritage: Framed by Angkor

Dance shows in the nearby town of Siem Reap are much more common endeavors than performances at the temples themselves. These vary from free performances at night markets and orphanages to a la carte and buffet dinner-dance shows, to the sensory explosion of Smile of Angkor. Each of these shows uses imagery from Angkor to create the setting and stories for performance (see Chapter Five).

Orphanages I visited, for example, had simple sets with a painting of Angkor Wat and other temples on the backdrop to give the illusion that the children are performing at the famous temple. Heritage is incorporated into the performers corporeal economy when, during the show, workers would explain (to tourists) that the disadvantaged children learn dance so that they can understand their cultural heritage and are happy to share that heritage with visitors before they ask tourists to donate money.

The Smile of Angkor is a quintessential example of the deeply rooted interconnections between tangible and intangible heritage and between international, national, and local governments. The 3-D, laser-light-show and theatrical extravaganza briefly mentioned in Chapter One features a giant animatronic talking head, an imitation of those at the Bayon (see Figures 39, 40). It attempts to solve some of the problems of other tourism and performance contexts, but at the same time may be the most commercialized tourism performance endeavor in Siem Reap.

The Chinese company, Siem Reap Performance & Arts Investment Co., Ltd., decided to finance the theater construction and the creation of Smile of Angkor in 2010.¹⁵⁹ The show is performed at Angkor Ex, an exhibition hall that hosts crafts fairs and meetings on one side, has a buffet restaurant in the center, and a proper theater on the other side. There is a full proscenium stage with inclined banks of seats. Seats are wicker armchairs with padding, which allows the company to add chairs on busy days.

Smile of Angkor tells the story of Khmer cultural history from the ancient past to the present (cf. Tuchman-Rosta 2014). In the opening scene, a young boy tells one of the legendary smiling faces of the Bayon that he doesn't understand why he is smiling (see

Figures 39, 40). The face comes to life, asking the boy to take a journey through time to the origins of the Khmer civilization. In the show the audience is transported to Angkor Wat and sees the court of the great kings who resided there, and an interpretation of a robam boran piece called Candle Dance is performed in this scene. The audience is then transported to the resurrection of the gods. In this scene the audience is treated with an excerpt from the ritual dance of buong suong.¹⁶⁰ This dance is rarely seen in tourism performances and some practitioners don't feel that it should be used for entertainment purposes. Audiences also view an excerpt of robam tep apsar and *robam kngork pailin* (Pailin Peacock Dance). This segues into a danced interpretation of the Hindu myth of the Churning of the Sea of Milk, as described in Chapter One. During this segment gods and demons fight over the elixir of life. Apsaras emerge from the sea and trick the demons into falling in love with them causing the demons to lose their focus. After the battle of the Churning of the Sea of Milk, the audience watches as nature is brought back into balance depicted by five dancers executing bathing gestures behind a massive water feature. Later, performers enter the stage dressed as monks and sit on tiered benches framed by the shape of a lotus flower (the inside of the animatronic Bayon head) indicating that balance has finally been achieved. The show ends triumphantly with Beethoven's Ode to Joy playing several times as the performers parade through the audience, some carrying the flags of the nationalities present at the show. In this finale, some performers retained their costumes for robam boran and folk dance, and others dressed in costumes that resemble the stone bas-reliefs (see Figures 10, 40-45).

Scholars might point out that the narrative presented here is a hodgepodge of myth and history in no particular order. For example, the glory of Angkor takes place before the Cambodian origin mythologies. Yet the underlying organizational force of the show, a young Khmer boy being transported in time to understand the value of his culture echoes Tim Winter (2007a, 7) argument that the Khmer Rouge left the need to redefine the markers of Khmerness. The boy in the show, anxious because he lacks knowledge of his own culture, is given insight through the magic of Angkor.

The show might be seen as a hyper-commercialized production that goes against UNESCO instruments of safeguarding and preservation (UNESCO, 2016 IV.1.1.102e). However, a deeper analysis shows that this may not be the case. The choreographer, Mr. Dai Lei, worked on the Opening Ceremony for the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and later came to Cambodia with 10 dancers from China to begin work on the Smile of Angkor enterprise.¹⁶¹ He explained, “After a few years we reduced the number of Chinese performers. Now [2012] the show employs 64 Cambodian dancers, three Chinese acrobats, and three Cambodian costume makers.” Dai Lei works directly with the Department of Art in Siem Reap to ensure that the dance practices are presented properly and the costumes are adequate. Costume changes have been made at the request of the Department of Art, and all Chinese performers except the acrobats returned to China—in part from a desire to employ as many talented Cambodian artists as possible. Sun Sovanny explained that she, “*rok selpak kar Khmer chol roam samteng pruoh...selpak kar Chen men aach roam apsara ban te* (found Khmer artists to join the performance because Chinese artists are not able [allowed] to perform Apsara Dance). Initially the

company allowed Chinese performers to dance Apsara Dance, we didn't find this acceptable so we had a meeting to discuss this and other issues with the show.”¹⁶² By 2012, all performers executing Cambodian traditional dances were both Khmer and trained in folk dance or robam boran. Sovanny explained that about 90% of the show has changed significantly since its opening, as the Department of Art suggested modifications to correct inconsistencies in the technique, costumes, and story. “While there are still changes to be made,” she was still meeting with both the artists and the choreographer monthly to slowly rectify problems with the story and choreography.

Performers at Smile of Angkor reported that they liked performing in that production more than at other tourist shows or with other troupes. They had some of the highest salaries of any artists in Siem Reap, earning between US\$150 and US\$200 a month. Additionally, they found that the performance, set, and costume quality have increased. Some of the female dancers reported that they felt uncomfortable in the original costumes, which had short skirts and skin-tight tops that were difficult to move in and were too revealing. They pointed out that Sun Sovanny has helped change many of the less desirable elements of the show. Arn Sophearika, a dance teacher and performer who studied at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh and earned a bachelors degree in choreography, both teaches and performs at the show.¹⁶³ She believes it is a good enterprise and appreciates the changes made to the traditional dances and the inclusion of what she considers to be more contemporary movement. “The audience is tired of watching the traditional dances, they like to watch something new,” she explained (cf. Tuchman-Rosta 2014).

While it may seem that a performance that pulls dance practice completely out of context for tourism development goes against ICH policy, it is in many ways in line with the directives laid out in the convention. The Ministries of Culture in China and Cambodia are working together to create the show, indicating the desire to increase cross-cultural understanding. The show also provides good salaries for performers allowing them to continue training and improve their economic situations. However, there are no days off or vacations. If performers miss work for any reason, they forfeit their jobs and must reapply for their position. Finally, while it may appear that the show is freezing Cambodia's ICH through the repetitive performance practice, it is actually generative, fostering a degree of creativity. The show changed drastically in the years after my first visit and is expected to continue to evolve in the future.

Embodying Heritage: The Dancers' Paradox

The material above suggests that there are paradoxes involved with intangible cultural heritage policy that go beyond Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (2004, 59) assertion that heritage, while conceptualized in terms of past tradition, is actually a modern innovation and Marilena Alivizatou's (2012, 11-15) discussion of the paradox of fostering originality while safeguarding traditions through preservation.¹⁶⁴ These additional paradoxes emerge from the application of those listed above to the experiences of Cambodian dance practitioners. They can impact the corporeal economy of the practitioners at the local level, creating a "burden" due to the "global status" of the art form (cf. Foster, 84). As conduits for their intangible cultural heritage, classical dancers in Cambodia are facing discourses that seem contradictory at first glance. Classical dance

performers are living, creative, engaged individuals who become symbols of the nation and thus vessels for the transmission of Cambodia's ICH (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 58). The performers are objectified and in some ways become cultural commodities. At the same time that they are embodying living sacred traditions, robam boran performers must engage with the commercialization process, as classical dance itself becomes a commodity. Without other means of financial support, many artists must perform in tourism shows and other venues (cf. Winter 2007a, 145). The dancers also are supposed to share robam boran and engage in cross-cultural understanding, but tourism opportunities and experimentation are said to denigrate their art form, sending conflicting messages to the artists.

Sitting in her office at the rundown Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, Hun Pen, the Deputy Director of International Cultural Corporations and ASEAN Affairs, choreographer and performer, explained that tourism is one way to preserve the art form because the more performances take place the more opportunities people will have to view robam boran.¹⁶⁵ She also noted that, “I am ashamed that I am a dancer...but I don’t dance every day now... Dancers in the tourism industry...may be focused of money and may not have good technique, but I don’t care... What I see is that they are doing the work to continue and promote the dance form.” UNESCO Cambodia’s Philippe Delanghe was not as sold on the promise of tourism as Hun Pen but argued that if done properly, it can contribute by sustaining diversity and alleviating poverty.¹⁶⁶ He said: “Has tourism helped? I think so, but has it helped in the right way? That is another question.” Delanghe noted that the tourism industry had turned into “a circus,” but that

this had drawn the attention of the international community (NGOs) to take dance more seriously. He added that when he referred to performing “properly” he did not mean in the sense of conservation (or performing only classical dance), but that the dancers should have training.

Siem Reap’s robam boran and folk dance performers were well aware of the differences between their performance quality and that of Phnom Penh, the questionable quality of some of their dance training, and the undignified conditions in which they are sometimes required to perform. In the few tourism shows where dancers were comparatively well paid, like Smile of Angkor, the work environment was often still difficult. Smile of Angkor dancers pointed to the constraints of having no days off or vacation, and felt undignified in some of the costumes.

Regardless, dancers' perspectives regarding robam boran echo those of UNESCO and the national government. Most dancers in Siem Reap don't have much direct contact with individuals in either of these positions, but official views are transmitted to the artists through workshops, festivals and exams promoted by the government and by teachers who were trained in government art schools in the years after the Khmer Rouge Regime. Nearly all Siem Reap performers interviewed described at least one of the following attitudes toward robam boran: 1) Robam boran shows people the history of Cambodian dance and the origins of Khmer culture during the Angkorean Period. 2) It is important to show what makes Cambodian culture different from other cultures, and performing robam boran for international tourists helps them understand those differences. 3) It is important to transmit their knowledge regardless of how limited it is.

It is noteworthy that even dancers who don't like their jobs and don't intend to continue performing highlight the importance of transmitting what they have learned.

TlaiTno: Possibilities for Success in UNESCO Projects

In the decade prior to my fieldwork, NGOs dealing with major issues affecting performers such as the transmission of robam boran (and other forms of intangible heritage), documentation, experimentation, and economic sustainability, were emerging in Phnom Penh (see Chapter Four). This type of organization was pretty much unheard of in tourism-driven Siem Reap. This began to change towards the end of my fieldwork. In 2011, Vuthy, the assistant director of the School of Art, Siem Reap submitted a successful proposal to fund a Young Artist Association made up of alumni. In 2012, the association received a US\$100,000 grant from UNESCO as seed money for the first year.

While UNESCO funding gave a major boost to the organization, initially things did not go smoothly. The association had organized informally and begun to perform in 2011, but with the successful grant application the artists did not know what to do next. Dancers began to withdraw from the association as performances stopped and it seemed like the association would fail before it had a chance to begin. In a morning conversation on January 3, 2012, the Alumni representative, Sarun (see Chapter Four) said, "We are getting frustrated. We don't understand what is happening. We were told to stop performing now that the application was successful, that we have to wait for Cambodian Living Arts to form the organization, but nothing is happening." Cambodian Living Arts was written into the grant proposal to provide technical assistance for the organization of the association. Coincidentally representatives from Cambodian Living Arts were using

the stage at the School of Art for a graduation ceremony that afternoon. I asked the program manager in attendance about the association.¹⁶⁷ He explained that there was no reason why the artists shouldn't continue to perform as they developed an organizational strategy but could not comment on how or when the strategizing would take place.

Many months went by without any organizational progress. Finally, on April 25, CLA organized a meeting with the staff and a few alumni led by CLA's Program Manager. The goal was to help all parties understand their roles and what was meant by "creating an organization." Many left the meeting just as confused as they were when they walked in. The local stakeholders, teachers and alumni, thought that the writing of the grant was equivalent to creating the organization and they could not fathom why additional organization was needed or why benefits were delayed. The facilitators and donors understood that the grant money was meant for the creation of the association, not the association's programming. They felt that the association lacked a feasible plan of implementation so there was a danger that the funds would be used up quickly and the association might disband once the funds diminished. The local community wanted immediate benefits, while the facilitating stakeholder wanted to create a lasting organization to benefit the cultural sector as a whole.

I was fortunate to have been invited to the first stakeholder meetings when they took place in July. On July 2 at 9:00 am CLA's project manager spoke with the art school staff explaining that the original plan for the association was impossible. The Alumni were too young to run their own organization and would not be able to handle the US\$100,000 budget. He explained that an informal club could be formed for the first few

months that would allow the alumni to receive some benefits from the organization, but that for the creation of a sustainable organization they would have to start from scratch.

The following day, all the teachers, one former student (the alumna mentioned earlier), the school administrators, the representatives from CLA and CAO attended the first stakeholder meetings. I was allowed as an observer who would not be directly participating in the meetings. We were then divided into three groups to discuss what we felt the organization should do (an activity in which I was included). Each group came back with varied results—pointing to the differing views of the local artistic community and the financial and technical supporters. Group 1, the teachers and the alumna, wanted students to have additional training; teaching and performance were recognized as the key goals of the association. Group 2, made up of donors and facilitators (representatives from CAO and CLA), felt the association should focus on classes in labor rights, contracts and management. They argued that it was that job of the school to train the artists and that the association had to be different, focused on professional development. The teachers responded that the four years of training provided by the school did not prepare the young artists to be professionals. The third group included the school’s assistant director, a representative from CAO, one from CLA, and myself. Our group provided a more balanced set of goals incorporating training and professional development geared toward creating an independent artist. The meetings spurred heated debate and arguments, yet all the stakeholders reported feeling “more confident” about the association despite continued concerns.

While the stakeholders agreed that more planning was required, everyone decided that club activities had to commence immediately or the alumni would lose faith in the promise of the association. At the end of June (before the meetings concluded), the first workshop was scheduled—a joint workshop for musical notation and ballet. This was quickly followed by weekly contemporary dance classes, and after I left in September, a visit to Phnom Penh to perform (see Figure 46). Even with these ‘benefits’ stakeholders had real doubts about whether or not the association would survive.

While it got off to a shaky start, the association was officially registered in February of 2013. At the time the association provided instruction in music and dance four days a week, encouraged cross-cultural workshops, performed for tourists four nights a week and offered tourist immersion experiences. By April 2013, the organization earned around 1,000 USD a month that was distributed among 46 members.¹⁶⁸ By 2016, the number of artists served by the association had nearly doubled, there were technique classes five days a week, and more than 200 tourists visited each month. The association income had increased to as much as US\$8,000 per/month. The association has the potential to change the face of the cultural tourism industry in Cambodia by putting the control of classical dance production back into the hands of the artists.

In the end, the voices of the artists-in-training were heard. TlaiTno focused on helping the artists get paid work in dignified settings, while simultaneously providing additional technique training. It is easy to see why this association is one of the few to recently receive support from UNESCO. The program involves youth in the dissemination of their heritage, provides vocational guidance, encourages intercultural

dialogue (via the workshops) and enhances the capacity of teachers through assistant teaching programs, all in line with the operational directives of the safeguarding of ICH. It also suggests a model for how UNESCO may be able to fund successful projects geared to the beneficiaries Intangible Cultural Heritage practices. Rather than funding a specific inventory or a set of workshops, as was common in the past, this grant funded the strategizing to build an organization. As a result, rather than supporting immediate and direct results, the grant supported the development of a self-sustaining organization. The process was less than perfect because a lack of transparency and clarity lead to significant confusion and frustration for all parties, but compromise and determination lead to the formation of a successful organization that benefits both the artists and the community. I suggest that associations like TlaiTno are a possible solution to the problems faced by many of Siem Reap's dancers.

Conclusion

UNESCO's list of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity legitimizes classical Cambodian dance on a global level. In the process, its status as a representative on this list intimates that the dance practice is no longer solely a traditional practice of the Cambodian people, but has become a piece of "meta-cultural" heritage, something that belongs to the world. This recognition is a powerful tool that can be harnessed by both the international and Cambodian governments to work towards ensuring that the classical dance practice will continue to be transmitted to future generations. Ok Sophon highlighted this fact: "the UNESCO intangible heritage list is a positive of globalization because now everyone visiting the country knows about classical dance."¹⁶⁹

While UNESCO's recognition has widened global knowledge about Cambodia's cultural practices and provided opportunities and support for sustaining the tradition, it has simultaneously created several paradoxes that affect both the development of the art form and the practitioner's engagement with classical dance. The chapter explored discourses surrounding intangible heritage policy, the struggle that artists face when innovating within the art form, the use of dancers as vehicles for the dissemination of cultural knowledge, and the strain between tourism and performance integrity in addressing the paradoxes.

The first paradox, that intangible heritage is a modern concept that emerged as people came to fear the loss of the past—that it seeks tradition in the modern period—has been noted by other scholars (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 59). The nostalgic desire to seek the past in the present creates a space for the confluence of past and present in heritage construction such as the performance of recently choreographed work at the private dinner-dance show at Wat-Tanei and the market for photos with costumed non-dancers on the walls of the Bayon. The discourse of loss is particularly profound in Cambodia, which has dealt with great cultural loss as described by Ok Sophon. Hun Pen elaborates on this idea, “classical dance technique disappeared a long time ago, the purpose of classical dance disappeared a long time ago, all that is left is the dance form.”¹⁷⁰ The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the dance masters' understandable desire to preserve what is left of the dance form has led to an interpretation of UNESCO policy that focuses on the conservatory aspects of the directives (safeguarding) at the expense of those focusing on innovation and the “living” tradition. Artists focused on

innovation and creativity, even when they devote energy to conservation as well like Sophiline, find that their goals for artistic expression do not always match those of the establishment.

A second paradox emerges out of this tension. Representatives of intangible heritage are supposed to be living traditions, yet in some ways the dancers become conduits of the dance. In the Angkorean period the dancers may have been conduits between the gods and the king, but now they act as vessels through which the heritage of the past can be transmitted to the audiences of the present. Because UNESCO's intangible heritage policy focuses on the form itself, the practitioners can be swept away into a project of preservation rather than engaging in creative expression of their own. Artists in Phnom Penh like Sophiline and Hun Pen have been able to navigate around potentially constricting policies, but the dancers in Siem Reap often had a harder time with this as demonstrated by the UNSECO festival housed at the Cultural Village in Siem Reap. The young dancers at the School of Art, Siem Reap did benefit from their required participation in the festival, gaining confidence and possible later opportunities, but they were simultaneously used to disseminate educational information through their bodily practice. Later they were encouraged to conform to official styles of performance.

UNESCO's policies against the over-commercialization of intangible heritage also have had a major effect on the classical dancers, particularly those from Siem Reap. The dancers must be economically secure in order to continue performing in the tradition, and without other means of support, entertainment venues, restaurants and hotels are often their only options. During an interview Hun Pen asked, "How do you promote

classical dance if you don't have a theater to perform in, where do you go to perform? Of course it is going to be at a restaurant.” In the reality of Cambodia in 2011 and 2012, commercial dance performance was vital to the survival of the dancers, and as demonstrated by the performance at Smile of Angkor, heavy commercialization is not always antithetical to the UNESCO project. Smile of Angkor encouraged cross-cultural collaboration and increased performer incomes even as it created an inaccurate portrayal of Cambodian Culture. UNESCO-supported organizations like TlaiTno may mitigate some of these tensions through their focus of increasing the capacity (both artistic and managerial) of young performers so that they have the tools to portray the dance form in the ways that they choose.

UNESCO has contributed to the rebuilding of cultural heritage in the years after the Cambodian civil war, but Philippe Delanghe has noted that a lack of a well-defined national cultural policy has made it difficult to support artistic development in the country because “culture does not receive any support from the National Development Board. We can only try to help,” he said, noting that NGOs have been the main source of support for intangible heritage.¹⁷¹ The next chapter turns to the reliance on NGO support to bridge the gap for funding dance training and development.

¹⁷¹ Portions of this chapter are derived from a presentation that was subsequently published in a conference proceeding, particularly in the subsection titled “Presenting Intangible Cultural Heritage: The New Year’s Festival” (Tuchman-Rosta 2015).

¹⁷² 25th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, August 10-18 2008.

¹²³ William Logan (2007, 44-47) also discusses possible paradoxes inherent in UNESCO's policies regarding issues of power and ownership.

¹²⁴ As examples, Winter (2007a) and Di Giovine (2009) both discuss tangible heritage and tourism in Cambodia. Focusing on Angkor, Winter explores the heritage production on the ground and Di Giovine explores the issue from the international level. Intangible heritage is mentioned in both texts, but only for a few pages each.

¹²⁵ There are of course exceptions. Silverman (2015) discusses the intangible heritage and tourism in Macedonia and Foster (2015) discusses these issues in Japan. Other researchers, who have looked at intangible cultural heritage and tourism, focus on tourist experiences (Gonzalez 2008, 808) and on cost/benefit analyses of tourism for local communities (Rodzi et al. 2013, 415).

¹²⁶ Most dancers in Siem Reap perform in tourist shows and thus are more vulnerable to the suggestion that tourist performance degenerates robam boran.

¹²⁷ The Declaration on Cultural Heritage adopted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) identifies structures, human habitats, and all kinds of cultural traditions under one heading rather than dividing them into three separate categories (Ahmad 2006, 298).

¹²⁸ For more on the evolution of UNESCO's cultural heritage policies including the terminology used and criteria for eligibility see Stefano (2013), Di Giovine (2009), Ahmad (2006), Harrison (2013). While I introduce some of this material here, my focus is on the implications of intangible heritage policy for dance production in Cambodia.

¹²⁹ Information regarding projects specific to Cambodia can be found at the UNESCO website: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/state/cambodia-KH>.

¹³⁰ Ok, Sophon. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 26.

¹³¹ Information about this can be found on the UNESCO website at http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17120&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

¹³² This particular award is listed on the UNESCO website <https://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/state/cambodia-KH>.

¹³³ Compiled by the Committee for Research and Documentation of Royal Ballet (Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts), this document can be found here: <https://khmerbamboo.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/khmerclassicaldanceenglish.pdf>.

¹³⁴ Anonymous. 2011. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, December 5.

¹³⁵ Page 25 of the UNESCO document, Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity: Proclamations of 2001, 2003, and 2005. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images//0014/001473/147344e.pdf>.

¹³⁶ The 90 Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity brought global attention to the need to “safeguard” ephemeral traditions promoting the later policies of intangible cultural heritage (Alivizatou 2012, 13). The masterpieces were incorporated onto the new Representative List (Aikawa-Faure 2008, 40).

¹³⁷ I am referring to the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The current operational directives as well as those of previous years can be found on the UNESCO website: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/directives>.

¹³⁸ The concept of "community" is also hard to define in the Cambodian context. Robam Boran is a former court dance tradition, but is now seen as a practice "of the people" (cf. Shapiro 1994). As such, a community of beneficiaries is hard to pin point.

¹³⁹ These fears are outlined in Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts 2009 Case Study Report on classical dance presented at the Training Course for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Japan. https://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/training/casestudy_pdf/09_10/case_study_report_cambodia.pdf.

¹⁴⁰ Ok, Sophon. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 26.

¹⁴¹ Proeung, Chhieng. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 31.

¹⁴² Ok, Sophon. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 26.

¹⁴³ Delanghe, Philippe. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25.

¹⁴⁴ Sun, Sovanny. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 28.

¹⁴⁵ Some study participants called me Soriya, a fairly common Khmer name because it was easier to pronounce.

¹⁴⁶ Final Project Report for the Rehabilitation of Cambodian Performing Arts (published by UNESCO and the Japanese Funds-in-Trust 2002).

¹⁴⁷ Final Narrative Project Report of the Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia (Published by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNSECO May 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Cheam Shapiro, Sophiline. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao Province, Cambodia, September 27.

¹⁴⁹ Proeung, Chhieng. 2012. Interview with author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 31.

¹⁵⁰ Prumsodun Ok relocated to Phnom Penh in 2015 and formed the first classical dance company with all male gay performers, a location where future research would give significantly more insight into the gendered dimensions of classical dance practice in Cambodia. See his company website for more: <https://www.prunsdun.com/>.

¹⁵¹ See description in Appendix C.

¹⁵³ Nita's self-deprecations regarding her physical characteristics are in line with the discussion of race in the Introduction. Nita is ethnically Khmer, so by the Cambodian concept of race she is part of the majority (cf. Duncan 2004). Her description of her physical characteristics seems racial, but she is pointing to physical characteristics that result from her low class rural upbringing (time out in the rice fields and carrying water). There is also a gender dynamic to the question of skin color. Historically, in the months before marriage women entered "the shade," *choul mlup*. During the period in the shade, women were not allowed out of the house and were taught to be ideal wives. The period in the shade could last for several months and at the end the young woman would emerge with pale skin since they were kept out of the sunlight. The length of this period depended on the wealth of the family since only the wealthy could afford to lose their daughter's productive labor for an extended period of time. Annuska Derks (2008, 49-50) discusses how this practice

has been reimagined and reapplied in the modern period as the skin color of rural migrant woman who worked in urban factories changes because they are inside all day. In the case of the New Year's festival, the effects of the sun on skin color were of more concern to the female performers than the heat. Attempts to cover the body and stay in the shade indicate the importance of skin color in their gendered corporeal economy—a topic that begs for further research.

¹⁵⁴ Neak Kru Mam likely had several motivations when she insisted that I sit with her. We had talked for a significant period of time during the rehearsal days that lead up to the opening ceremony and she was interested in my research, particularly the tourism aspect. She also wanted to explain the performance to me while it was ongoing. At the same time, as discussed in the Introduction, my presence was beneficial at the event. It lent an international authority to the proceedings because my physical characteristics labeled me as an outsider. This was apparent at the closing ceremony as well. Festival organizers invited me along with a family of four from the Netherlands to sit in the VIP seats. In both cases, while our foreignness gave us the privilege to be invited to these seats first, we were not the only audience members given the opportunity. As the program began, the VIP section was opened to everyone in the audience regardless of ethnic background. One factor here was that empty VIP seats could be considered an embarrassment.

¹⁵⁵ This incident was later explained in different terms; some people said she was upset because she made a mistake or was just exhausted from all of the excitement.

¹⁵⁷ I use the term traditional dance when referring to multiple dance genres. Peacock Dance is a popular folk dance based on traditions in Pailin Province. Apsara Mera is a dancing goddess featured in one Khmer origin myth. Apsara Dance, choreographed in the 1960s, has become the iconic representation of the dance genre. Ream Eyso is a demon character from the Khmer myth about the origins of rain.

¹⁵⁸ According to a child's rights activist, when children dance one can't be sure where the money goes. It also isn't clear if the children continue to receive an adequate education. In Cambodia, children are legally allowed to begin work but it cannot affect their basic rights. Anonymous. 2012. Interview with Author. Written recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July.

¹⁵⁹ Annie. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 20. Interviewee asked to be referred to by only her English first name.

¹⁶⁰ See Chapter 1 for description of the dance.

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- ¹⁶¹ Dai, Lei. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 18.
- ¹⁶² Sun, Sovanny. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 28.
- ¹⁶³ Arn, Sophearika. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 17.
- ¹⁶⁴ Marilena Alivizatou (2012, 11-15) also discusses how there is a “modern ‘rage to preserve’ the past tangible and intangible” (15) resulting in the formalization of heritage conservation through bureaucracy.
- ¹⁶⁵ Hun, Pen. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 30. Hun Penh did note that she was referring to the importance of promoting classical dance for its preservation. She was adamant that tourism does not help preserve classical dance technique. She said, “If you want to talk about the preservation of dance technique go to Sophiline...I can’t think of anyone who is doing dance technique preservation except for her.”
- ¹⁶⁶ Delanghe, Philippe. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25.
- ¹⁶⁷ Sarun did not feel comfortable with asking the project manager directly; it went against her sense of social hierarchical constructions. She felt that I was in a better position to do this. Although I told her the project manager’s response (with his permission), Sarun was hesitant to continue association performances.
- ¹⁶⁸ Nguon, Vuthy. 2014. Personal Communication with Author on Facebook. June 1.
- ¹⁶⁹ Ok, Sophon. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 26.
- ¹⁷⁰ Hun, Pen. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 30.
- ¹⁷¹ Delanghe, Philippe 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25.

Chapter 4: Policy, Ideology and Production: The Nation and the NGO

As an NGO we have a lot, but we cannot be the driving force to the national level. We contributed a lot to capacity building... There are many things that we can contribute, but we cannot take over for the government... It is correct to say that the government shows off the arts in front of those big cameras. But if you look behind, look at the lives of the artists behind the stage. When all of those artists are off stage and going back home they have to work as mobile taxi drivers...my heart really dropped when I saw this happening.¹⁷²

Soun Bun Rith had been working with Cambodian artists from several genres for more than 10 years when we sat down for a lunchtime interview on October 13, 2011. In 1999 he began organizing weekly performances at Chaktomuk Theater on his own, alternating between different performance genres. Ten minutes after an evening lakhon khol (all male masked dance drama) performance that Bun Rith organized, he was walking towards the theater's outer gate to return to the UNESCO office when he saw a motor-taxi driver trying to hail him. The driver's face was hard to make out in the dark, but when Bun Rith approached, he realized it was the young man who had performed as Neang Seda (Sita)—the princess in the Reamker, Cambodia's version of the Ramayana. When the performer realized that he had tried to hail Bun Rith, he was embarrassed and explained that he had to try to get a passenger to take home so that he could make between 2000 and 3000 riel (about US\$0.50) to pay for gas.

When Bun Rith saw how “fragile” the artists' lives were regardless of the great skill that they possess, he decided to continue working towards arts development to encourage more opportunities. He first worked at UNESCO and subsequently at various NGOs. Bun Rith explained that officials have not always been happy with his assessment

that the national government doesn't prioritize the arts in its political agenda. He added, "When our leaders open and close their mouths they say that culture is the national identity." Bun Rith emphasized how the government used dance and music performances at state events to demonstrate official support, but said that the arts are treated as an accessory. Cultural traditions are part of the "blood" of Cambodia, yet the artists are left without monetary support.

Bun Rith echoes Philippe Delanghe's concern, discussed in the previous chapter, that the lack of a national cultural policy constrains the development of artistic production, leaving much of the development in the hands of NGOs that do not have the capacity to fulfill the needs of all of the performers in the country.¹⁷³ Turnbull (2006, 139) explains that the national government was not fiscally equipped to support arts development and gives it only 0.25% of the national budget.¹⁷⁴ As a result, the state has relied on foreign NGOs and embassies to catapult Cambodian arts back onto the international stage (Turnbull 2006, 147-148).

The inherent tensions, or "frictions," brought about by the encounters of political ideology and policy, international funding, NGOs, and local practitioners and administrators prompted me to devote this chapter to documenting the connections between national ideology, and the realities of classical dance production and performance (cf. Tsing 2005, 1). The chapter proposes that the relations that emerge between Cambodia's National Government, what Caroline Hughes (2009, 1) terms "international interveners," and local arts producers as they pursue arts development and conservation in Cambodia are best thought of as a social web that simultaneously

constrains and supports classical dance practitioners.¹⁷⁵ The web is a useful tool for tracing the paths of these dance practitioners as they navigate between various sources of support (see Chapter Two). Here the focus is on these sources of support (nodes) and the negotiations that occur between various types of stakeholders invested in the production of the art form in order to ensure that it remains continuous.

Scholars have suggested several possible models for understanding the trends of capital and NGO development. William Fisher (1997, 450) proposes a “fluid web” as a model of the relationships between NGOs and other invested parties—an observation similar to Anna Tsing’s (2008, 66) metaphorical “flow” of global forces.¹⁷⁶ The use of multiple grids also has been suggested as a possible model to represent the ways that “connection and contiguity” vary due to power and identity differences (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 20). Irregularly moving “scapes,” particularly the ideoscape and the financescape provide another alternative model for approaching the interconnections between the flow of global capital (so prevalent in NGOs serving the third world) and the conflicting political ideologies developing at these sites (cf. Appadurai 1996, 34-36).¹⁷⁷ Rather than unstructured flow, the ideas of tension and flexibility also have been proposed as a model for thinking about transnational flows. Here national sovereign powers work strategically with global enterprises while maintaining strategic control (Ong 1999, 6, 21).¹⁷⁸ A model that allows for variability and the uneven nature of the distribution of global connection proposes that international interventions “hop” between specifically selected locales leaving the rest untouched as opposed to flowing directly from one point to another and touching everything on its way. This creates power

differentials between places that have access to the global stream of resources and those that are skipped over (Ferguson 2006, 47).¹⁷⁹

In the case of Cambodia, the metaphor of flow does not take into account the people falling through the cracks and overemphasizes ease of movement. A grid evokes an image of a regularly spaced pattern that doesn't exist. The idea of scapes, while useful for thinking about the movement of capital and contestations of ideology, neglects the actors involved in nodes of transnational connectivity. The concept of hopping between key points adequately emphasizes the nexuses and holes, but conjures the sensation of speed. Instead, the combined fragility and connectivity of the web model is a well-suited metaphor for the complex network of stakeholders involved in the continued development of Cambodian dance.¹⁸⁰ But this is not a fluid web as Fisher (1997, 450) proposed. It is a web that is sticky, as Tsing (2005) points out, and easy to tear, and like any web, it has gaps similar to those observed by Ferguson (2006).¹⁸¹ This web is in a constant state of flux, delicately woven by stakeholders with varying degrees of influence and forming a base of support for sustaining and developing cultural practices. The focus in this chapter is on how the web supports the production, preservation and development of classical dance—but the model can be extended to other performing arts as well. The web emerges from the linkages between stakeholders, including the international interveners, the national government institutions, and local administrators. Its threads provide tenuous support for the work of practitioners. Stakeholders are drawn to bridge the gap because of national discourse and ideology that elevates classical dance (and the performing arts more generally) to a place of importance on the national and global level.

These discourses root Cambodian dance in the grandeur of Angkor and emphasize the art form's role in cultural recovery after the traumas of the Khmer Rouge Regime (see Chapter One and Chapter Three). The maintenance of these discourses serves as the foundation of the web. They motivate stakeholders to stay invested and to work with one another to support different elements of dance preservation and conservation. While I agree with Fisher (1997, 450) that the web is a useful tool for thinking about movement of funds, people, and ideas, in Cambodia as in Africa (cf. Ferguson 2006, 47), these linkages are not fluid, they do not flow equally, and they are filled with tension and friction (Ong 1999 and Tsing 2005).

To demonstrate how this model works, this chapter first will explore how robam boran is entwined with Cambodia's national discourse to produce the foundation that draws stakeholders to the practice, using the example of National Culture Day festivities and their relationship to cultural nationalism. The chapter will go on to give examples of how this ideological discourse acts draws various stakeholders to contribute to the fragile web of arts development through three different organizations (nodes) that served as field sites between 2011 and 2012. The first, Khmer Arts, demonstrates the potential freedoms and constraints that the non-profit model has on artistic innovation in Cambodia. The second, Cambodian Living Arts, shows a different model for art-related work, acting as an umbrella organization that works to intertwine individual artist capacity and training with cultural development. The third, the School of Art, Siem Reap, provides insight into the tensions between international NGOs working with disadvantaged children and government supporters who use national discourse to inspire arts-related projects. Each of

these organizations, with their linkages to one another, to various international interveners, and to the national government demonstrates a different nexus of the web attracted to Cambodia's national cultural discourse.

The Foundation of the Web: National Culture Day Siem Reap 2012

Unable, in the post-cold war period, to be of any ideological use or exploited as a force for national unity or reconciliation, [performing artists] have been relegated to the status of tourist eye candy or graceful accessories, to appear at annual ceremonies —“Culture Day” or “January 7th Liberation Day” — events where the public is largely excluded (Turnbull 2006, 145)

The idea that the performing arts no longer have a place in Cambodia's political or financial realm is a reaction to the “demoralization” of the artists after the National Summarit Theater burned down and the Secondary School of Fine Arts was moved to the outskirts of Phnom Penh (Turnbull 2006, 144-145).¹⁸² However, Turnbull's own words emphasize the symbolic strength of the classical dance form in Cambodia's national discourse. National Culture Day is an annual rallying point for creating a national identity, and while performing artists may be exploited to produce the symbolic beacon of the nation, these displays are central to national imagining. This was emphasized in the theme of the 14th Annual National Culture Day on March 3, 2012: “Everything is for the sustainability of national culture.” Fear of cultural loss underscored the celebration of National Culture Day in Siem Reap Province, beginning with over an hour of speeches extolling the virtue of working together to keep the fine arts, the dance, and the culture of Cambodia alive. The highlights of the event, however, were the performing arts demonstrations that showcased Cambodian culture in the large open plaza of a public school in the center of the province. This both echoed and contradicted Robert Turnbull's

(2006, 145) assertion. The National Culture Day performance was framed as an ideological discourse of unity, but it also allowed the local community to engage with traditional performances they had rarely seen.

The Abduction of Seda, an episode from the classical dance drama the Reamker highlighted the event (see Figure 47).¹⁸³ From my seat, I could hear the constant quiet murmur of the audience members discussing the events proceeding on the stage—a common occurrence at Khmer performances. At one point, two voices stood out. A man asked, “What is this dance called?” His neighbor replied, “It’s from...from the Reamker. It is one episode. *Reamker mean chraen phnek* (The Reamker has many episodes).” Although the Reamker is familiar to many Cambodians, the audience, made up of local students and residents of the region, was largely unfamiliar with the particular dance performed. The lack of opportunity to view dance performance, and thus a lack of general knowledge about the arts, contrasts with a deep national identification with traditional arts, in agreement with both Turnbull (2006) and Bun Rith’s assertions.¹⁸⁴ It supports the idea that dance is “exploited” as a way to promote “reconciliation” as opposed to the assertion that it is lacking political ideological import (Turnbull 2006, 145).

Scholars agree that nationalism is not a natural process, that the concept of the nation was constructed in recent times, and that it is the product of collective human ingenuity.¹⁸⁵ It has famously been called an “imagined community” by Benedict Anderson ([1983] 2006), who discussed the emergence of a sense of unity between people who have little to no in-person interaction. This imagined community is built in part by cultural symbols that have been “invented” to establish a sense of continuity that

reaches deeply into the past, naturalizing the nation (Hobsbawm 1983). While both Turnbull (2006) and Bun Rith's ambivalence regarding the discourses of the importance of classical dance—and the arts in general—for national identity when compared to the real fiscal support of the arts by the government is understandable, this does not preclude the arts from being cultural symbols of continuity. Nor does the lack of cultural policy indicate a lack of political usage of the arts.¹⁸⁶

Whether they show off classical dance at diplomatic receptions or at demonstrations for local populations such as National Culture Day, government officials are solidifying the practice as integral to the essence of Cambodia. The artist and the intellectual often are key figures in establishing and expounding on the concepts that form the core of national ideologies (Smith 1991, 93). John Hutchinson (1999, 397-403) proposed the idea that “rediscovery” may better explain the process by which historical events and traditions become embedded into a sense of cultural nationalism. This is true in the Cambodian case, where an understandable fear of loss is embedded within national discourses. Cultural nationalism revives an imagined distinctive primordial essence—based in myth, cultural practice and the concept of a homeland—that may lead to “proclamations of national virtues and denunciations of a threatening other” (Hutchinson 1999, 395).

These are seen in Cambodia's use of rhetoric surrounding dance practices. The stated aims of Culture Day 2012 were to diffuse national culture and to prevent the influx of foreign culture. Like other displays of Cambodia's cultural strength and resiliency, this was achieved through artistic demonstration. Chairs were set along the stage for

government officials and those given special recognition. At the start of the event a local group performed *robam chun por* (Blessing Dance) in front of the stage facing the politicians (see Figures 48-49). In ritual ceremonies, the dancers perform facing offerings and representations of ancestors and deities, so symbolically the officials replaced the deities of the past. When they saw me taking pictures of the stage and the speakers, event organizers asked me to sit in a VIP chair behind the top-ranked officials. When this happened in other settings, organizers were in part using my physical presence to bring authority to the event through my foreignness. I have no doubt that this was at play here, but the context of the event muddled this intention. A long series of speeches followed the performance of *robam chun por*, extolling Cambodia's cultural traditions, food, attire, the temples, and the performing arts. Dire warnings were doled out about the dangers of listening to pop music, watching Internet videos, and becoming too influenced by other cultures. In her speech, Sun Sovanny, the director of the Department of Culture and Fine Arts frequently repeated the phrase, "Ancient [traditions] are not backwards, [this] era is not foreign," which sounds much more catchy in Khmer ("*Boran min yeut, samay min borortes*"), adding, "...today let us think about our cultural identity. Today, this one day each year, how it has given birth to our government." In this context, my physical presence on the stage served both to demonstrate the importance of the event (by virtue of drawing the attention of a foreigner) and—if unintentional—to buttress the strong critic of international influence on Cambodian cultural traditions.¹⁸⁷

Some argue that cultural nationalism occurs during the early stages of national cultivation, others that it is an "episodic phenomenon" that has the potential to reoccur

(Woods 2014, 4). Both views fit with modern day Cambodia, which formally has been a nation-state only since 1993, so it is in an early stage of development. It also could be argued that this is an example of episodic phenomena in that it is the most recent formulation of nationalism in the area. I argue that because of Cambodia's ethnic uniformity and desire to emphasize a national identity distinct from its neighbors, cultural nationalism always will be in the foreground.¹⁸⁸ Historians of Cambodia have discussed the emergence of nationalism in the colonial era and the reemergence of national identity after Cambodia's civil war (cf. Edwards 2007 and Winter 2007a).

Because of the importance of the intellectual and the artist, some argue that cultural nationalism is apolitical and should be separated from discussions of the state (Hutchison 1999, 392). In Cambodia, however, intellectuals and artists are often employees of the state, making this distinction somewhat antithetical.¹⁸⁹ In this context, where the Ministry of Cultural and Fine Arts makes attempts to regulate artistic practice, it is unrealistic to separate national ideologies of cultural identity from state policy (cf. Kallio and Westerlund 2016, 97). That said, unlike in Phnom Penh, where most artists, both teachers and performers were employees of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Siem Reap did not employ performers and was largely inactive.¹⁹⁰ The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts had “divested the responsibility for sustaining...[the] arts on ‘others’” (Turnbull 2006, 147). International interveners generally oversaw—or at least funded—music and dance education in the country outside of the capital city (Kallio and Westerlund 2016, 93). For public events like National Culture Day, Siem Reap’s government turned to the next best option,

dancers trained by NGOs like the School of Art, Siem Reap. This school was funded and organized by a European children's aid organization (CAO) with connections to the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

The School of Art, Siem Reap was one of several arts-oriented NGO projects that were striving to maintain the traditional arts during my period of research. These organizations, which also included Khmer Arts and Cambodian Living Arts, often filled the gap left by the state's unfunded mandate for preservation and development.¹⁹¹ The School of Art was frequently invited to participate in government-sponsored events. During my research, these included visits by foreign diplomats and military officials, National Tree-Planting Day, and an international Buddhist festival.

The National Culture Day festivities in 2012 demonstrate why there was such ambivalence regarding the arts in Cambodia's political ideology. Government discourse was imbued with the call to give attention to traditional culture and the power of the arts to rebuild the war-torn nation, a beacon that draws global interest. The Cambodian public, on the other hand, desired performances, but had little access to them since they were mainly arranged for major diplomatic and business events or tourists. Siem Reap's National Culture Day Celebration offered a rare opportunity for people outside of a major provincial center to view performances.

Throughout the performance the audience members discussed the beauty of the costumes and the gracefulness of the movements. Some of the school children started to try bending their hands and copying the gestures they saw in the performance. Many had cell phones out to record it. The emphasis on *robam boran* and the audience reaction

indicate how important the practice is both to government discourses and the community's understanding of cultural identity. Robert Turnbull (2006, 147) is right that the public doesn't always have access to performances, but when they do a sense of excitement pervades the space. Even if it was through the poor digital recordings of old phones, those attending also could share what they saw with many others.

NGOs and the State: Developing the Web of Artistic Production

Many scholars have pointed to the malleability of the “non” in non-governmental organization. Appadurai (2001, 17) has noted that some NGOs are so powerful that they become their own political powers and that other NGOs are complicit with nation-state policies. Harvey (2005, 177) points out that due to neoliberal state policies, an NGO sometimes steps into “the vacuum in social provision” left when the state increasingly withdraws social support—understanding that it will be picked up by NGOs. The move towards neo-liberal government policy limits the reach of the state and increases the importance of NGOs in fulfilling services and creating development projects (Choudry and Kapoor 2013, 4). Many states in Southeast Asia have responded flexibly, “refashioning sovereignty” to meet new needs (Ong 1999, 215). Ferguson and Gupta (2002, 989-990) have termed the tendency for the NGO to take on state-like functions “*transnational governmentality*” and argue that it is a key feature of current nation-state operations.¹⁹²

NGOs proliferated after World War II due “to a sense of the limited capability of national governments to deliver the basics of life...” (Appadurai 1996, 168). The trend expanded after the end of the Cold War, leading to over 28,000 international NGOs—

most of which were created in the last few decades (Leve and Karim 2001, 53). This has certainly been the case in Cambodia where, according to Roger Nelson (2012, 23), Phnom Penh has the most NGOs of any city internationally, a result of post-Cold War neoliberal policies and the intense UN intervention in the early 1990s (see Chapter 1). Scholars divide these NGOs into polarized groups: “advocacy” NGOs that tend to be confrontational and “service-delivery NGOs” that often work with the government to fill gaps left by inadequate funding and policy (Hughes and Hutchinson 2012, 27). The arts NGOs discussed in this chapter fall into the service NGO category. They don’t necessarily fulfill classic service needs like infrastructure development, but they serve the ideological need of arts preservation and the economic needs of arts practitioners.

The idea of “heritage-as-development” also has been encouraged by agencies further increasing international interest (De Cesari 2010, 626). In Cambodia, the majority of NGOs want to support programs that help disadvantaged populations. For example, even though it is the home of Angkor Wat, the country’s major tourist attraction, Siem Reap is the second poorest province in Cambodia. Classical dance training can help disadvantaged Khmer youth secure safer employment in the tourism industry.¹⁹³ NGO organizers feel that they are helping reconstruct traditions that were nearly lost to the ravages of civil war while helping Khmer youth regain a sense of Khmer identity. The internationally recognized need to “recover, regenerate, preserve and protect the nation’s heritage” has encouraged the development of arts programs in NGOs that serve these under-privileged populations, putting some of the artistic “future of the country in the hands of the vulnerable” (Kallio and Westerlund 2016, 93).

While the underfunded Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts put limited resources towards preserving performing arts traditions (particularly classical dance), with the focus on preservation, no resources were allocated towards development and innovation. This was left in the hands of NGOs focused on Phnom Penh at the time of this research. Each arts NGO that provides education, focuses on preservation, and encourages innovation emerges as a nexus point on the fragile web of classical dance production—generating threads of connection between one another, and between state bodies, international governing bodies, and international sponsors in the public and private sector. Three organizations discussed in the following examples demonstrate how nodes that offer various kinds of support for artistic endeavors generate the social web of production.

A Thread of Preservation and Innovation: Khmer Arts

Khmer Arts focuses specifically on the production and elaboration of classical dance, dedicating resources to professionalizing a small group of artists in Cambodia who are devoted to the company and to maintaining Khmer traditions in the diaspora through afterschool activity in California. As a node in the web, the NGO helps to fill gaps in conversation and choreographic innovation very successfully through workshops, international touring, and archiving. Yet activities at the site still showed the tensions that occur because of connections to other nodes in the web, including government criticism and the difficulty of relying on international funding.

On Friday March 4, 2011, Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and I were talking in the office at the Khmer Arts Theater in Takhamao after rehearsal. She suddenly became quiet

and contemplative. “My teacher died yesterday,” she told me. We sat in silence for a while. “Now I need to do my best to pass on everything that my teacher taught. She was very concerned about the dance being passed on, especially the kbach baat yak (giant role gestures),” Sophiline said. Another silence, “I am just doing my best, trying to create new work, practice old works. Doing this takes all of my time and all of my sleep.”

Khmer Arts is a not-for profit that epitomizes the preservation and development arts NGO. Sophiline was especially dedicated to the preservation of the classical dance genre, particularly after Soth Sam On, one of the last surviving masters of the giant role who survived the Khmer Rouge, died.

To engage with both classical dance preservation and choreographic innovation, Sophiline and John Shapiro created a multi-layered approach to the production of classical dance. The general plan of daily activity—practicing technique and older dances in the morning followed by choreographing or rehearsing new work in the afternoon—was often varied by engagement in workshops, foreign exchanges, and occasional visits from dignitaries (see Figures 1, 50-52). When I arrived in Phnom Penh in January of 2011, the company was involved in a cultural exchange with a contemporary choreographer from the U.S., who trained in classical dance with the company members in the morning and in the afternoon led contemporary dance workshops for the artists. She also worked with Sophiline to create a new piece of experimental choreography melding the two techniques. It wasn’t until mid-March, just after Sophiline’s teacher died, that I witnessed the normal schedule emerging. Sophiline began to focus more intently on the perfection of movement than the generation of new material, and she

emphasized documentation of the gestures. The organization's work on the documentation of gesture, the perfection of classical dance technique and the development of new work made it a central node Phnom Penh's web of dance production. But Khmer Arts also encountered tension with other stakeholders as illustrated by the following excerpts from my field notes:

March 25, 2011: Friday¹⁹⁴

... I noticed that two large armchairs were set up at the front of the stage facing the dancers so I asked Sophiline who was coming. She told me that it was a teacher from Neak Kru Penh Yom's generation who is now living in France. I asked her if I should practice in the back, and she said no, it's OK, that we could just practice together. Thus I lined up behind them and went through the stretches and then followed in the kbach baat. Neak Kru Penh Yom corrected some of my movements; she pushed my heels together and forced me to sit back on them. She also corrected my torso position pushing my shoulders down so that my spine arched further. During the kbach baat, Lok Da Chheng Phon¹⁹⁵ walked in accompanied by five dogs; he laboriously climbed the stairs with the help of Sophiline and his aide and then sat down in one of the chairs. After finishing the kbach all of the dancers circled around him. Sophiline set up a recorder and the archivist was filming. Lok Da Chheng Phon spoke to the dancers about the kbach and seemed particularly concerned that the dancers seemed to be "looking without seeing." There was also some discussion of the fluidity of the gestures.

Towards the end of this discussion the teacher from Paris arrived and with her, HRH Prince Tesso.¹⁹⁶ The teacher was given the other armchair, and a blue plastic chair was brought up for the Prince. Neak Kru Sophiline explained how the rehearsal day worked and that she was trying to focus more on teaching yak to all of the male role students, although the gestures weren't yet perfected. After this she had the dancers perform the giant kbach baat and asked me to sit and watch.

After the morning practice the dancers surrounded the teacher from Paris and took notes as Sophiline interviewed her about her experience. The teacher then began to comment on the Khmer Arts dancers' technique, correcting gestures and positions. Prince Tesso also weighed in on these corrections. After the lunch break the dancers met with

Sophiline to continue discussions about the corrections, they also broke down the movements with the help of old videos. As the dancers prepared to depart, Sophiline asked me, “What do you think of my place? I try as hard as I can and so do my dancers.” Sophiline takes her work on preservation, both on technique and older choreographies, very seriously. Her dedication to the preservation of the arts had not gone unnoticed.¹⁹⁷ However, critical appraisals from government officials and other established teachers sometimes leave her questioning the work of her organization.

Sophiline sometimes received criticism because she generated new movements to express themes and ideas that were outside to the older dance canon (see Chapter Three), and because while her dancers performed exceedingly well, she didn’t have a dance school, which was seen to detracted from the goals of preservation.¹⁹⁸ But she rarely has tense encounters about the quality of technique at Khmer Arts like she did on March 25, 2011. She is generally acknowledged for her ability to produce dancers of exceptional quality. Phirom, one dancer at Khmer Art, told me, “Neak Kru [teacher] Sophiline *keu chea kru khnhom samkhann cheang ke* (has been my most important teacher) because when I entered this group I didn’t dance very well and Sophiline was able to teach me.”¹⁹⁹ Another company member, Sreyvan, had initially trained in folk dance. She was 12 years old when she started, too old to be accepted in the classical dance program at the Secondary School of Fine Arts, even though she said, “*Khnhom mean robam boran neou knong chedd khnhom* (I had classical dance in my heart).” She had heard that Sophiline was willing to accept dancers who were willing to work hard and had gone to practice at Khmer Art. “Neak Kru let me practice here and they looked at the way I moved. She felt

that I had potential and even though it was a lot of work...she allowed me to change to robam boran.”²⁰⁰

As a result of Sophiline’s work both in preservation and in arts development, Khmer Arts became an important node in the web of classical dance production. The organization helped to develop robam boran performers out of classical dancers who had been unexceptional students and dancers who trained in different genres, supporting the perpetuation of robam boran. Her ability to bring out the best in her dancers was emulated by others who aspired to create new nodes in the web. On the morning of March 4, just before Sophiline told me about her teacher’s death, we had been discussing how some instructors and NGO administrators had visited Khmer Arts to discuss strategies for running a classical dance program. Chey Chankethya—a classical dancer and contemporary choreographer explained: “I went out to Khmer Arts to learn teaching strategies. When they were in school, her dancers were the ones at the back of the classroom. They are some of the best.”²⁰¹

Most of the leadership at Khmer Arts is Cambodian and Cambodian American, unlike some of the NGOs that have invested in Cambodian arts development; still, funding mainly comes from international donors. Sophiline notes that the donor entities do not affect the artistic decisions of Khmer Arts, but they have affected the functioning of the organization. In 2011, the economic downturn in the United States made it difficult for Khmer Arts to find enough support for the company, and in May of 2011 they were forced to decrease practice and rehearsal times and cut all salaries in half. As a result, some artists had to find supplemental incomes. After a company meeting a dancer noted

“We will only come in to rehearse twice a week now, I think they have some problems with the money. But it’s OK, I will focus on my other studies and maybe make some money elsewhere.” One musician, for example, began to perform in a restaurant a few nights a week to supplement his income.

As time went on the dancers and other staff became accustomed to the new schedule, which continued through the rest of my work at Khmer Arts in 2011. International touring continued, as did workshops with visiting choreographers (such as the Tanzconnexion workshop discussed in the introduction). Its importance as a node for the conservation of classical dance and for innovation in the art form was not diminished by the instability of foreign markets, but economic realities did decrease the amount of time the organization was able devote to its endeavors. As previously indicated, Khmer Arts has continued to be an organization dedicated to both preservation and development, and while it may have been criticized for some of its development ideas, it was certainly respected for its attention to technical excellence.

A Second Thread: Capacity Building, Leadership, Creativity and Identity

When it comes to classical dance, Khmer Arts Academy stands out. CLA on the other hand educates people about all arts, mahori, bassac, pin peat... CLA supports poor children and educates them about the arts. Money is important, but I don’t focus on that. I came to get skills from teachers. CLA has good teachers.²⁰²

Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) attempts to develop Cambodia into a sustainable cultural center through arts education and capacity-building programs. It provides education for underprivileged students through its Cambodian Living Masters Program, and it also has become an umbrella organization, a central node in the web of arts

development from which threads emanate out linking multiple organizations together. Through its connective tissue, CLA bridges classical dance development with the development of other arts serving as an education, conservation, and development nexus. In the past, the organization has worked with Khmer Arts, Amrita, the French Cultural Center, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the School of Art, Siem Reap and many other arts groups (all nodes in their own right). CLA's folk and classical dance class highlights both a complexity of encounters and an unequal distribution of opportunity where some artists are more successful at flexibly navigating the web than others.

Cambodia Living Arts (CLA) works with a different model from Khmer Arts. It maintains education programs that were at the heart of the association from 1998-2010 while expanding its role in arts development, shifting its focus to capacity building and the development of Cambodia as a global cultural center.²⁰³ As the comments above from Sophea Chamroeun, a senior student at CLA indicate, while Khmer Arts specializes specifically in classical dance development, CLA has a much broader focus.²⁰⁴ According to the organization's founder Arn Chorn-Pond, "In 1998, the Cambodian Master Performers Program (CMPP) began. I found some of the old masters...they were all drunk...it was an emergency to revive them. We don't know how long we are going to have them. I emphasized three things, record, perform, and teach."²⁰⁵ Arn explained that after 15 years, they were no longer in the "emergency phase" and the focus has shifted to the young, supporting their artistic endeavors and helping them find employment. In 2011, Executive Director Phloeun Prim felt that CLA had "gone through...major steps in development" and that the goals of the organization were transforming.²⁰⁶ This led to

some uncertainty surrounding the roles of the main stakeholders as they worked to “redirect [the] focus to the youth of today.” The vision of Cambodian Living Arts became “using the arts to transform the nation,” inspiring people to “reimagine Cambodia through the arts and culture and not just through the landmines and the killing fields or the great temples of Angkor.”²⁰⁷

CLA works directly with over 1,000 artists who they guide with their capacity-building programs. It works of a much large scale than other organizations (compared to Khmer Arts with fewer than 50 members and the School of Art Siem Reap with 200 students) and when their projects with other organizations are factored in, CLA has a substantial reach in the Cambodian arts world. While the association provides some performance and scholarship opportunities to its beneficiaries, there also is the expectation that the artists will use the development-oriented tools gleaned from the organization to sustain their own work. This has mixed results. Some artists receive many benefits from the organization and are adept at finding work outside it. Others are not as successful at navigating the multiple threads emanating from the organization. There also has been tension because of the popularity of particular programs. The Folk and Classical dance class where I conducted the majority of my research was the most popular of all of CLA’s master classes. The students enjoyed dancing, the teachers were particularly strong, and the master of the class—a well-known musician named Ieng Sithul—was very well connected and had the ability to create many performance opportunities for the students. Students viewed attendance as a possible way to make money. As a result, it had become so crowded that CLA was working with Master Ieng Sithul to come up with

a business plan that would charge students for attending the class. As Song Seng, the project manager at the time, put it: “It is the most popular class and art form, and the people want to learn it. So why don’t you charge them?”²⁰⁸ He explained that the class was so crowded that it was reducing student success. Senior students welcomed being given the opportunity to teach, but they also needed to work on their own technique.

The Folk and Classical Dance Class at CLA is different from other parts of the original Cambodian Masters Performance Program. Ieng Sithul initially wanted to help children from the poor artistic community of Bassac learn artistic skills (see Chapter 1). The class operated on its own for three years, joining CLA in 2006 because of the additional resources that would be available. As a result, the class had more autonomy and provided more opportunities for senior students. Many of the senior students also received training from the Secondary School of Fine Arts, and some had begun their studies at the Royal University of Fine Arts during the time of this research. This made the Folk and Classical Dance Class into its own node tethered to CLA with several of its own thinner threads branching out to governing bodies, private enterprises, and other NGOs.

A particularly busy week in October demonstrates the entanglements involved (see Figures 53-56). On Sunday, October 2, two sets of visitors came to observe the morning dance class (tourists, one of whom was particularly interested in music). In the afternoon, the senior students rehearsed for an indigenous awards ceremony organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. On Tuesday, three of the senior students, Sophea, Chanrith and Borey, rehearsed at the French Cultural Center (CCF) for

a dance created by Chuvman (Belle) Sodachivy—a contemporary dancer and choreographer who had been a beneficiary of Amrita’s programs and was commissioned to create a full-length piece for an event at CCF. That evening I traveled with the three of them to the National Museum for the Indigenous Award Ceremony dress rehearsal. On Wednesday, many senior students performed in the ceremony. On Thursday, Sophea, Chanrith and Borey were back at CCF for another rehearsal with Belle. On Friday, Sophea, Chanrith, Visal and select senior students from other Phnom Penh-based CLA programs attended a tourism training seminar at CLA in an effort to learn how to become a cultural ambassador for the organization’s new tourism program. On Saturday, Sophea and Chanrith performed at Chayyam, a restaurant that offered dance and music entertainment twice a week (if not for the ceremony this would have occurred on Wednesday as well). Finally on Sunday, in addition to their regular weekly rehearsal, many of the Folk and Classical Dance Class students joined other CLA beneficiaries to perform at Meta House Phnom Penh, the German Cambodian Cultural Center. This performance was part of an English program offered to students of CLA designed to help students present their work in English to international audiences.

While this was a busier-than-average week, the examples illuminate the threads that connect CLA and the dance class to other nodes that support arts endeavors. They also illustrate the unequal access to resources and possible tensions that can arise. Notice for example that two particular artists, Sophea and Chanrith had the most frequent opportunities. This was not because they were more talented or motivated than others, it was because they were more successful in developing contacts, and they were more

flexible with their schedules. They were proficient at navigating multiple threads in the web of production. Sophea, for example, told me that although she had a scholarship from CLA to attend the Royal University of Fine Arts for a bachelor's degree in choreography, she would "frequently miss classes to attend rehearsals, make appearances on TV, or perform."²⁰⁹ In contrast, Sopheary, a senior student who had begun a two-year training program to teach high school history had less flexibility to participate in events. "*Thngai angkear mun khnhom trauv teou sala* (Last Tuesday [November 1, 2011] was supposed to be my first day in school), but I didn't go, I was at the Beer Launch performance all day. I told them [at the training program] that I was too busy to go and got in trouble. They said I am not allowed to miss class in order to perform."²¹⁰ The inability to accept all opportunities offered to beneficiaries occasionally was interpreted by CLA staff as a lack of interest from the artists. A staff member of the tourism program said, "We had some attendance problems at the Tourism Seminar, showing a lack of interest. Those that didn't participate fully will not be able to continue in the program."²¹¹

Other senior students do not have the same opportunities to build capacity or make money performing. Borey explained that he did not get to perform internationally because, "*Khnhom min mean batpisaoth kar samteng* (I don't have the same amount of performance experience) as the other dancers in the group."²¹² Visal, a senior student and intern at CLA told me of his concerns for other dancers. "They say they want to get married, but how can they? They have no money, no opportunities. They maybe make five dollars a performance and how often do they perform? They didn't finish school, how will they support a family?"²¹³

Master Ieng Sithul's connections provided the opportunity to perform at event organized by national and international governing bodies (in this case at the Indigenous Award Ceremony organized by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO Phnom Penh). The opportunity for three of the senior students to perform in Belle's full-length choreography demonstrates the connection between CLA and Amrita, where both Belle and senior students have participated in contemporary dance workshops, and connections with CCF—the producer of "My Name Is." Both the tourism-training seminar and the Meta House performance show the strong connection between the Folk and Classical Dance Class and its parent organization. These also indicate the broader interests of CLA that go beyond arts instruction in capacity building and leadership.

The performance at Chayyam indicates some success in the CLA mission of building the capacity of their artists. Senior students in the Folk and Classical Dance Class have been able to create personal networks through connections with one another, CLA, Amrita, other organizations, and government contacts that enable them to find additional commercial sector performances. As the practitioners dancing bodies carve pathways through the larger network created by CLA, they are able to enhance their social and fiscal capital through connections they make and the opportunities that they find. Not all artists supported by CLA find the same degree of success in this endeavor. The Chayyam performances also demonstrate the imbalance between opportunities that can occur as a result of the broad focus of the organization. When capacity building is the goal, the result can become a neo-liberal focus on the individual, and certain individuals are in a better position to take advantage of opportunities (cf. Harvey 2005, 65).

Regardless, CLA has made strides both in providing opportunities for arts training and for the public to learn more about the arts. CLA has become a central nexus in the web of production, enhancing connections between nodes in the web. These nodes include smaller NGOs like Meta House and the French Cultural Institute, private enterprises like Chayyam, and large institutions like the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO. The linkages that CLA and the Folk Dance Class made with these nodes created threads supporting select practitioners who are particularly skilled and the flexible navigation of these fragile strands. Yet as the web grows larger and more complex, some nodes are ripped away. With large numbers of organizations providing arts training, not every arts organization is able to survive.

Unraveling Threads: The Demise of an Arts Organization

The School of Art, Siem Reap provides an example of the fragility of the nodes and threads of the web. The school's stakeholders had different priorities—tourism development, student retention, the need for benefits, land acquisition—and the inability to flexibly navigate these competing desires led to the eventual closure of the school, ripping a hole in the web of classical dance production. The closure of the school resulted from entangled relationships between the local education and dance community in Siem Reap, Cambodian government institutions, and an international children's aid organization (CAO).

The School of Art, Siem Reap was a project of CAO, an international NGO, which provided economic support and some logistical aid. In order to make the project a reality, CAO worked with Cambodia's Ministry of Youth and Sport. Since foreign

investors cannot purchase land in Cambodia, the Ministry of Youth and Sport provided the land required for the school. In exchange the school worked closely with the government for special events. The school generally functioned as its own node in the web of arts production, but it was directly tethered to CAO and the Ministry of Youth and Sport for its existence. Until 2011 the system worked well, but a variety of miscommunications and cultural misunderstandings between the financiers, the local school administrators, and the students and their families led to its slow decline. The closure tore a node out of the web creating a gaping hole that required various organizations to weave new and more fragile temporary connections to fill the gap.

I first learned of the school's closure through a distressing Facebook message on June 14, 2014, "You know the School of Art was closed on April 6, 2014," Nguon Vuthy, the school's former assistant director informed me from across the sea as we discussed its successful offshoot, TlaiTno (see Chapter Three). The closure is an example of the fragility of the web of arts production in Cambodia. The school had been a key nexus with threads connecting to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and to other governing bodies, several arts organizations including CLA, children's aid organizations (like CAO), and to commercial enterprises particularly in the tourism industry in Cambodia. It had filled a gap left by the inactivity of the training program of Siem Reap's Department of Culture and Fine Arts and provided a capacity-building opportunity for disadvantaged Khmer youth (cf. Kallio and Westerlund 2016, 93). A representative from the NGO explained, "We believe art is part of the educational program of the child. Preserving art in Cambodia after Khmer Rouge period is really important for children to

understand their own culture.”²¹⁴ The group hoped the project would give some of the students the skills to pursue careers in the arts while the rest still would have the ability to dance or play instruments, giving them greater insight into their cultural traditions. The representative stressed, “ALL of them will know that they can do things by themselves.”

When I first visited the School of Art, Siem Reap in 2008, it exuded an energy that infected the stakeholders, providing solace in artistic training and production. As I entered the gates leading to the school, the sounds of the Khmer pin peat orchestra drifted over the walls of the gated compound. The two-story building painted in the traditional red resin that housed the costume room, the kitchen, the masking-making room and the administrative office, loomed before me. As I walked to the office I could see the dancers, dressed in the *kben* (pantaloon) colors of their school year, lined up in front the mirrors through open studio doorways. More than 100 dance students were attending classes that afternoon.

The school was formed in 2002 when CAO expanded its Cambodia projects designed to support children’s welfare and education. The school had a strong working relationship with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.²¹⁵ Programs included classical dance classes, folk dance classes, traditional pin peat music, costume making, and mask making. Art history, the Khmer martial art, *bokatao*, and bassac opera also were included in the education. CAO gave students a monthly stipend of US\$10, five kilograms of rice a year, bicycles to allow them to get to school, and dance uniforms. They guaranteed students an education through university if they maintained good grades. They also initiated a program so that graduates with talent could work as teaching assistants

(US\$40/month). There were monthly visits from CAO representatives who were very invested in the success of the program. The assistant director of the school, Nguon Vuthy explained, “we had a lot of work to do, but I was very happy because the quality [of the training] was recognized and many external institutions encouraged us.”²¹⁶ Attitudes regarding the program began to shift after 2007 when the original school coordinator resigned. The new School Director, Ouk Sothea, and Vuthy developed a much more structured program with specific age ranges and four years of training with yearly exams.

The change in staff brought more structure to training but relaxed rules about student employment. Students majored in one particular artistic genre, but often learned a bit of everything. This made it easy for them to find jobs at hotels and other tourism venues in the evenings. The school's administrative staff did not encourage employment in the tourism industry because of child labor issues, but it was seen as a necessary evil (see Chapters One and Two). “Their workers rights have to be the priority,” said a representative from the CAO, but “why not” perform for tourists in private groups?²¹⁷ Eighty to ninety percent of the students came from disadvantaged backgrounds and had to contribute to the weekly household income.

When I began long-term fieldwork in Siem Reap, towards the end of 2011, the school retained its connection with both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Dance classes and teacher-training programs continued. Lecture demonstrations and government appearances were frequent along with cross-cultural events and tourist programs. Underneath this seeming success, however, seeds of uncertainty and insecurity developed among the teachers and the students. The CAO

benefits had diminished. There were no longer monthly stipends or bicycles available. While enrollment was still high, with over 200 students enrolled, many rarely attended class (sometimes as few as 80 students a day). Teachers were at a loss for how to keep students in class, and the school's social worker was making daily visits to student's homes. The administrators feared the annual meeting with CAO's Cambodia representatives coming up in February of 2012. Even as tensions intensified the school maintained a feeling of serenity.

At the time of the National Culture Day performance discussed earlier in the chapter, tensions were rising between School of Art administrators, NGO representatives, and Ministry of Youth and Sport officials. Country representatives from the NGO arrived just a week before National Culture Day for the budget meeting on February 23-24. At the meeting, the CAO representatives expressed serious concerns about the continued viability of the school. Since attendance was so low in part because of the lack of a stipend, and a stipend was not something that CAO was willing to consider, the representatives suggested the school no longer met the needs of the rice farmers that the group was trying to help.

Two CAO country representatives, Sara (a volunteer at the organization), Vuthy, Sothea, Sarun (the then social worker and dancer, soon to be teacher) and I attended the February 23-24 budget meeting. The first day of the meeting focused on how to allocate the money in the US\$70,000 budget (a much smaller budget than previous years) to best meet the needs of the school. At the top of the list was how to entice students to return. CAO representatives said they could allocate some money for bicycles or rice, but they

would not provide monetary stipends. They believed students should not be paid to attend dance classes since students pay to attend dance classes in other parts of the world. They explained that the budget was set, so they might have to cut something else to accommodate the need for incentives.

When it came to issues of incentives, the school officials emanated a “sense of powerlessness” throughout the discussion as they were outside of major organization decisions and unable to influence the outcome. Language difficulties played a role (cf. Choudry and Kapoor 2013, 8). I was the only native English speaker in attendance, but English was the only commonly spoken language. I was able to help alleviate some confusion, but other issues were more difficult to navigate. For example, Sothea and Vuthy asked about keeping the money from tourist donations at the school. They didn’t understand that the US\$2,000 collected was part of the US\$70,000 in the budget for the year.

The second day of the meeting pinpointed the devastating loss of student commitment (see Figure 57). CAO representative asked: “Well how many students are not attending regularly?” The answer was startling; about 120 students were showing up out of 250. Many students had not been coming to the school for over a month. The representatives told the director they had to come up with a way of weeding out students who were not participating. They were concerned that donors who were sponsoring specific children would find out suddenly that the child they sponsored hadn’t been going to dance class. The meeting turned to how to implement a new tourism program to increase the school’s self-sufficiency and provide an economic incentive to students.

Later that month, Sara, who was helping to structure the tourism program, said “It is true that the parents and the family need money... if you don’t have a lot of money you can make money in another way. The only way that you have is from tourists.”²¹⁸

During the budget meeting, teachers also voiced concerns about how students needed transportation and had to help their families financially. I saw this first hand when I traveled to students’ homes with Sarun, the social worker, on March 2. At the first family’s home, transportation was clearly the issue: They had five children and only one bicycle. There were similar transportation issues at the third home. At the second family’s home, both parents had started working, older siblings had moved to Thailand and the student had to take care of younger children. At the fourth family’s home, the mother had just died, and at the fifth family’s home, the student said she had stopped attending “because her hip was bothering her” and the school was very far away. She just had not notified the school that she was quitting.

The fissures developing between invested parties (NGO, School administration and staff, beneficiaries, and government institutions) became even more pronounced a week later with the sudden announcement that the Ministry of Youth and Sport had sold the land where the school was located and that the program would have to re-locate to the Administrative City, 20 km outside of Siem Reap.²¹⁹ The Ministry of Youth and Sport had decided to swap the school’s centrally located site for a training area recently built at the Ministry of Youth and Sport’s building.²²⁰ Vuthy visited the administrative city to look at the new studios and determined it was not possible for training to continue there. He agreed to take Sara and me to visit the new location.

On the way Vuthy explained, "It is very far, the teachers wouldn't be able to pay for the gas to travel here, and it would be impossible for students to ride their bikes." Given that it took about 30 minutes to travel there by car, Sara and I could only agree. The "village" was vast with around 60 buildings color-coded by governmental department. There were no trees or bushes, and the concrete was baking-hot around us. While the government had officially moved to this location in April of 2010, the buildings were deserted. In the Ministry of Youth and Sport area, we saw four studios, three for dance and one for music. They were beautiful large pavilions with cross ventilation, space for changing, rows of ceiling fans to combat the heat, and clean modern bathrooms. We discovered that there even was going to be a swimming pool and a dormitory for the students. This startled all of us. Vuthy hadn't been aware that such a plan was in place. Students and teachers at the school would neither agree to travel that far nor to live at the arts school.

The issue intensified later in March. CAO would not be willing to continue funding the school if it was moved to the new location. The ministry understood and agreed that the school could move to an alternate location. I traveled with Vuthy to investigate the alternates, but none of them worked because of space, distance or competing usages.²²¹ Although school officials had been told that they would have to evacuate within the month, weeks came and went with no word about eviction. The School of Art, Siem Reap settled back into its normal routine.

In April of 2014, two years after the initial notification, the ministry finally turned over the land to the person who had "purchased" it more than two years earlier, and the

school was given just one day to vacate the premises. When the school was forced to evacuate, the CAO decided it no longer wanted to fund the program. Students and some of the staff went to the school that day and dismantled as much of it as they could in the time that they were given. The musical instruments and costumes were taken to TlaiTno (see Chapter Two). The artist association made room for several of the young dancers that had been training at the school, so the young dancers that I worked with in 2012 continue to practice and perform, along with some newer students. A vital nexus of the web of dance production from 2002 to 2014 was ripped out, and a new node (TlaiTno) that emerged in 2012 has been able to partially repair the damaged threads in the web.

In his discussion of failed NGOs in Haiti, Mark Schuller (2007) argued that failure occurs because of the friction between the state, communities, shifts in funding flows, and inherent inequalities in the NGO structure. While the closure of the School of Art demonstrates the failure of one project of an international NGO brought by contestations between stakeholders in the project (the NGO, government institutions, local staff, and beneficiaries), aspects of its decline follow the trends suggested by Schuller. Yet there also is the possibility, as noted by Bernal and Grewal (2014: 14) that because of “the demands of new activisms and political imperatives” new NGOs will emerge as others disappear. In Siem Reap, the school, which created hundreds of partially trained dancers with some knowledge of Cambodian traditional arts, became unsustainable. The effort and labor that the students were putting into their training was not matched by the benefits received while they participated in the program or by the opportunities (financial or symbolic) that they received after training had ended. CAO

representatives were correct that it no longer addressed the needs of the community. The advantages of participation did not meet their corporeal needs. As the government continued to step back from tangible support for the arts and the international community became increasingly important, TlaiTno, discussed in Chapter Two, better addressed the current needs of Siem Reap's young artist community. TlaiTno provides the artists with the training they desire while allowing them to contribute to the family income. Although it became unsustainable from the perspective of the NGO, the loss of the School of Art left a gap in the web, particularly regarding dance training. TlaiTno attempted to weave this fissure by accepting and training some of the School of Art's students and continuing dance practice five times a week, but the new association can only stitch together part of the hole left by the closure of the school. Since there is no place for new students to train or arts masters to teach, the conservation of traditional arts in Siem Reap province had been drastically reduced.

Conclusion: Filling the Gap

As I have established in this chapter, government discourses prioritize classical dance and the performing arts in Cambodia more generally as key symbols of national identity supporting Hutchinson's (1994, 123) assertion that "the paradigmatic figure of the national community is the artist." In Cambodia, this has led to an expectation among the general population that both the fiscal and ideological "...perpetuation of cultural traditions is the responsibility of the government."²²² This is an expectation encouraged by a history of royal patronage for the classical dance form. For example, many refer to how in the mid-20th century Queen Kossamak Neariroth "nurtured them you know, in her

palace and gave them money...[they] grew up in the palace, those classical dancers.”²²³

Regardless of these expectations, the government does not have the resources, or some might argue the desire, to maintain and develop Cambodia’s arts traditions (cf. Turnbull 2006, 145). It relies, instead, on various international interveners, particularly NGOs, to fill the gaps left by this resulting shortfall in the production of the web. The natural gaps of the web require the artists and arts administrators to skillfully navigate the sticky threads connecting NGOs and governing bodies, threads that also are at risk of rupture as demonstrated in the section above.

This chapter began with Soun Bun Rith’s and Philippe Delanghe’s concerns that while NGOs can play a large role in the preservation and development of dance in Cambodia, they cannot fill the gap left from a lack of a government arts policy.²²⁴ My research shows that this is a gap not solely in national cultural policy, but in domestic resource availability and support. Phloeun Prim notes, rather than expecting government or NGO support, a change of mindset is needed so Cambodian people will value the arts differently and begin fiscally supporting performances by being willing to pay for entry.

²²⁵ This chapter doesn’t document who bears the responsibility for the gap or who should fill it in the future, but it does provide a model of how international interveners temporarily filled the gap and why they have taken interest in filling it in the first place.

Throughout this chapter I have proposed that the gap is filled by the creation of a social web built through encounters between various international interveners, national governing bodies (such as various ministries), and local arts producers (artists and administrators). In this conception of the web, the NGOs, national ministries,

international governing bodies (like UNESCO), and some private enterprises become nodes from which threads are created that bind them to one another. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, for example, develops ideological discourse that simultaneously promotes classical dance as a symbol of national identity and highlights the fragility of the arts within Cambodia's larger historical context at events like National Culture Day. This ideological framework is foundational in drawing international funding sources and NGO partnerships in as different threads. Threads emerge from each nexus and node to form the social web that helps to fill the resource gap.

The web model can be used as a tool for understanding the structures that impact the corporeal economy of dance practitioners. It accounts for the complex, tense, and fragile relationships between different stakeholders in the production process and how practitioners navigate between the supportive nodes with more or less success. The examples of the three organizations discussed highlight various types of encounters and the many roles that NGOs and NGO projects can play when they become nodes filling the gap. Khmer Arts, Cambodian Living Arts, and the School of Art, Siem Reap each served as a central nexus that tethered together other (local and international) organizations, private enterprises, and government institutions invested in the financial and ideological support of the arts. Khmer Arts for example was key to the perpetuation of classical dance in Phnom Penh. The organization extended documentation and technique training, paid artists regular salaries, and created new innovative work, three important aspects of preservation and development that the government doesn't have enough resources to fully support. Cambodian Living arts provided a large network that

allowed practitioners to find performance and training opportunities and simultaneously supported its own opportunities for artists associated with the organization. While the organization did not offer practitioners the steady salaries of Khmer Arts, artists who were able to maintain flexibility in their pursuits were able to take advantage of a variety of opportunities.

While the nodes of the web have been somewhat successful in filling the gap caused by a lack of resources, holes in the web—like the demise of the School of Art—and the hastily patched tears leave fissures and gaps through which individual artists, teachers, administrators, and entire troupes can fall and with them a piece of a struggling cultural practice disappears. Bun Rith and Delanghe propose a cultural policy to begin sealing the gap. Phloeun suggests that a change in the Cambodian public's expectations about the arts is the solution so that they begin to place a monetary value on viewing performances. It also is clear that cultural tourism has been a proposed solution both to filling the monetary gap and sustaining traditional arts practices. This was a main focus of Cambodian Living Arts and the School of Art, Siem Reap. The next chapter looks at the interconnection between tourism and dance practice in more detail, moving away from the economic aspect of tourist performance to explore the tourist encounter as a moment of possibility.

¹⁷² Soun Bun Rith. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 13.

¹⁷³ Philippe Delanghe. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25.

¹⁷⁴ This figure is based on an interview conducted in 2003 (Turnbull 2006, 149). According to an anonymous interview with a UNESCO representative on November 5, 2011 conducted by the author, this amount has actually decreased substantially since that time to .02% of the national budget.

¹⁷⁵ Caroline Hughes (2009, 1) proposes the use of the term “international intervener” to refer to all parties invested in a development project from outside the nation in which they occur. She uses the term to refer to NGOs, the UN, regional governing bodies such as ASEAN, and international funders. I use this term to highlight the global nature of current arts development in Cambodia. It is not meant in a negative way; during the research period I also was an international intervener at times.

¹⁷⁶ Anna Tsing’s later work, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (2005, 1-3) adds complexity to the idea of flow, proposing the idea of the stickiness of “practical encounters” focusing on the messiness that occurs as a result of global “encounters of difference.”

¹⁷⁷ I am using Appadurai’s (1996, 33-36) use of “scapes” loosely here. I don’t deviate from his proposed scapes, but I do apply the idea of the “ideoscape” to NGO and state interactions in a way that he may not have intended. While Appadurai’s vision of the “ideoscape” refers to the movement of the “master narrative of the Enlightenment” (p. 36) including freedom and rights, I am pointing to how this movement is in tension with the ideologies of the state to which it is moving.

¹⁷⁸ Aiwa Ong’s *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (1999, 233-237) is not primarily concerned with the relationship between NGOs and the state, a topic she addresses late in the book. However, the concept of tension and flexibility can be used to explore the relationships between NGOs, international funders, and the state, and how artists navigate through these tense connections.

¹⁷⁹ James Ferguson (2006, 47) proposes this model for thinking about uneven development in Africa, but this model could apply to Southeast Asia where some countries (and cities) attract significantly more foreign investment than those that are considered to have too much risk.

¹⁸⁰ Lisa Markowitz (2001, 41) refers to the unstable “web of relationships” that emerges when studying NGOs.

¹⁸¹ As discussed in Chapter One, when I mention sticky threads in Cambodia’s web of arts production, I am not referring to Anna Tsing’s (2005) metaphor (end note 176). Instead I am referring to the possibility that the artists who are supported by

and navigate the web of production will get trapped in particular nodes of the web and lose their ability to flexibly utilize all of the resources available to them.

¹⁸² Robert Turnbull is a pianist, a journalist, and a producer. He has been involved in Cambodian dance production for many years working both with traditional performance practices and more recently with contemporary arts. His thoughts on the government's support of classical dance are colored by these experiences.

¹⁸³ The excerpt from the Reamker was the highlight, but other Cambodian arts traditions including folk dance and popular form of spoken comedic theater were included.

¹⁸⁴ Bun Rith has called for regular performances to remediate these problems. Between 1998 and 2000, he was able to organize these events regularly, but as the years progressed he noted that performances grew less frequent. Soun Bun Rith. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 13.

¹⁸⁵ Anthony Smith (1991), Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Benedict Anderson ([1983] 2006) and others have asserted this position.

¹⁸⁶ Shapiro, John. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, May 12. The Executive Director and Co-Founder of Khmer Arts compared Cambodia's national policy on the arts to that of the United States. The United States does not have a cultural policy, and to develop one would require a change to the constitution. It can be argued that this creates a "negative space or a free space" that allows for creativity (Mark 1969, 9). This does not mean, however, that the arts and humanities are not steered by governance (Mark 1969, 10).

¹⁸⁷ The excerpts from the Reamker and the folk dances were performed after the speeches. After the dance performance there was trivia game. The event came to a close with the performance of comedic theater.

¹⁸⁸ Cambodia has made some efforts to showcase its diverse ethnic communities, but with 90-95% of the population identifying as Khmer and "the land of the Khmers" and "the country of Cambodia" used interchangeably in daily use, it is appropriate to call Cambodian nationalism an ethnic nationalism, to borrow Liah Greenfeld's (2006, 141) term. That said, Greenfeld's (2006, 144) asserts that ethnic nationalism is a dangerous and permanent threat to international stability prioritizes western notions of the nation (cf. Gupta 1995). Thus I prefer to use cultural nationalism here.

¹⁸⁹ Turnbull (2006, 139) explains that at the time of his writing, the government employed approximately 700 artists in some capacity (at the Royal University of Fine Arts or in the Department of Performing Arts).

¹⁹⁰ Nguon, Vuthy. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, April 20.

¹⁹¹ Both Turnbull (2006, 146, 148) and Soun Bun Rith (Interview 2011) mention that Khmer Arts and Cambodian Living Arts are organizations that support dance practitioners, performance, and innovation.

¹⁹² Bernal, Victoria and Inderpal Grewal (2014, 8-9) also discuss the continuity between states and NGOs.

¹⁹³ In most families, children are expected to bring home between US\$10 and US\$20 a month to contribute to the family income. Participants in this study from Siem Reap frequently mentioned occupations that young performers (11-16) might be engaged in if they hadn't had the opportunity to learn to dance. These include working as trash pickers, hauling bricks at construction sites (boys), and digging potatoes (girls).

¹⁹⁴ This excerpt has been edited to allow for easier reading.

¹⁹⁵ Lok Da Chheng Phon was the Minister of Information, Press and Culture in the 1980s and early 1990s (before there was a Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts). Throughout his life he was very involved in the arts. He created an artists' retreat in the 1960s, for example. Chheng Phon was Sophiline's uncle and visited rehearsals at the Khmer Arts Theater relatively frequently. He actually built the theater as a Vipassana Retreat before leasing it to Sophiline. He passed away on December 22, 2016. For more on this influential figure see Diamond (2012, 130-150), Cravath (2007, 174-175, 184) and Heywood (2008, 83-89).

¹⁹⁶ I first met HRH Prince Sisowath Tesso in 2009 at a casual lunch with Suppya Nut. After returning to Cambodia in 2006, the Prince worked in several government positions: at the national assembly, in the Ministry of Tourism, and as part of the cabinet of His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni. At the time he was also working as the private secretary of HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi (then director of the Royal Ballet).

¹⁹⁷ Hun, Pen. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 30.

¹⁹⁸ While Sophiline Cheam Shapiro did not have a training program in Cambodia at the time, she allowed motivated students to train with the company. At the time there was a

female apprentice who had trained at the Secondary School of Fine Arts, but desired more experience training at the Khmer Arts Theater. There also were two young men attending practices when their work schedules allowed. Since the time of research, a training program has been added to Takhamao activities.

¹⁹⁹ Sao, Phirom 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia March 25.

²⁰⁰ Um, Sreyvan. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, May 4.

²⁰¹ Chey, Chankethya. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 8. Kethya taught at the Secondary School of Fine Arts, worked with several international contemporary choreographers (with the help of the NGO Amrita) and in 2012 began a masters program in Choreography at UCLA.

²⁰² Chamroeun, Sophea and Cheychanrith Hou. 2011. Interview with the Author, handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 22. Sophea and Chanrith requested to be interviewed concurrently, but Sophea made the statements in the early part of this section.

²⁰³ Prim, Phloeun. 2011 Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 29.

²⁰⁴ Chamroeun, Sophea and Cheychanrith Hou. 2011. Interview with the Author, handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 22.

²⁰⁵ Chorn-Pond, Arn. 2013. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Brooklyn, NY, April 30.

²⁰⁶ Prim, Phloeun. 2011 Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 29.

²⁰⁷ IBID. In the interview Phloeun felt unsure of his own responsibilities as the goals of the organization shifted. When asked about his responsibilities he said, "Sometimes I wonder...how should I respond to that?" Later adding, "So my work is to help develop and carry on the vision and the organization of Cambodian Living Arts" and to do fundraising.

²⁰⁸ Song, Seng. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia. October 3.

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- ²⁰⁹ Chamroeun, Sophea. 2011. Conversation with the Author. Documented in field notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia October 30.
- ²¹⁰ Meng, Sopheary. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 6.
- ²¹¹ Gommard, Marion. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 17.
- ²¹² Soy, Chanborey. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 2.
- ²¹³ Neang, Visal. 2011. Conversation with the Author. Documented in field notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 1.
- ²¹⁴ CAO Representative. 2012. Personal Communication with Author. April 9.
- ²¹⁵ Although the School of Art frequently worked with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (and its Siem Reap branch) for special events, the school's assistant director lamented that they did not have an official relationship with that ministry. When asked about a photo of a visit of the Former Minister of Culture and Fine Arts (HRH Princess Buppha Devi) he explained that they had a stronger relationship with the old ministry, but that the government composition had changed. This may have been partly responsible for the closure of the dance school.
- ²¹⁶ Nguon, Vuthy. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, April 20.
- ²¹⁷ CAO Representative. 2012. Personal Communication with Author. April 9.
- ²¹⁸ Brocchi, Sara Soomie. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, February 29.
- ²¹⁹ The administrative city was constructed in 2010, but by 2013 the various provincial departments had returned to Siem Reap city center. The construction of and criticism surrounding the administrative city has been documented in the Phnom Penh Post (Thik 2013 and Olszewski and Thik 2011).
- ²²⁰ According to Sylvia Nam, a specialist in land speculation in Cambodia at UC Irvine, government land cannot technically be sold, but officials are able to get around these rules by leasing the land for extended periods of time or engaging in land swaps

(swapping less desirable land for land that has high economic value, like the School of Art, Siem Reap). (Personal Communication, November 2014).

²²¹ One site had two buildings one of which would continue to be used as an academic school. The other was in a quiet area not too far from town with a wide grassy plaza and huge shady trees, but the location had only one small building.

²²² Prim, Phloeun. 2011 Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 29.

²²³ Chorn-Pond, Arn. 2013. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Brooklyn, NY, April 30.

²²⁴ Soun Bun Rith. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 13. Philippe Delanghe. 2012 Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25.

²²⁵ Prim, Phloeun. 2011 Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 29.

Chapter 5: Staging the Apsara: Spaces for Symbolic Emergence in the Touristic Borderzone

I am not really into touristy things, so this trip has been a real eye-opener for me. You know going to the temples with all the people pushing stuff on you. This [a dance performance at Kulen II²²⁶] is a nice break from that. Although I guess it is a pretty touristy thing to do.²²⁷

—A tourist in Cambodia, 2012

The notion of fixed boundaries, static cultures, and constant subjectivities must be altered to be more processual, fluid, and reflexive and to incorporate the contemporary movements of people. The touristic encounter must be considered as a moving border zone, a zone of creativity and emergence.

(Jule-Rosette and Bruner 1994, 404).

Sara, the volunteer at the School of Art Siem Reap, was returning to Italy. Several teachers, the costume maker, and I went out to an Italian restaurant with Sara to say farewell. After eating too much pizza, we decided to go for a walk. Soon, I realized that we had wandered to Pub Street, the ubiquitous tourist party zone. Seeing the five of us walking together, ramourk drivers and street vendors approached to offer rides and to sell their wares. They spoke to the dance teachers in English and responded with bafflement when they discovered that the teachers were, in fact, Khmer.

Amid the cacophony of sounds, blaring hip hop music, live piano playing, shouts and the sing-song of the sellers, we could hear sounds from a traditional pin peat orchestra drifting from above. I glanced at my watch and realized that the nightly performance at Temple Balcony, a restaurant that serves a la carte menu options as tourists ‘gaze’ upon Cambodian dancing bodies, was still in process (cf. Urry 1990, 10). I asked the teachers, Sarun and Sokhun, and the costume maker Chompo, if any of their former students performed at the location. Sarun said, “Don’t know, I’ve never been there

before.” She told me that she was interested in seeing the end of the performance, particularly to see if there was anyone she knew on stage, so we decided to stop by.

Although we only saw one folk dance, when the dancers came out at the end of the show to thank the audience and let them come up for photos, the teachers saw two former students, one dressed for Apsara Dance and the other for Ream Leak Choup Leak.²²⁸ Sokhun, Sarun, and Chompo wanted to take pictures with their former students and pulled Sara and I with them. We lined up behind the tourists to wait our turn (see Figure 58). When the dancers saw their teachers in the audience, they squealed with excitement. They allowed the tourists to take pictures first, but the outpouring of emotion caused a disruption in the normal flow of the tourist site. The teachers, students/performers, anthropologist, volunteer, and even the waiters who were drafted to take the photos had crossed several touristic boundaries simultaneously—challenging the constructed touristic borderzone at the site.

According to Edward Bruner (2005, 192), “The touristic borderzone is like an empty stage waiting for performance time; this is so for both the audience of tourists and for the native performers.” In these borderzones, the tourists and the tourate ideally know their places—the performer is appropriately “native,” the tourist knows to “suspend disbelief” and the producers “put on a good show” (Bruner 2005, 18).²²⁹ The stage-like space of the borderzone allows the tourist and tourate to engage in improvised performances through which a cultural imaginary emerges. This generative process occurs in the clash between expectation and experience (cf. Bruner 2011, 199). The borderzone is not always literally a stage, but according to Bruner (2005, 18), it “is

located in an actual place in the world” where the performance of tourist encounters occurs. Pub Street then, where locals serve as ramourk drivers, peddlers, and fish massage bath attendants, and tourists hunt for clubs, bars, or atmospheric dining is as much an emergent borderzone as the literal staged performance at Temple Balcony. The experience I described on Pub Street and in Temple Balcony provides evidence of this borderzone, a space in which everyone is expected to carry out particular roles—indicated by the bewilderment and excitement that greeted the teachers when they were not performing their expected roles.

Following Edward Bruner (2005, 18), I suggest that the borderzone is neutral gap in which a “constructed theatrical” culture can emerge (see also Causey 2003, 27). Bruner’s theoretical frame of the borderzone is useful for understanding the emergent properties of touristic spaces and the performative quality of interactions. But his conceptualization of the borderzone has some inconsistencies that warrant further exploration. For example, in Jules-Rosette and Bruner’s (1994, 404) comment at the top of the chapter, the touristic “border zone” is described as “fluid, reflexive...and moving.” But in Bruner’s (2005, 17) later work he describes the borderzone “in spatial terms...as a distinct meeting place” between the tourists and “local performers.” This indicates a stationary borderzone rather than the mobile one conceptualized earlier. Bruner’s proposal that there is a zone of interaction that mediates encounters between the tourist and locals allowing for “dialogic interplay,” helps describe the tourist/tourate encounters and experiences documented in Cambodia, but his framework is at times too general, reducing the multitude of positionalities in the zone into tourist and local, and too specific

since he is focused on “upscale group tourism” in his discussions of the borderzone, where it is more “rigid” (Bruner 2005, 19).

On a larger scale, “constructed theatrical” sites provide space for the generation of symbolic engagement where various actors work together to produce an idealistic version of the tourist site that is simultaneously inspired by ideological discourses and by how these discourses influence identity formation of site participants (Bruner 2005, 18 and Edensor 2001, 64-65.) In Cambodia this idealization generally focuses on how classical dance, and the performing arts more generally, highlight the essence of Khmer cultural traditions—either because of a connection with Angkorean cultures or because of connections to current practices. This is an important project after the cultural losses of the Khmer Rouge era (Winter 2007a, 145-146). On a smaller scale, borderzone crossings destabilize tourist encounters, creating the potential for alternative experiences to emerge. The tourist quoted at the top of the chapter, for example, saw herself as separate from the rest of the tourist community, uncomfortable with the crowds at Angkor and overwhelmed by the “children endlessly coming up and trying to get me to buy things.”²³⁰ With the positionality of a post-tourist she recognized that a buffet dinner dance show was as touristy as a visit to the temples (cf. Urry 1990, 100-102). It felt less touristy to her because at the dance performance at Kulen II, interactions in the borderzone constructed a cultural imaginary in line with her expectations—the relaxed pace of the event, the slow music and dance, the lounging, eating and drinking—that contrasted with the busy atmosphere of the temples.

For dance practitioners working in the tourism industry, the emergent possibilities of the borderzone have the potential to impact symbolic and social capital (see Chapter Two). Since they are an integral element of the idealistic tourist constructions, the practitioners may have the potential to increase their status through their representation of the art form. At the same time, as discussed in Chapter Three, the negative connotations of tourism performance may detract from this prestige. While the impact of tourism performance on the dancers' symbolic capital is ambiguous, performing in these shows certainly has a positive impact on social capital given that they have opportunity to interact (however briefly) with visitors from a wide range of countries. The borderzone is a fundamental aspect of the corporeal economy for dancers in the tourism industry because tourist experiences in the borderzone can affect venue popularity (through recommendations) and because encounters in this unstable boundary affect the performer's acquisition of non-fiscal capital. Thus a deeper analysis of the construction of the borderzone and the imaginaries it creates is called for.

This chapter proposes that an expansion of Bruner's concept of the borderzone is necessary to fully understand the generative capacity of these spaces of encounter. Rather than a localized borderzone with a rigid interface between the local and tourist populations, I propose that the touristic borderzone is an extension of an imagined boundary surrounding individuals engaged in tourist activities, whether tourist or tourate. These boundaries are created through the roles the individuals perform, their expectations, and their experiences. The borderzones are created by the overlap between individual boundaries in places of tourist/tourate encounter. This redefined notion of

tourist/tourate engagement with the borderzone and encounters within it alleviates inconsistencies in Bruner's conceptualization while demonstrating how moments of interaction are laced with possibility.

To explore this reformulation of the borderzone, what I call the borderzone field, first I will detail how these touristic spaces create the potential for the production of cultural imaginaries that can bleed into individual conceptions of self and that can sustain ideological discourses at national and global levels. I then will discuss how my suggested reframing works to give Bruner's model a broader application. Three case studies demonstrate my reconceptualization. The different settings—a buffet dinner-dance show, a club/restaurant that offers a nightly performance, and an organized dance class observation—serve as stages for the construction of ideological discourses (see Chapters Three and Four) through the staging of classical and folk dance traditions. Additionally, I will examine how the encounters and experiences of the tourists and tourate have the potential to generate new cultural imaginaries, both when those involved perform their expected roles and when they transgress across the borderzone (and their personal boundaries).

A Space for Improvisation and Play

Anthropological discourse regarding tourism relies heavily on visceral, embodied and theatrical imagery (cf. Chaney 2008, 193-206). This discourse is inspired by the work of Erving Goffman (1956) and Victor Turner ([1982] 1992). Goffman's (1956, 135-146) discussion of the "dramaturgical" nature of personal and "team" presentation, including the staging of everyday performance and the notion of a front stage presented to the

world and a back stage revealed only to the team, inspired performance-related narratives that metaphorically point to the staged nature of tourist attractions. MacCannell's (2013, 101) concept of staged authenticity, for example, examines the tourist desire to see "real" culture as layers of carefully constructed stages are peeled away. For Edensor (2001, 60) role-playing in the front-stage area intimates the self-reflexive goals of some of the tourate to communicate particular ideas to the tourists. Turner's (1982, 61-88, 105-109) outline of social dramas and their relationship with cultural performances also has been used to frame how the tourism dialectic can produce cultural symbols through interactions that challenge established values and ideas. His work on play has also been influential (cf. Turner 1987, 170). Scholars have explored the playful nature of tourism and the idea that both tourists and the tourate can "play" at an ideal reality that doesn't exist, generating an imagined construction (Cohen 1985, 292-294).

The playful, emergent qualities of touristic interactions take place in neutral zones or "utopic spaces" between everyday experience and ideological fantasy (Causey 2003, 27). The utopic space creates a gap between ordinary life and "untamed possibility" that leads to the creative interpretation of ideologies and narratives and leaves room for "a plurality of individual interpretations and internalizations" (Ness 2003, 12-13). Andrew Causey (2003, 225) argues that utopic spaces are "fraught with misunderstandings, tensions, and frustrations, as both parties attempt to dispel previous assumptions about their identities" emphasizing "difference" and strangeness. In tourist spaces, the tourate decides how to present its culture, mediating between what it finds important and the expectations of the tourist (Picard 1990). The interaction between tourist expectation and

tourate presentation creates an imaginary, a unified core fantasy built from an ethos of shared concepts, which is often linked to “ ‘myths’—traditional explanatory stories” (Salazar and Graburn 2014, 3). These imaginaries are often connected with official national discourses of identity so that tourism serves a political purpose stimulating pride in imagined national histories (Salazar 2010, 130):

...the more globalization ... homogenizes habits and landscapes all around the world, the more whatever is available of the past tends to be iconicized as a symbol for national identification and, in touristic terms, as a unique sight (Peleggi 1996, 445; cf. Salazar 2010, 132).

In Cambodia, classical dance performances are used as ideal tourist experiences to follow visits to the Angkorean temples. These provide an “authentic” taste of Cambodian culture while simultaneously connecting classical dance to perceived Angkorean roots (Winter 2007, 145-146). The international acknowledgement of the ancient dance tradition is a way to prove that Cambodian culture is resilient (Chheang 2008, 285-287).

Located within the utopic neutral spaces where the tourist and tourate interact, cultural imaginaries and ideologies are constructed in the borderzone, making it a key area for analysis (cf. Bruner 2005). Yet scholars’ have noted that some assertions in the borderzone framework proposed by Bruner were not fully developed. For example, Nash (2000, 31) notes that:

One often has to take Bruner’s generalizations on faith...though he portrays the “borderzone” he is studying as “contested” we learn little about the variation in meanings within each of the parties involved.

Bruner (2005, 18) discusses how the engagement between the tourists and tourate results in a “contested” and “evolving” borderzone. But as Nash points out, Bruner never identifies what is being questioned in the borderzone or the different positions that might

be disputed. Additionally, as mentioned at the opening of the chapter, Jules-Rosette and Bruner (1994, 404) suggest that touristic boundaries are fluid and that the tourist encounters a moving border zone. But Bruner (2005, 17) later focuses on a localized borderzone, perhaps a shift from his earlier attention to mobility. Further examination of Bruner's borderzone also raises questions. For example, Bruner (2005, 18) writes, "Each group knows its part in the touristic drama." He cautions that without the players conforming to the appropriate roles, tourism will decline in an area. In the same paragraph, however, he argues, "the roles are not fixed" and that they are achieved as the tourists and locals "engage in a coproduction...[an] ever shifting, contested borderzone engagement." How can a borderzone be both moving and "localized in space" (Bruner 2005, 17)? How can it be both reliant on the actors knowing their roles, and not have fixed roles?

Beyond further clarification of these ideas, my research suggests that Bruner's concept of the borderzone can be expanded to be applicable to a wider array of tourism contexts. This particularly is apparent in his discussion of the position of the tourate. Bruner (2005, 192) visualizes "the natives" breaking out of their "normal routines to meet the tourists...to display themselves and their cultures for the tourists' gaze and for sale." This may make sense at certain tourist destinations. But in Siem Reap, for example, where tourism is the dominant industry, touristic space is deeply engrained in the everyday life of the population. From free dance shows in markets to elite private performances, neither tourists nor the tourate in Cambodia can avoid some engagement with intangible cultural tourism, even if they only see images of dancing apsaras in

advertisements. Bruner (2005, 192) writes that the tourists “are always ‘there,’ but are always in motion,” In contrast to the tourist who step out of their normal lives and into the borderzone to work and out of it when work is over. In the Cambodian case, however, the tourist in Siem Reap is always there in the borderzone as well, because the borderzone has become a part of every day life.

The notion of scale also is problematic in Bruner’s conceptualization of the borderzone. In (2005, 193), he refers to the borderzone as a “site for the invention of culture on a massive scale.” While borderzones might have the generative potential to promote large-scale symbolic emergence, it seems from his case studies and those of scholars that used his framework that these cultural innovations are found on a smaller scale (that may have the potential to increase in size). At the Out of Africa Sundowner in Tanzania, Maasai warriors become benign and friendly as they dance with elite tourists and sing “Hakuna Matata” to create an American image of Africa (Bruner 2005, 84-86). But this image is localized to a specific moment and space, not a change on a massive scale. The same is true at Manyallaluk Cultural Tours in Australia where a cardboard kangaroo becomes symbolic of the Aboriginal Australia life in the bush for both tourists, who fail when trying to throw spears at it, and the aboriginal people, who become epitomized as closer to nature for their ability to hit the cardboard cutout (Tonnaer 2010, 28). The decisions of Tribal Tours—a company specializing in providing tourist experiences for Alaska natives—to challenge the tourist’s nostalgic gaze in the borderzone similarly denotes innovation on a smaller scale (cf. Bunten 2011, 61-63).²³¹

The final generalization in the conceptualization of Bruner's borderzone discussed here is the idea that when the boundaries become blurred the construction of the desired cultural imaginary may not work well. Bruner (2005, 18) writes that when participants in the tourism activity don't adhere to their "part in the touristic drama...tourism declines." He also describes times when tourists "break through the bubble" as moments when the constructed event is unsuccessful (Bruner, 2005, 98). My research indicates that these border transgressions can either heighten or detract from tourist experience. While the imaginary may not be the one expected, it doesn't follow that the construction is unsuccessful (cf. Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011, 1-26). Bruner (2005, 19) suggests that in the up-scale tourism that he describes, the piercing of the boundary rarely occurs, but he points to several moments both on the side of the tourist and the tourate when it does. For example, he points to a Maasai waiter, who suddenly began dancing like a warrior, and tourists, who passed villages of extreme poverty that were not intended sites for their engagement (Bruner 2005, 90, 98). Bruner writes that the waiter was "out of place" and that the tourists witnessing poverty were "very disturbed" and some felt "ashamed" to have spent so much money while the villagers had so little. Certainly the intended constructed imaginary was not achieved in these cases, but these incidents of border crossings illuminate the improvisational nature of play in the borderzone and how these encounters can lead to the emergence of new cultural imaginaries. This also occurred in Cambodian dance tourism where brief interactions and kinesthetic experiences across these borderzones at dinner-dance shows challenge the roles designed for event participants.

The borderzone remains a useful metaphor for locating “encounter culture” in tourism experiences, particularly when the concept is framed as a mobile, fluid boundary that can generate small-scale cultural innovations (cf. Tonnaer 2010, 28). The borderzone then is a place where cultural boundaries become porous and where encounters lose their connection with locality. I agree with Anke Tonnaer (2010) that encounter is key to understanding the innovative possibilities of tourism, but I argue that this requires conceptualizing the borderzone as untethered from localities. Instead, touristic borderzones should be considered extensions of the individual boundaries of the tourist and tourate that overlap to form a border of exchange. This is similar to Michael Di Giovine’s (2014, 150) notion of a “ ‘field’ of production” in which “all parties in the touristic experience simultaneously produce, receive and reproduce [constructed] imaginaries.” The field here is a borderzone field, and the production in this space occurs through the “ludic recombination of familiar patterns” in new configurations that are characteristic of Victor Turner’s (1987, 170) conceptualization of play.

My reformulation here establishes a more flexible and dynamic borderzone that allows for creative, improvised innovations and takes into account individual expectations, assumptions, and experiences in all facets of tourism (cf. Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011). My work on classical dance production in the tourism industry in Cambodia is a useful counterpoint for thinking about the inconsistencies and potential expansion of the metaphoric borderzone because like Bruner (2005, chapters 1-2 and 7), I explore the constructed imaginaries at different types of staged tourism performances.

Kulen II: A Buffet Dinner-Dance Show

Kulen II management designed this buffet dinner-dance show venue to function as a classic tourist performance space with a sharp demarcation between the front stage and back stage areas that limits interpersonal interactions between the tourate and the tourist (see Figure 59).²³² There is a rigid structuring behind the design of the venue, both in terms of the physical layout and the organized activities (eating, performing, serving, photographing). However, presentation choices by the management and performers and the experiences, visual and visceral (kinesthetic) of the participants at the site allow for the construction of a neutral borderzone where playful engagement generates an imagined touristic reality of Cambodia—a “play at Reality” that can influence the real (cf. Cohen 1985, 294).

A natural breeze was the only similarity between the nature reserve Phnom Kulen and its namesake, the constructed performance space at Koulen Restaurant, housed in an open-air pavilion.²³³ Phnom Kulen National Park is a sacred hilly area 50 km away from the famed Angkor Wat. The first capital of the Angkorean Era, it features *kbal spien*, a bridge of stones carved in the shape of lingam, and other archaeological sites. More recent constructions include the 16th century Wat Preah Ang Chup with a massive reclining Buddha. The reserve includes jungles that provide rare tropical fruits, a conservation center for biodiversity, and a waterfall that is rumored to have purifying properties and is a favorite destination of domestic tourists. While the owner borrowed the name from the famed location of the origin of the Angkorean civilization, the stage set is more reminiscent of the Bayon temple, featuring a replica of the four faces carved

onto the towers of the temple's second tier. Artificial vines emerge from the top of the stage and drip down the face from the Bayon alluding to the age of the Angkorean temples. The use of the Bayon as opposed to the ruins of Phnom Kulen that are not as well known to tourists creates an imaginary connection for the audience between the dance performance and Cambodia's ancient history (see Figures 39, 60).

Colloquially called Kulen II, Koulen Restaurant can accommodate 500 guests a night and frequently books close to that number in the high tourism season. The restaurant is often recommended by hotels as a place to see classical dance and is popular among large international tour groups that are bused in to the venue. The performers arrive at around the same time as the tourists but are kept largely separated from them with the exception of the photo-op scheduled at the end of each performance. Dancers and musicians enter the back stage through a side door reserved for their use (see Figure 59). This space houses costumes, props, and incense for rituals and is rarely breached even by management and staff.²³⁴ The strict demarcation created by venue management where the artists were sequestered from both staff and tourists added to the 'otherness' of the performers, giving them an ethereal, mysterious quality to viewers (cf. Picard and Di Giovine 2014, 1-7). In conjunction with the Angkorean visual cues (in some cases the dancers physically entered the stage through doors cut into the temple stage set) the separation promoted the nostalgic image of ancient apsaras from the temples coming to life for the tourist performance.

While the boundary between manager/wait staff, tourist, and performer was highly structured, the performance itself offered flexibility for the artists. Manager Mam

Si Hak explained that the artists knew best how to portray Cambodia through dance and so they were given the authority to present the work on their own terms.²³⁵ Their cultural capital, their expertise as dancers with at least some level of training, was recognized by the management in this way. Performers were given more artistic freedom and there was an element of surprise in each performance, a benefit for the few audience members who attended regularly.²³⁶ As a result, the dancers had some control over their own objectification, making them feel empowered. The potential alienation that performers might feel from the art form and from their own bodies was diffused by the ability to choose performance pieces based on their desires of the moment (see Chapter Two). But the show always ended the same way.

Dancer Suon Somphors noted that the only classical dance that was performed every night was Apsara Dance because it was both a management requirement and a tourist expectation.²³⁷ For the last piece of the night then, Apsara Mera emerged from an opened doorway in the replicated temple structure. The image of the apsara dancer was thus entwined with the Angkorean temples in this tourist production. Although the stage creates a barrier between the tourists and the performers, making direct interpersonal connection impossible, visual and embodied interaction between the two groups occurs in these spaces. The example below demonstrates how the tourate and tourists may be engaging in different physical activities, they still engage with one another through these visual, auditory, and kinesthetic relationships in the borderzone field.

On stage, six heavenly courtesans join Apsara Mera in shades of blue and red and they meander along the stage in a line alluding to the image of the mythical sea serpent—

a key figure in Cambodian mythology. A flower is held delicately in each dancer's right hand, the right arm positioned in front of the chest. Each left arm alternates between being bent and placed near the front of the hip with fingers curving back toward the forearm and the arm stretched to the back with hyper-extended elbows, wrist bent upward, index-finger and thumb pressed together, and the other fingers fanned out reaching toward the floor. The flashing lights of digital cameras and cellphones and the red lights of video-recorders alert the performers to the fact that they have become icons of their culture (see Figure 61).

In the audience, many tourists glanced intermittently at the performance distracted by the sounds of people eating, drinking, talking, and getting more food. Some are half engaged with the performance, some don't seem to care what occurs on the stage, others are engrossed, trying the hand gestures for themselves—a sign of engaged interaction—or getting up to find the most advantageous angles from which to document their experience in a way that they can take home (see Figure 62). At times the staff has to intervene to solve disputes between tourists. For example, when engrossed in their own playful experience and the desire to bring a piece of it home with them, one tourist lunged forward and infringed into the viewing space of a second tourist's table disrupting the second tourist's experience of the event.²³⁸ These disparate touristic engagements with and experiences of the venue generate a part of the borderzone.

The quality of the borderzone was not only affected by the ever-mobile tourists, but by the tourate as well. Even as they perform, the dancers take in the audience reactions. The lights in the entire venue are always on so although the stage lights are

brighter, the dancers have no trouble seeing the audience reactions as they perform. Many dancers including Suon Somphors and Kim Sophors bask in the camera flashes and recording. Kim Sophors worked at a tourism agency making over US\$200, but she continued performing at Kulen II because she loved the experience of sharing her culture with the audience.²³⁹ On the other hand, dancer Kong Srey No felt somewhat disenfranchised by the tourism industry.²⁴⁰ She loved dance and sharing her culture, but the context in which she performed left her feeling undervalued and unappreciated. For her the clinking of glasses was loud and the cameras were not flashing often enough. She said, “I don’t care if they eat and drink as long as I get paid” but then said, “*Khnhom chang chhorpp roam* (I want to stop dancing), they [the management and tourists] don’t care about us.”

As soon as Apsara Dance ended tourists were invited to get up on the stage to take pictures with the dancers, the only moment of direct interaction between tourist and artist (see Figure 63). For the dancers this moment is particularly important. Kong Srey No perked up when discussing the topic saying that this portion of the evening makes her “extremely happy.”²⁴¹ In Suon Somphors words:²⁴²

Ke cholchett thatroub cheamuoy neak roam chraen bek (They like to take pictures with the dancers a lot)... I like it because they have an interest in Cambodia and come here once, then they take pictures to take home and remember us. In their home they look at them, they show their friends and family look these are Cambodian dancers and we took pictures with them.

As soon as tourists take their pictures, they disperse back to tour buses, ramourks, or nearby hotels. Many move on to the night market to buy souvenirs or to go to a club or bar. The performers disperse just as quickly. When the last tourist has taken their photo

they bring their palms together and bend their knees once more to show their appreciation for the audience and file off of the stage. A few tourists linger over drinks as the wait staff begins to break down the dining area for the night. Within minutes of their exit, the dancers have stripped off their costumes, put on street clothes, and departed through the side door to hop on motorbikes and travel home. They are so completely transformed that when they encounter tourists who have seen the show, they are unrecognizable. The demarcated space between tourist and performer is very successful. For example, one evening I ran into a male dancer who came up to talk to me on the street after the performance. A tourist who had just left the show noticed and said, “he wants to know if you need a ride,” assuming that the performer was a ramourk driver.

As an anthropologist I also affected borderzone construction and tourist and tourate experience (cf. Simoni and McCabe 2008, 174-175). The dancers, for example, looked forward to seeing me back stage before performances and if I was unable to attend when I was expected, the dancers would get upset. My presence indicated an interest in their work beyond the casual momentary notice of the tourists with their photos, an enhanced validation of their symbolic import. For the tourists, a conversation with the anthropologist was frequently, and unsurprisingly, a moment to find out “the truth” about the dance practice, but interactions sometimes went beyond this. Two male tourists from Spain, for example, were seated next to me on August 14, 2012.²⁴³ As the performance ended one of the men snickered as he watched the tourists take photos and then looked thoughtful, “Do they have to take pictures with the tourists every night?” he asked.²⁴⁴ His question was striking for two reasons. First, it demonstrated that his boundary did not

correlate with the larger borderzone created that evening. Second, he did not think of himself as a tourist, or at least as the same type of tourist as the photo-takers. This indicates the need to think of the borderzone as a more fluid field created through individual interpretation.

Kulen II management has been largely successful in constructing a rigidly structured tourist/tourate boundary with little space for interpersonal interaction. But there are still encounters through the visual, acoustic and kinesthetic gaze of individuals on both sides of the tourist/tourate divide. The management attempts to introduce the tourists to each dance through brief summaries announced between the dances providing some context for what they will see. They frame the event as an offshoot of the temple visits, a chance to see the culture born there set onto living beings. Many tourists actively viewed the performance, they physically moved to collect better photos, they sometimes attempted dance movements, and they frequently partook in the photo-op at the end of the performance—their chance to finally approach a living apsara. Many reported being confused by the classical dances, “the folk dances are easy to understand, I don’t really see a theme in the classical dances”²⁴⁵ one tourist explained, indicating that the announcements did not successfully carry their messages, perhaps lost in the cacophony of buffet sounds. Regardless, many still preferred the classical dance because of the “slow intricate movements and beautiful costumes.”²⁴⁶ From the point of view of management, the dancers played an active role in creating the image of Cambodian culture to be shown at the venue each night through their selection of some of the performance pieces. Generally the dancers chose dances that they enjoyed and allowed

themselves some variety. (In one case they changed the dance they had planned because I told them that I had seen it the night before.) The dancers also felt that they were symbolically representing the country through the photos that the tourists took home.

The interactions—interpersonal or observational—between the tourists and tourate demonstrate how the borderzone allows for the emergence of multiple imaginaries through encounter culture (cf. Tonnaer 2010). The imaginary intended by the management (following nationalist ideology) was to produce a direct connection between the dance and Angkor, to show how Cambodian cultural traditions are deeply rooted in the ancient past that most foreign tourists had come to experience. This was not, however, the imaginary that developed for most tourists. Regardless of the Angkorean-themed set, the majority of the tourists (like the woman discussed in the opening of the chapter) saw attendance at the event as a break from the intensity of the temples.²⁴⁷ Connections were not being made between Angkor and the classical dance form. For example, tourists commented that “the stories are really beautiful”²⁴⁸ and that they “aren’t the kind of thing we see on TV,” but no mention of the connection between dance and Angkor was ever made.²⁴⁹ Many of the dancers felt that the venue gave them a space to teach visitors (foreign or domestic) about Cambodian culture. Kim Sophors for example, said, “*pel phnhievtesachar mork meul yeung roam* (when the tourists watch us dance) they learn about our identity, our country.”²⁵⁰ Kong Srey No added, “a lot of visitors come to Cambodia, so it is good to perform for them...we want them to know about our culture.”²⁵¹ The dancers were able to contribute to the construction of a global Cambodian sense of identity, and at the same time the tourist imaginary created at the

borderzone affected the way they understood their own cultural traditions. The ideological connection between classical dance and Angkor also deeply affected the dancers, who all cited classical dance as Cambodia's most important art form because of this connection. The borderzone was constructed through the overlapping assumptions and experiences of the individuals involved in the encounter. Individual interpretations, (cf. Ness 2003) assumptions and experiences create personal boundaries that together form a borderzone field (cf. Di Giovine, 2014) that has different characteristics each night.

The Temple of Pub Street

Kulen II represented a highly structured type of tourism performance where the tourate sought to create a rigid boundary between the tourist and the tourate. At Temple Balcony—the club/restaurant mentioned at the beginning of the chapter—management attempted to create a similarly rigid boundary. However, the physical reality of the site led to the possibility of more fluid encounters between the tourist and tourate, which the management attempted to make up for in different ways. The upstairs restaurant/bar offered nightly performances between 7:30 and 9:30 pm. Recommended by the Lonely Planet Guide, bloggers, and several ramourk drivers, it was a go-to place both for smaller tour groups (~40 people) that were given a premier central table with unobstructed views, and tourists unaffiliated with tourist groups who happened to pass by. The audience at this show tended to be mainly European and American, but many Asian tourists also attended.

While Kulen II was promoted as a dinner-dance theater attraction, Temple Balcony was a club that happened to have traditional dancing every night. In contrast to Kulen II then, the average venue attendee might not intend to watch dance at all. Already this drastically altered the imagined construction of the space. As the restaurant name indicates, there also was an attempt to create a tourist imaginary that connects the venue to the temples at Angkor. At Temple Balcony, columns included vague motifs of etched floral patterns, inspired by the temples, but not alluding to any particular archaeological site. The stage was red with gold décor that was more reminiscent of a present day Buddhist temple than of Angkor. The setting invited more playful imaginative work on the part of the tourists and the performers. It inspired the viewer to contemplate the mysterious and ambiguous atmosphere. The demarcation between staged performance, lounge, and club was blurred. So too, was the demarcation between front and backstage. While there was a definite backstage area where performers change, costumes are stored, and incense burns, just like at Kulen II, at Temple Balcony this was a makeshift lean-to on the roof accessible only by walking through the front of restaurant (see Figures 64-67).²⁵²

The more relaxed atmosphere and more flexible boundaries increased the possibility of unexpected encounters between the tourist and the tourate. Yet the tourists and the tourate were expected to maintain their assigned roles regardless of extenuating circumstances. Additionally the management created structure at the Temple Balcony performance in other ways. On the wall to the right side of the stage there was a nightly schedule with specific times for music and each dance that was performed. This set list

was never altered in any way, so while the music pieces were undefined and changed at the whim of the musician, dancers performed the exact same set each night. The dancers descended to the stage area about two minutes before their dance and as the audience applauded they would disappear back up the stairs to prepare for the next offering. On some occasions the dancers made special preplanned trips to the audience, but these, too, were highly structured. On one occasion, Ouk Rany, the dancer who performed the lead in Apsara Dance, was scheduled to deliver a birthday cake to a man in a large tour group. That day she came down with laryngitis, and she didn't want to participate in the added activity.²⁵³ She wasn't feeling well and didn't want to get the tourist sick. A manager said, "*aun niyeay min ban* (You can't talk), but you don't need to. You only need to go downstairs and smile like an Apsara."²⁵⁴ In this case the desire to construct a particular imaginary was stronger than any considerations of health. The fact that the symbol of Apsara is that of a graceful, slender, silent, smiling woman was only enhanced in this moment.

Like Kulen II, a strict boundary was built between the tourate and the tourist. But the borderzone was disrupted at the end of each performance, when performers and tourists would interact during the photo opportunity. At Temple Balcony, the dancers stood in their most recently worn costume, used strategically in the performance so that at least two dancers remained in classical dance costumes, with one performer of Apsara Dance featured at the center of the stage. This moment of engagement was more fluid than that of Kulen II, perhaps because of the looser divide between the front and backstage areas.

Tourists from various parts of Asia often posed using the "peace sign." I have also seen them make a heart with their bodies for the photos. They generally thanked the artists before and after taking photos, complimenting their dancing skills. Americans and Europeans were more likely to attempt to converse with the dancers, to find out more about their life experiences. They were also more likely to attempt the dance gestures during these moments with varying degrees of seriousness. For some, yoga was close enough to the tourist experience of Cambodian performance that it was an acceptable alternate to the classical dance gestures—the high-lifted knees were also inspired by the engraved temples of Angkor (see Figure 67). Unlike Kulen II where tourist/tourate interpersonal interaction was exceedingly rare, at Temple Balcony the tourists might compliment a dancer or even ask the dancers for help.

While the dancers at Kulen II had more control over the structure of performance, the fluidity of this tourist/tourate boundary at temple balcony gave performers there a greater possibility of increasing their social capital by widening their global network, at least temporarily and through the stories they were able to tell their friends and family about their interactions with people from around the world (see Chapter Two). Ouk Rany once engaged with a group of female tourists when she taught them a mini-lesson in classical dance gestures, so they could execute them properly for the camera. These moments of interaction also provided a glimpse into another cultural realm. When the tourists imitated the dancers, performers felt they had bridged cultural gaps, and they felt empowered by the audience's appreciation of the movement style, particularly when they were spontaneously asked to teach audience members. This experience served to flip, at

least for a moment, the power dynamics between tourate and tourist, giving performers more power over their presentations of self.

Artists also received undesirable attention during these photo opportunities. Pietra, a classical dancer who had trained at the School of Art, Siem Reap, told me that male tourists tried to hug or even kiss the dancers, an act that is considered inappropriate in Cambodia, where touching the opposite sex in public is not generally acceptable. Pietra explained that when this occurred she would handle it by saying “No sir, no sir, no sir.” She discussed further, “How does it make me feel? *Khnhom min mean aarorm khoeng te* (I don’t feel angry)—I feel anxious (*phay*). They are strange men, and they want to kiss us and then maybe later hit us. I don’t even like to go out late and hang out with friends.”²⁵⁵ Clearly she was wary of being objectified and exoticized, discussing both physical violence and potential damage to her reputation. She also discussed the potential dangers of riding her bicycle alone at night after work. Performers at Kulen II categorically denied that such incidents occurred at their venue. For example, Suon Somphors said, “a tourist has never touched me, *pel khnhom roam neou leu chhak khnhom keu chea apsara mneak* (when I am on stage I am an apsara) and they know to respect that.”²⁵⁶ It seems that the relaxed boundaries allow for play of both a positive (learning steps) and negative (uninvited touching) nature.

Similarly to Kulen II, on occasion I caused a breakdown of the touristic borderzone at Temple Balcony where the dancers had to walk through the restaurant to leave after their performance. Generally, they would walk quietly and quickly in front of the stage. Without their elaborate costumes and with faces cleaned of makeup, they

generally went unnoticed by the tourists. However, Hoy Sovan (see Chapter Three) was very outgoing and didn't like leaving the restaurant without chatting with me, even if I was talking to tourists about their experiences of the performance. At first she would tell a waiter that she wanted to talk to me, knowing that she wasn't really supposed to cross the boundary and show the tourists her true persona. Later she became more confident about this and would approach me as I talked to tourists, but only when at least one woman was in the group of tourists. On these occasions I became a temporary guide and interpreter as tourists asked her questions about dance training and offered compliments on her performance. In one case, a female tourist asked if she could get dressed up in one of the classical dance costumes and pose for photos. Sovan agreed to help the tourist with this and they set a time to meet before the show the next evening.²⁵⁷

The somewhat relaxed structure of the performance at Temple Balcony permitted a more playful borderzone in which the managing staff seemed to be fighting for control (as in the example of Ouk Rany bringing cake and laryngitis to a guest). This borderzone emerged because the overlap of individual experiences at the site creates a field that makes more space for direct interaction than at the highly structured Kulen II. Even though there is a borderzone, for many engaged in the encounter culture of the site, the flexibility of the field allows for increased improvisation and innovation whether positive or negative.

Experiencing the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class as a Tourist Site

The difficulty with experience...is that we can only experience our own life, what is received by our own consciousness. We can never know completely another's experiences, even though we

have many clues and make inferences all the time (Bruner 1986, 5).

In the case studies thus far, I have argued that the touristic borderzone field is made up of what I have called boundaries that surround individuals who participate in activities at tourist sites like Angkor Wat and Pub Street, and at tourist venues like Kulen II creating a borderzone that is constantly shifting and fluid. Earlier I proposed that the individual boundary is created through the assumptions and expectations that individuals have of the sites as well as of their experiences. Methodologically and analytically speaking this creates a conundrum. As Bruner (2011, 200) has argued, “the scholar has little access to the tour as objectively lived and no access to the tour as experienced.” While I have used clues observed and comments recorded to make the most logical inferences possible about the experiences and expectations of individuals involved in tourism events, they are just that—well thought out inferences. In this chapter’s final example I go beyond inference through a personal experience of encounter in the touristic borderzone. In this example I became part of the tourate when I performed classical dance for tourists visiting the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class. Later I had the role of a tourist and then a role as guide, so I was able to cross the borderzone in several capacities.²⁵⁸

On January 29, 2012, I was sitting on the side of Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) Classical and Folk Dance Class classroom in Phnom Penh watching the dancers get ready to demonstrate a dance for a small tourist group when I overheard an alarming conversation.²⁵⁹ “Shouldn’t Celia perform in this dance?”

asked one of the senior students in CLA's Classical and Folk Dance Class in Phnom Penh. They were performing neary chea chour—a classical dance about a beautiful young girl—I knew it fairly well, but I was far from good at the dance, and I had never been asked to perform when there were tourists visiting. I would either sit with the dancers who weren't demonstrating so I could see both the “performers” and the tourists or I would practice the dance on the side of the room with other less skilled students. Panic began to set in. Could I perform adequately? Would I forget the steps and make the teacher look foolish? Would my performance somehow detract from the experience or expectations of the visitors? I breathed a sigh of relief when the teacher, Neak Kru Thyda, said “No, no.” Only to feel my pulse quicken when she said, “*Soriya* [my nickname] *ning roam* (will dance) *kbach baat yak* (the basic gestural vocabulary of the giant role) she performs yak better.”

Why the sudden interest in having me perform for the tourists after being in Siem Reap for nearly two months? This encounter with tourism really emerged from what Urry (1990, 100-102) refers to as post-tourist's desire to be taken back stage and engage in self-reflexive touristic experiences. As a reaction to this burgeoning desire, workshops, classes, and training observation had been gaining popularity in Cambodia's cultural tourism industry. These activities give tourists more immersive sensory experiences and at least the illusion of the deconstruction of cultural boundaries. While what Cohen (1985, 293-294) would term experiential tourists have visited dance schools to observe training for many

years, the development of these activities for the recreational tourist in Cambodia was just beginning in 2011 and 2012.

CLA was a front-runner of this trend. Rather than constructing a connection between Angkor and classical dance like Kulen II and Temple Balcony, CLA was interested demonstrating the living traditions of Cambodia. What better way to do this than to bring tourists to watch the dancers train? In 2010 and 2011, they worked with a consultant to develop more sustainable tourism practices at the arts classes they supported. The new model was designed to alleviate the stress that surprise visits had on the arts classes, decrease class disruption, and help make the donation system more transparent. It allowed tourists to sign up for one of a number of observational options that would allow the tourist to experience the training without disrupting the flow of the class. On that day in 2012, I became a part of testing this new sustainable tourism experience when my parents, who were visiting for two weeks, and a new CLA staff member and her parents were among the first tourists to sample the new program.²⁶⁰

I arrived on time for rehearsal at Sala Sothearos²⁶¹— just after 8:00 am. The class began as if it was a normal day. We stretched and then practiced the Kbach Baat and a sequence of warm-ups for performing folk dances, the monkey role, and the giant role. Before the tour group arrived, the long classroom was divided into two sections, one group practicing a folk dance, the other on the side practicing a classical dance. Competing rhythms pervaded the classroom.

At 10:00 am the group of tourists arrived along with a guide who worked at CLA. As they passed the heaping pile of flip-flops left by students who were in the throws of practice, the guests were instructed to remove their shoes and sit in small chairs with their backs to the open-aired windows of the schoolroom. The atmosphere of the space changed. Regular instruction stopped the moment the tourists arrived, and all the students (including myself) quickly retreated to the south side of the classroom to await instructions, just like we had in the past when tourists or other visitors paid a surprise visit. The classroom had transformed from a space of instruction into a performance hall. The goal of limiting the intrusion of the tourism did not seem to be realized.

This was the moment, when Neak Kru Thyda quickly called for the intermediate and beginner students to demonstrate neary chea chour, that I found out I would be expected participate in the demonstration of kbach baat yak. With a word from the teacher, the dancers knew exactly where to stand and which dance to perform (see Figure 68). After neary chea chour and monkey dance, it was time for kbach baat yak. I got in line behind the male dancers, but Neak Kru Thyda pulled me to the front row. I whispered, “Neak Kru, I am not sure of all of the steps, I think it would be better if I could follow the other students.” She responded, “Don’t worry, you can still see them on either side of you. You have to be in the front where your parents can take pictures of you.”

I tried to position myself slightly behind the other students so that I could follow them when I got lost (see Figure 69). In front of me the tourists sat,

cameras in hand as I waved my imaginary staff and quickly moved forward, my toes curled, knees bent, spine sharply flexed forcing my stomach forward while my shoulders and hips stayed parallel. I worked hard to both remember the sequence of gestures and keep the other dancers in my peripheral vision. The dance seemed to drag on, as I lifted one leg so that my thigh was raised to the side perpendicular to my hip and my knee bent at a 90-degree angle, my foot was flexed and turned out with my toes arched, followed by the other leg. When the dance ended it had been a blur of strained muscles, facing different corners of the room and creating different patterns in space. The tourists applauded, and I returned to the comfort of the sidelines.

This wasn't the first time that I had performed, even in Cambodia (I had been asked to sing Christmas Carols with dancers before they performed, and I had served as an announcer a few times in Siem Reap). But this was the first time that I had performed classical dance for tourists. I felt anxious about the possibility of disappointing my teachers, both Neak Kru Thyda who had so graciously opened her overcrowded classroom for me to learn and conduct research and Neak Kru Sophiline who had determined that I had the most potential in the giant role.²⁶² I also felt that I had cheated. I hadn't really known all of the steps and had been following the other dancers. I simultaneously experienced guilt in my inability to fully transform into the symbol of Cambodian culture and proud that my performance afforded some semblance of the cultural traditions. Clearly the teacher asked me to perform so that I would have the

opportunity to show my parents what I had learned (I had never performed in this manner when visitors had been at the class). But this didn't change my experience of performing. It made no difference that there were only five tourists, two of whom were my parents. I felt that my performance was inadequate, not because I wasn't Khmer, or because my technique wasn't up to par (we were all students), but because I didn't know all of the steps. It didn't feel like I was in a dance class, it felt like a performance and I wondered, "How can I properly represent Cambodian culture?"

While I felt disingenuous in my representation of the culture, neither the other dancers nor the tourists had this reaction. For the dancers and the teacher, it was very important that my parents have the opportunity to see my progress. From their perspective, you eventually had to perform, to share what you know, and the classroom was a safe space to engage in this practice. I didn't have to worry about a costume, makeup, or lighting, and I had after all been recorded on a video with them doing the kbach baat and practiced in the back when other guests attended the class in the past. To them, having guests and turning dance class into a quasi-performance didn't mean that it wasn't still a learning environment.

The tourists on the other hand were surprised. When they arrived and within the constructed setting, I sat with the students, but I seemed more of an observer. They were not expecting me to be asked to dance, particularly right in the front. My mother reported that she was impressed by how well I was able to execute the steps even though she noticed several mistakes. She also felt

responsible for capturing the moment in photos. She thought, “How often will you have the opportunity to have photos of you dancing in Cambodia? Here is the opportunity, and I am the one who has to deliver the pictures.” My mother didn’t have many preconceived expectations about what the experience would be like, although she didn’t think it was going to be quite so similar to a performance (she expected more instruction from the teachers). My father had a different reaction, which stemmed from different expectation. He expected a dance class with “a lot of pauses to make corrections.” He didn’t expect to see a full dance all the way through (see Figure 70). For him the entire event was confusing and my participation was rather unsettling. He later said, “I tried to look at everyone but you dancing...I had come to see Cambodians learning Cambodian dance, not you dancing.” For my father, the construction of this particular tourist imaginary was disruptive. The viewing of the Cambodian “other” came to close to the self. He explained, “I wondered if they were going to make us get up and dance.” Unfortunately, as I performed the kbach baat yak I was so engrossed in the performance that I was unable to observe reactions and expressions of the other family. My mother reported that they were surprised to see me dance and equally surprised that an American had learned to dance so well. Similar to the dancers’ and teacher’s reactions, my dancing showed that although I made mistakes I had achieved some level of technical ability.

This experience, this moment of being the tourate performer, was complemented by the question-and-answer period when the visitors were invited

to ask the students and the teacher's questions about the rehearsal. Neak Kru Thyda and I moved to the front of the room and sat with the tourists at that point so that we could better hear the questions, and the teacher was in a better position to answer questions and encourage the students to chime in. The students arranged themselves in rows and sat spread out in the classroom facing us. For a while I sat and listened to the responses, becoming a momentary tourist, but Neak Kru Thyda was growing increasingly frustrated with the translations. The tour guide was new to Cambodian Living Arts and not yet familiar with the programs and this made it difficult for her to accurately respond to all of the questions. Neak Kru Thyda leaned in to me and whispered, "You understand these questions. Can you help translate?" I asked, "Are you sure?" and she nodded. At this point I took over the lead when a translation was required. Moving from performer to tourist to guide, I was able to experience multiple roles in the tourism industry.

My personal experience here emphasizes the fluidity of the borderzone in the tourist experience. My movements through different roles also affected the tourists' experience of the event. They were surprised when I became a performer and possibly (with the exception of my father) even more startled when I became part of the question and answer session. My mother was surprised that I spoke up because she thought I would never insert myself into an ongoing tourism event. My father was the only one who had seen me conversing with the teacher just before I spoke. One tourist's question stood out: the mother of the new NGO staff

member asked “Is this what classes are normally like?” When I helped explain that it was more like a dress rehearsal and describe the normal flow of the classes, she requested that the students show some of the opening stretches and exercises (see Figure 71). It was apparent that the event did not meet with the expectations of seeing a class.

The new hire at the NGO and I were not tourists. By extension, our parents weren't in the same category as other tourists. As dance student and ethnographer, I became part of the tourate when I was asked perform for the tourists and then to answer questions and help with translations. Because the tourism program was in its infancy, I also was asked to get feedback from the tourists to strengthen their experience. They expressed a desire to see more of an actual class, not as much of a performance. They felt their intrusion into the classroom space and hadn't expected the breakdown of the session for their benefit. The act of converting the classroom to a performance space reconstructed the tourist/tourate boundary in a way that detracted from the observation of the training session. Expectations were not met in the touristic borderzone, threatening the success of the event.

Conclusion

The three 'E's, expectation, experience, and encounter, are the foundation for my rethinking of Bruner's (2005) touristic borderzone. I agree with Bruner that a borderzone is found in the neutral gaps and spaces that generate an imagined touristic reality through the playful engagement of tourists and tourism producers. But his formulation of the

borderzone is too general. As Di Giovine (2014, 151) has argued, touristic imaginaries are a “constantly deepening, individually instantiated mix of remembered narratives and images that serve to inform an object or place’s meaning.” This means that grouping participants into tourist and tourism producer (or tourist and tourate) simplifies the understanding of the touristic imaginary. When the teachers and our group went to Temple Balcony, they were neither tourists nor tourate at the time, but they weren’t quite local bystanders either because they had both performed for tourists in other contexts and had trained some of the dancers. Their ambiguous position challenged the expected roles at tourist sites as much as the ethnographer/performer/guide, or the NGO worker/tourist, or the parents of ethnographer/tourists at the CLA dance class observation. The expectations and experiences of each of these individuals will reflect their personal positionality and influence the created tourist imaginary.

Rather than viewing the borderzone as immobile, set at the site of tourist/tourate interaction, I propose that it is constructed through the overlap of the individual boundaries of tourists at the site creating a field that is constantly changing and through which the touristic imaginary is built. The boundary is where individuals, whether tourist or tourate, are negotiating their assumptions, expectations, and experiences, and for the performers this can impact the composition of their corporeal economy. At Kulen II for example, Kong Srey No expects the tourists to behave respectfully to the dancers, but she can see that they are often disinterested, and she finds this demoralizing. At the same venue, Kim Sophors assumes that tourists come to the performance to seek a deeper understanding of the country, and she interprets the constant photography as an indication

that her assumption is true. Each of these interpretations leads to a differently constructed imaginary. On the tourist side moreover, one pair of tourists found the photography demeaning, something that the dancers had to endure and questioned the quality of the dancing. Another tourist who had dance training could kinesthetically comprehend the difficulty of the classical dance because of the extreme joint flexibility. Again, these disparate experiences and understandings created varying imaginaries. And these were developed without any interpersonal encounters between tourist and tourate.

The physical construction of the site—both the ‘stage set’ and the designed boundaries between tourist and tourate—also impacted tourist/tourate expectation, experience, and encounter. In Siem Reap, venue designers and the management attempted to create some kind of connection between Angkor and the dance venue, a reference to Cambodia’s national ideology. This was accomplished both through stage sets and through metaphorical connections. The name of most tourist venues, like Kulen II and Temple Balcony, reminded both tourist and performer of the connections between archaeological sites and the dance. Set design also foregrounded this connection, particularly at Kulen II with its replica of the Bayon. At CLA, staff attempted to demonstrate the connection between dance and cultural survival. Offering tourists the opportunity to observe a dance class—an unstructured space where tourists could peer into inner workings of cultural preservation rather than view the end result—reified ideological discourse regarding the resiliency of dance practices. Showing dance training demonstrates that the Khmer Rouge were not successful in their attempts to destroy Cambodian cultural practices. These deliberate structural designs are the only indication I

found that interactions at the borderzone can facilitate cultural innovation on a massive scale (cf. Bruner 2005, 192). And even as they play into ideological construction of the nation, there is little evidence that these inventions are generated in the borderzone; it is more accurate to say they are supported in the touristic borderzone (Chapters 1 and 3).

Tourist/tourate encounters in the borderzone did, of course, lead to cultural invention on a smaller scale, and since tourism is so widespread, when all of these inventions are compiled this could be interpreted as a massive potential. These encounters were heavily mediated by the constructions above and were dependent on personal innovation through playful engagement. The heavily constructed demarcation of Kulen II discouraged interpersonal interaction, but enhanced the ability to construct personal imaginaries for both tourist and tourate. Without being able to interact directly, tourism participants create vivid interpretations of the site that both align with and swerve away from the interpretation intended by management. The fluidity of Temple Balcony allowed for increased borderzone crossings. A lack of a definite back stage/front stage divide and the more relaxed atmosphere created the conditions for the potential breakdown of individual boundaries (even if they weren't desired). Rather than maintaining their intended roles, there were times when the tourists and tourate would slip out of their roles. While Bruner (2005, 18) felt this could make the tourism event less successful, at Temple Balcony this slippage allowed for a playfulness that heightened the experience—perhaps not to the transcendental liminal state of Turner's (1987, 25) performance—but certainly at a different level than that of the successfully rigid borderzone of Kulen II. These moments of interaction, direct or indirect, enhanced the

social capital of both performers and tourists creating fleeting connection that lived on through their affect on the participants' sense of self. In contrast, at the CLA dance class tourists expected a barrier to be created between class observer, class participant and guide. But what they experienced was the makeshift construction of a staged performance where the classroom became the stage, and the observation chairs became the audience. Further confounding expectations, all thought that the anthropologist would be in the observer category, when in fact the anthropologist was a performance participant and then a guide. As at Temple Balcony, the borderzone broke down, here because of the inconsistency between desired expectation and experience. While tourists still enjoyed the visit, the event was less successful because of the changes to the construction of the borderzone. The examples of Temple Balcony and the CLA dance class demonstrate how expectation, encounter, and experience can generate unanticipated touristic borderzone fields that can either lead to an equally successful, but qualitatively different touristic imaginary, or a less successful imaginary (as Bruner anticipated).

What I have described is similar to Tonnaer's (2010, 28) "encounter culture"—tourist encounters that are defined by performances of the self and the other in the borderzone. However, at least in her analysis of the encounter culture, this concept shares the generalizing tendencies of Bruner's tourism roles. The interpretations and encounters of tourism producers are reduced to tourist, local presenter, and cultural broker. I demonstrate that to fully understand the import of the borderzone's generative ability and what is being generated we need to tease out the roles of individuals within their larger tourism category and reimagine the borderzone to take into account the direct connection

between borderzone constructions and the individuals involved in its production. This analysis does require further research. As Jane Desmond (1999, 258) proposes, there needs to further research on how tourists interpret their own experience—and I would argue this extends to other individuals engaged in the tourism event as well. This step would deepen the analysis of the bodily experiences of all event participants. Also, while I have demonstrated the need to reimagine the borderzone as the overlapping boundaries of the individual tourists involved, the quality and construction of those boundaries was beyond the scope of my work and needs further investigation (cf. Desmond 1999, 265). Where do the expectations and assumptions of the tourism participants come from? What are the socio-political contexts and values that make up their understanding of the tourism event?

²²⁶ Kulen II is a dinner-dance show featuring a buffet and a program of six dances.

²²⁷ Tourist 4. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia July 1.

²²⁸ Apsara Dance, choreographed in 1962, is simply about the joy of the Apsaras as they find beautiful flowers in the garden. The gestures and costumes are inspired by the bas-reliefs on Angkor Wat. Ream Leak Choup Leak is an excerpt from the Reamker. It is the story of Rama's sons and their adventures in the forest. The date of choreography is unknown.

²²⁹ Andrew Causey (2003) proposes the term *tourate* to describe the people involved in tourism production in any capacity.

²³⁰ Tourist 4. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia July 1.

²³¹ Neither Tonnaer (2010) nor Bunten (2011) discuss the scale of the innovations taking place in these borderzone interactions, but both use the framework of the borderzone to examine the innovative and productive capacity of these touristic spaces.

²³² Even Smile of Angkor (Chapter Three) with its formal theater, has less separation. The dancers are in the lobby to greet tourists as they arrive and can be seen flitting in and out of the dining area to get ice cream and other treats before the performance.

²³³ The spelling inconsistency here stems from the transliteration of Khmer into the Roman alphabet. Because the national park spelling in Kulen, many refer to the restaurant as Kulen II (a second Kulen) as opposed to Koulen Restaurant.

²³⁴ The only time I ever saw a manager back stage was when I was escorted there by a manager the first time I was given access to the area.

²³⁵ Mam Si Hak. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 24.

²³⁶ One group of three attendees from Japan and Cambodia (living in Siem Reap) told me that they knew the owner and frequently brought both Khmer and Japanese friends to see the show (Tourist 30. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 26). A representative from CAO (Chapter Three) told me that he had been invited to several government events at Kulen II because it was used to demonstrate Cambodian culture to prospective investors (conversation over lunch, recorded field notes, February 24, 2012).

²³⁷ Soun Somphors. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 11.

²³⁸ An incident of this nature occurred during almost every performance that I was able to attend.

²³⁹ Kim Sophors. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 26.

²⁴⁰ Kong Srey No. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 19.

²⁴¹ Ibid

²⁴² Soun Somphors. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 11.

²⁴³ Toward the end of the research period (July and August 2012) the restaurant manager began to seat tourists with me. This allowed me to find out tourist impressions throughout the evening, but often restricted me from talking to larger groups, a limitation of this work. Management would not tell me if people were seated with me intentionally or if it was a space issue in the restaurant.

²⁴⁴ Tourist 23. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 14.

²⁴⁵ Tourist 1. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 25.

²⁴⁶ Tourist 11. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap Cambodia, July 10.

²⁴⁷ Tourist 4. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 1.

²⁴⁸ Tourist 1. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 25.

²⁴⁹ Tourist 23. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 14.

²⁵⁰ Kim Sophors. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 26.

²⁵¹ Kong Srey No. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap. Cambodia, August 19.

²⁵² See Tuchman-Rosta (2014) for a full description of Temple Balcony.

²⁵³ See Tuchman-Rosta (2014) for a discussion of Ouk Rany's experiences.

²⁵⁴ Taken from hand written field notes, August 16, 2012.

²⁵⁵ Pietra. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia August 6. (Interviewee asked to be referred to by first name only.) Comments like this one indicate that future research on the gendered dimension of tourism in Cambodia would further understanding of the situation of dancers working in the industry.

²⁵⁶ Soun Somphors. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 11.

²⁵⁷ Unfortunately this occurred on August 29, 2012 the last night I was able to visit Temple Balcony before returning to the United States on September 1, so I was unable to find out if the meeting occurred.

²⁵⁸ Valerio Simoni and Scott McCabe (2008; 173-189) explore the complex encounters that ethnographers have in borderzones, but the ethnographer as tourism performer was not a part of this discussion.

²⁵⁹ This is the class that serves as training for the Children of Bassac discussed in Chapter 2, who also performed at the National Museum on Thursdays (introduction).

²⁶⁰ CLA discontinued this program because it still disrupted the flow of the classes. The organization now organizes workshops and other experiences for tourists interested in a more immersive tourist experience.

²⁶¹ Sala Sothearos is a public high school that is used as a rehearsal space for CLA's Folk and Classical Dance Class and the Yike (opera) class on Sundays.

²⁶² Neak Kru Thyda began teaching me the giant role because Neak Kru Sophiline told me that it was more natural for my body and also allowed me to practice the role with her ensemble at the Khmer Arts Theater (see Chapter Four).

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This dissertation has documented the intersections between the experiences of Cambodia's classical dancers and the large-scale phenomenon that affect the dance form. It demonstrated how these phenomenon, such as tourism, globalization, and national policy are intertwined with ideological discourses that surround the art form in ways that trickle down to the corporeal economy and bodily labor of the dancers. The dissertation analyzed how the former court dance became an icon of heritage, a global commodity and a global representation of the Cambodian resiliency to articulate this process. Through engagement with different layers of global, national and local cultural policies that affect dance development and dancer experience, the dissertation developed an amalgamated theoretical framework to reveal the complexity of the dancers' corporeal economy.

The first two chapters documented this bodily economy by exploring the commoditization of Cambodia's classical dance practice (Chapter One) and the potential for the subsequent commoditization of the dancers body (Chapter Two) using historical and economic theoretical discourses. In Chapter One, I found that while many scholars focus on colonization and/or the aftermath of the civil war as the root of the commercial trend in the dance practice (both periods where the connections between the dance practice and non-ritual performance dramatically increased), the origins of the process have a much deeper history. Even in the Angkorean period, considered by many to be the origins of the dance form as a ritual practice, dancers were given expensive gifts and

farmland, an indication that while the genre may have been exclusively used for ritual practice, economic compensation for the dancer's labor has never been out of the ordinary. While early forms of compensation were different in character, they laid the groundwork for future developments introduced the colonial era, the turmoil of war in the 1970s, the isolation caused by Vietnamese interventions in the 1980s, and most recently the growth of the tourism industry. I found that accessibility, both for practitioners and for audiences, also factored into the commoditization of the cultural practice. These changes to the demographics of dance practitioners and dance audiences are more recent and result more directly from Cambodia's Civil War. Many dancers fled the country and training occurred in refugee camps and diasporic communities around the world. After the war, the ideological communism of the Heng Samrin government in the 1980s required that the general public have access to these practices.

Chapter Two demonstrated that the commodification of cultural practices and movement practices requires a transformation in the way that the economy is imagined. The chapter develops the concept of the "corporeal economy." This economy, which incorporates labor on and off stage and the value of that labor in different forms of capital (economic, cultural, and social), is necessary to understand issues of preservation and development of classical dance. The expansion on Wacquant's (2004) concept of the corporeal economy articulated the intense, often un-compensated, labor that goes into dance production before the final performance, the flexible nature of this labor as dancers work to gain increased opportunities, and the varying forms of capital that they can access. It used the Cambodian Living Arts Folk and Classical Dance Class's participation

at different events in Phnom Penh to demonstrate this point. At the bank opening, the dancers labored for hours prior to the performance without a salary, yet they gained both symbolic and social capital through their work (cf. Bourdieu [1977] 2013). They represented the country at an international event, which was supported by the Chinese Embassy, increasing their prestige and expanding their social network because the dancers were able to make connections, however brief, with artists from China. The case demonstrated how the social gains to some degree made up for the additional labor costs of rehearsal.

Chapter Two also documented how the hyper-commodification of classical dance affects practitioners' lives. Like Kopytoff (1986), Appadurai (1986), and Stone et al. (2000), the dissertation employed a broad view of commodity that includes the commoditization of services (including performance) and, as a result, commodification of the body. This commodification is demonstrated at the Cambodian Cultural Village where a daily schedule of performances in the ethnic theme park has been created for touristic consumption. In this space the dancer's corporeal economy is routinized and objectified. While economic capital seemed to be the primary goal of work at the cultural village (where it is possible for choreographers to make US\$400 a month), I found that the work empowered some dancers including Kea and Sophea. Sophea felt a connection with modernity and independence, throwing off what she perceived to be the shackles of traditional family life. Kea was able to continue work well into her pregnancy with the possibility of returning to work after having the baby, a reversal of the traditional performer's life where family meant the end of work. The chapter found that economic

capital was important, and dancers experienced ambivalent feelings about the way they were displayed in performance, but their labor also provided a measure of control over their own bodies.

Together, Chapter One and Chapter Two documented how the commodification of the dance practice as a whole translates into demands of intense labor and bodily discipline for practitioners. While the labor of preparing for and subsequently performing in events often outpaced the fiscal compensation received and precluded the dancers from the sort of livelihood that they witnessed among their audiences, this work was met with a combination of rewards that include financial, social, and cultural gain. The work also gave artists the opportunity to explore their modernity. The dancers maintained some elements of control over how they decide to use their bodies to gain desired capital. At the same time, I found that the dancers became physical living embodiments of Cambodian cultural heritage that Cambodia aims to display because their bodies were commoditized for performance events.

The subsequent two chapters documented the relationship between discourses of cultural heritage and cultural policy, and how these had the potential to impact classical dance practitioners. Chapter Three demonstrated how the recovery from war led to increased international interest in the dance form, particularly through its recognition by UNESCO as a representative of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. It proposed that paradoxes and conundrums embedded in intangible heritage discourse noted by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) and Alivizatou (2011)— for example, that the concept of heritage itself is modern (developing in the second half of the 20th century),

and yet it seeks to find roots in tradition. I found that these paradoxes affected the dancers corporeal economies on a variety of levels.

The tension between tradition and modernity that appear in heritage discourse lead to further contention surrounding the practice of traditional arts and heritage development policies, placing stress on the dancers and their bodies. First, according to the UNESCO directives, representatives of intangible heritage are living traditions, a mandate that should result in increased attention to the practitioners' creativity and their needs. However, because the practice is perceived as a foundational aspect of the nation's identity, the directive often results in the dancers becoming conduits for the heritage that they present and represent. The heritage has had a way of taking over the living bodies of the dancers, since policies tend to focus on the form itself. For example, young dancers from all of Siem Reap's tourism troupes and arts schools were required to participate at the New Year's Festival honoring Cambodia's intangible cultural heritage. This government-sponsored combination workshop, exam, and performance event was used as an opportunity to control the quality and content of tourism production and used the dancers as vessels through which Cambodian culture could be displayed for the edification of the local community. The dance also has tended to take over the dancer in the tourism performance context where stock dances that are now national icons are performed. These dances include Apsara Dance and Blessing dance, choreographic endeavors of the 1960s re-imagined as dances rooted in the Angkorean period—again, the paradox of seeking tradition in modernity. There are, of course, some situations where dancers maintain control of the work they produce. Much of Sophiline Cheam Shapiro's

choreography, including *Stained*, the dance piece based on the Trial by Fire in the Ramayana that she created for the Goethe Workshop discussed in the introduction, challenged official narratives, as did the work of young artists like Chey Chankethya. Regardless, in much of the tourism performance, in work produced by NGOs involved in the traditional arts, and in performance for government events, it can be difficult for the dancers to separate their interpretations and visions of the art form from external expectations.

Chapter Three also articulated a paradox inherent in UNESCO policies regarding tourism development. UNESCO's directives voiced concern about the over-commercialization of heritage practices in the tourism industry. Policy-makers worried that the commodification of heritage would enhance the degree to which the heritage controlled the practitioner and the tradition stagnated (see above) when the goal of the policy is that the practitioner should be working with and developing a living heritage practice. However, some of the most commercial endeavors also served to bring life to the classical dance form. Without the tourism industry, the practice of classical dance would not have been a viable option for many dancers, and the even the most seemingly extravagant of tourism venues, Smile of Angkor, sought to begin conversation about the dance practice between the Cambodian government, the dancers, and the international developer of the event.

These seemingly contradictory factors also impact discourse, policies, and development on a national level, perhaps with more impact on dancer experience. The dance practice takes on increasing significance as a cultural and national symbol because

of this international recognition. At the same time, this international recognition drew the attention of funders and tourists who strongly impact the form. Chapter Four moved the discussion of classical dance inward, documenting national narratives of identity construction that position the art form as a key symbol of country and culture in a manner that supports John Hutchinson's (1994) views on the role of art in the nation. The display of classical dance at military dinners, government events and public holidays such as National Culture Day demonstrated how the genre is used as a central symbol in the creation of an "imagined (Cambodian) community" (cf. Anderson [1983] 2006). Preservation efforts in conjunction with innovation and exploration inspired by the classical dance tradition articulated what Hobsbawm termed "the strength and adaptability of genuine traditions" (1983, 8). The instability of the late 20th century required a return to the deep past in Cambodia, the classical dance form provided an ideal symbol that could be linked to the ancient glory of the Khmer Empire "re-inventing" the traditional practice. The dissertation found that this recognition is a powerful symbolic tool that can be harnessed by both the international and national government to work towards ensuring that the classical dance practice will continue to be transmitted to future generations, as shown at the National Culture Day events in 2012.

This national and international discourse promoted the symbolic value of classical Cambodian dance, but while the arts were seen as intrinsic to Cambodian identity, there was a general lack of fiscal support for them in the country. Instead, I have shown that the ideological standing of the tradition, in concert with the discourse of loss, has drawn support for the preservation and development of the art form from numerous NGOs,

foundations and private sources, often with international backing (international interveners). These interveners each focus on one small aspect of classical dance production, creating a web that allowed the dancers to navigate between various sources to support their continued work with the dance genre. The group of adolescent dancers performing at Wat Tanei for a pair of wealthy tourists in front of a humming generator (Chapter One); the young men and women dancing in front of the National Museum each week (Introduction), and the performers parading at Smile of Angkor with bas-reliefs on their shoulders (Chapter Two)—all were supported by the web of interconnections between NGOs, government departments, private funders, and tourist venues that were drawn to ideological narratives built around classical dance and other forms of heritage.

The social web of production model developed in Chapter Four serves as a tool to trace the way that dancers navigate through and between various sources of support in order to survive via practice. The international interveners, the Cambodian government, and local organizations, act as nodes connected to one another by tenuous, thin, sticky threads that form a loose net supporting the perpetuation and continued development of the dance form. The artists navigate along these threads, demonstrating flexibility and creativity to continue their artistic endeavors. This can be perilous. When support shifts, dance practitioners may lose their balance and fall off of the web. Sometimes a node is ripped out, like the School of Art, Siem Reap, and new organizations that grow in its place (like TlaiTno) are not always able to catch all of the practitioners who have fallen through the hole. The dissertation found that a viable alternative has yet to develop. Several study participants proposed possible solutions: Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and

Phloeun Prim (Executive Director of Cambodian Living Arts) both suggested that it is necessary to normalize the idea of paying to view performances. During the 2011-2012 period, all performances were free for audiences. Philippe Delanghe (UNESCO) and Suon Bun Rith (formerly from AMRITA) recommended a more substantive cultural policy to help fill gaps in funding by increasing economic support by the government. The dissertation research demonstrated that both of these solutions have merit but would require substantive shifts in the way the government and the general public viewed the arts. Some government officials, including Hun Pen and Sun Sovanny, also proposed that tourism could be part of the solution.

Tourism has the potential to enhance the national and international discourses that surround classical dance, to provide a source of much need revenue for practitioners, and as I demonstrated in Chapter Five, to increase the symbolic and social capital of the dancers (and tourists). This increase in symbolic and social capital occurs in what I called the borderzone field. I expanded on Edward Bruner's (2005) concept of the borderzone using what are termed the three 'E's': expectation, experience, and encounter. The borderzone field is constructed from overlapping boundaries of the participants at a particular tourism location rather than a specific structure within a tourism site. These boundaries are created through the negotiations between participants' expectations and experiences. The dissertation demonstrated that the interactions and encounters between participants in these ever changing and moving borderzone fields created touristic imaginaries. It found that expectations and assumptions are often contested in the borderzone and that the negotiation of these assumptions with actual experience can lead

to cultural innovation. This was demonstrated at less structured tourism sites that offered the flexibility of borderzone crossings (at Temple Balcony and the Cambodian Living Arts dance demonstration where there was an increased chance—sometimes by design—that direct interactions would occur across the borderzone).

Edensor (2001) and MacCannell (2013) show how tourism events are staged performances. Chapter Five demonstrated that the borderzone field inhabited the constructed division between the front and back stage. The research showed how these spaces were structured to feed the national and international narratives of cultural identity. At tourism shows, connections between classical dance and Angkor were deployed whether through a stage set resembling the temples, theater names like Kulen II, or the preservation of heritage through dance training at the CLA dance class. Even in the most relaxed setting, the demonstration class, barriers were built between the tourists, tour guide, teacher, and students that individuals were expected not to cross and which intensified the approved heritage discourses. These connections between the dance form, Angkor, and national identity are also embedded in the performing body. Through their participation and engagement in borderzone field, practitioners strengthen their symbolic capital when they demonstrate their knowledge of the art form. Interactions in the borderzone field can also help the practitioners accumulate social capital since they have the opportunity to engage with people from all over the world.

I found that disparate experiences in the borderzone field can deeply affect the individual practitioner's corporeal economy. At Kulen II, even without direct interaction, a dancer might find that the visitors' actions don't match her expectations for respectful

behavior as they eat, drink, and talk during her performance. This response may not fit with that of another dancer who interprets the talking as excitement about seeing the event and feels the audience values that performance. These differing views of the same event demonstrate the importance of the individual's expectations, encounters, and experiences in the borderzone field, and, for the dancers in Siem Reap's tourism industry in particular, they can affect how they view their own value as performers and artists.

As demonstrated in the introduction, the dissertation's amalgamated framework using heritage, tourism, nationalism, development, and economic discourse was necessary to develop a complete picture of classical dance practice. The social web of Cambodian dance production developed in Chapter Four would not be able to exist without the physical labor of these dancers who dedicate years of training to their artistic practices documented. Nor would the dancers survive without the social web that their corporeal economy is tied to so deeply. The continued development of classical dance is not solely an economic enterprise—ideological and cultural elements of the practice identified in several chapters are vital to its perpetuation. The dancers would not be able to survive without the web of fiscal support created through the network of NGOs, funders, and government institutions that spin the tenuous threads on which the performers manage to negotiate their continued dance practice. This web, in turn, would not exist without the ideological discourses that prioritize classical Cambodian dance as symbol of both national resiliency and strength, and as a meta-cultural production shared by the world as documented in Chapter Three. Without this discourse, the dance practice might not have been noticed by the international community that is so integral to its

survival through the support both of NGOs and the ever-growing tourist presence.

Findings demonstrate that the slow transition of dance from ritual to tool of diplomacy, to secular global commodity, documented in Chapter One, has allowed the development of classical dance to continue in the decades after the civil war making its practice a viable, though challenging, option for dancers to attain financial stability and enhance their social standing.

Future Research Directions

This dissertation has shown how large-scale global, national, and economic activities and ideologies have been embedded in local contexts and permeated the lives of dance practitioners. Certain aspects of this work—particularly the broader applications of the corporeal economy, the social web model, and the borderzone field would benefit from further investigation. Additionally, this combination of frameworks could be applied to understanding the interplay between global phenomena and local cultural development in other countries—particularly countries that aim to construct national identity through the use of heritage development. Future research would demonstrate the degree to which the integration of these frameworks could be employed elsewhere. Finally, the inclusion of identity politics in future research on classical Cambodian dance both inside and outside of the country would further articulate the symbolic value of the dance practice.

Further research on the corporeal economy should explore control of bodily labor in more depth. In Cambodia, or with any other dance practices, research should document the extent to which dancers maintain control over their own laboring bodies. This element

of self-control was documented in this research, but needs further elaboration that incorporates more individual dancer experiences from different personal and performance backgrounds. Continued research would benefit for incorporated a detailed analysis of gender and class within the classical dance world. For example, sustained research at Natyarasa, an classical dance company with all-male gay performers formed by Prumsodun Ok in 2015 would provide further insight on these issues of gender, labor and the body. It would also be beneficial to incorporate a variety of dance forms to demonstrate possible differences and similarities between corporeal economies and control in different practices. Research on folk dance and also with movement practitioners from ethnic minorities would articulate possible racial dimensions of ethnic and racial control on the corporeal economy of Cambodian dancers. This also could be extended outside of dance to look at any form of movement practice and possibly any kind of work (since the body is always in use). Dance is a good starting point to approach corporeal economics because in dance production the links between body, labor, exchange, and consumption are so strong. The corporeal economy provides insight into the decision-making process of practitioners as they negotiate external contingencies that affect their personal lives, their very survival and also the survival of the classical dance form.

Another avenue of research concerning the corporeal economy in Cambodian dance is to document the degree to which the flexible nature of the dancer's bodily labor is connected to the flexibility required for them to navigate the social web of dance production. Further research could trace the laboring bodies of dancers with more

specificity through the social web of production developed in Chapter Four. Following dancers as they move through specific nodes in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, Cambodian Living Arts, TlaiTno, and others that were not included in the scope of this research—including those that have emerged in recent years would provide a more complete picture of the complexity of the classical dance production. How do practitioners and the nodes work with and support each other? How are connections between the nodes developed? How do the dancers negotiate conflicting pressures from those they work with? The web itself could also be expanding by taking account of other factors that contribute to dance development. Lastly, the web model also can be employed to discuss development trends faced by other countries that rely on a complex network of international interveners, government associations, and/or private funders to support local projects and communities.

As identified at the end of Chapter Five, several questions merit further attention regarding the development of the borderzone field concept. What are the origins of the expectations and assumptions that are integral to the production of the borderzone field? How do different socio-political contexts affect the participants' understanding of the tourism events? Answers to these questions would require specific attention to the individual participants. Additionally, added attention to the tourist/visitor experience in this borderzone field would further demonstrate the impact that the tourism experience has on symbolic and social capital for all tourism participants. The borderzone field also could be utilized to articulate interaction at tourist events of any kind and may even be employed outside of tourism discourse. The concept could be used to document

immigrant and refugee interactions or intergenerational interactions, for example. As articulated in the introduction, the amalgamated framework employed in this dissertation was developed from the ground up as observations of the dancers and those invested in dance showed how larger global processes affected the corporeal economy of these individuals. As a result, this integrated framework may not be applicable in other places. Future research on practices and traditions that have become integral to the construction of national and global cultural identities in other countries would demonstrate the degree to which the amalgamated framework deployed here has cross-cultural potential or whether it is specific to the Cambodian case while the individual models have greater breadth.

Specific to Cambodia and the diaspora, this dissertation prompts future research on identity politics and heritage development. This study focused mainly on classical dance practitioners and others who rely on the arts for at least some of their livelihood. Future research on the use of classical dance as a symbol of Khmer identity both within Cambodia and in the Cambodian diaspora would expand on the ideological constructions documented in this dissertation. For example, related research in diasporic communities could articulate how the national and international discourses of Cambodian heritage and tradition influence Khmer artists living and working outside the country. Further research in Cambodia could articulate issues that emerge for the continued development and production of other arts practices and forms of traditional heritage as a result of the privileged symbolic position that classical dance has attained.

Concluding Thoughts

This dissertation demonstrates that in order to fully understand the complex and nuanced interconnections between the everyday lived experience of Cambodian dance practitioners and the larger processes that impact the art form that they practice, it is necessary to employ a multi-layered theoretical framework. This framework includes discourses of economics, development, nationalism, heritage and tourism, elements of which are interwoven in the dance practitioners lives as they struggle to continue practicing and performing the classical dance form. Their sweat and pain as their bodies labor before and during performances and their verbal concerns about sustaining a reasonable livelihood demonstrated the need to incorporate a bodily, or corporeal economic framework that articulated the benefits that dancers attain, both financial and social, through their work. The dancer's navigation between a series of NGOs and government institutions that was necessary for economic survival developed into the social web model for understanding classical dance production and development and for tracing the paths that dancers follow as they negotiate various aspects of their corporeal economy. The dissertation documented how this web would not have existed without the ideological discourses of nationalism and the heritage policies put in place by UNESCO. At the same time, it documented how the ideological discourses and heritage policies could have potential detrimental affects on the dance practice and the dancers. These policies certainly sent seemingly contradictory messages about how development should occur. Tourism was the main source of revenue for dance identified in the research, and tourism theory was used to articulate some of the paradoxes regarding development and

policy. The dissertation also documented the vital nature of the tourism event as a space for creative play and ideological construction for both the tourism producers and the tourists.

These frameworks are intertwined in the classical Cambodian dance case, but may be applicable more broadly as well. Globally, elements of intangible cultural heritage bring in foreign currency via the all-important tourist industry, encourage a sense of national identity, and appeal to foreign investment, so the production of traditional culture is increasingly important. Heritage programs and cultural tourism policies are promoted in many developing countries recovering from conflict as a key to economic stability. While the impact that this production has on local communities has been a focus of some recent research in tourism and heritage, the bodies of these producers often are forgotten. The focus on classical Cambodian dance in this dissertation gives the underlying humanity of moving, breathing bodies that become emblems of cultural identity an integral role in the analysis of cultural development.

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Appendix A: Comprehensive List of Field Sites

This appendix includes a list of all field sites where the ethnographer conducted research and generally outlines the goals and activities of the field site. While research at all field sites informed the analysis in this dissertation, some are only mentioned in passing and others do not appear in the dissertation. Information gathered at these sites will be the source material for future publications. The author is grateful to individuals from all organizations, institutions, and venues that allowed access to rehearsals, performances, and other activities.

Field Sites in (or near) Phnom Penh

Amrita Performing Arts: Established in 2003, this Phnom Penh-based arts organization initially aimed to help redevelop all of the traditional art forms in Cambodia. At the time of research the goal of the organizations had changed based on the beneficiaries' desires. Now the organization focuses on the development of contemporary dance rooted in Cambodian traditions and offers contemporary dance workshops. A major goal of the organization is to help develop the next generation of young artists. Beneficiaries have the opportunity to perform in Cambodia and internationally and work with contemporary choreographers from around the world. Several dancers I worked with were involved in Amrita activities so I had the opportunity to observe events occasionally.

Apsara Arts Association: Neak Kru Vong Metry established this organization in 1998. It is dedicated to giving children from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to

learn classical and folk dance. The organization survives through tourist donations, and students perform for tourists most weekends. I attended practice here twice a week for four months and attended performances when possible.

Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center: Founded by Rithy Panh in 2006 , this organization is dedicated to providing free access to Cambodian heritage through its collection of video and sound recordings. The center also houses cultural events. I used the audio-visual archives to find videos of dance from the colonial period to the present. Also, I attended screenings of dance performances and led an Art+Society workshop at this location.

Cambodian Living Arts (Folk and Classical Dance Class/Children of Bassac):

Cambodian Living Arts, founded by Arn Chorn Pond began as an organization dedicated to finding masters of Cambodia's traditional arts practices and developing arts training programs for Cambodian youth. While these initial goals haven't disappeared from the organization, the mission has broadened. During the research period, CLA transitioned into an umbrella organization working to facilitate artistic production and create an arts sector that will support the next generation of artists. I attended several CLA events, but was primarily focused on one small section of the organization, the Folk and Classical Dance Class. The Folk and Classical Dance Class joined CLA in 2006 after three years of work. Older members of the class form the Children of Bassac Dance Troupe, which at the time of research performed at the National Museum on Thursdays in the high tourist

season and at many other events (both commercial and governmental). I attended the Folk and Classical Dance Class every Sunday while in Phnom Penh as well as many of the Children of Bassac performance events. The Children of Bassac are no longer officially associated with Cambodian Living Arts. As adults, they have formed their own dance troupe.

Chayam Restaurant: A restaurant in Phnom Penh that housed dance performances two nights a week. I attended performances here regularly (once or twice a week for nine months). Unfortunately, the restaurant closed after the research period ended.

French Cultural Center (*Institut Français Cambodge*): Established in 1999, this organization supports several different activities in Cambodia. A major focus of the institute is cultural programming. It helps support new choreographic work in Cambodia, collaborations with international artists, and presentations of more traditional work (both performances and exhibits). Following Phnom Penh's dancers, I attended several rehearsals at the institute and watched many performances that it helped to fund.

Khmer Arts: With a particular focus on classical dance and classical dance inspired choreography, this organization aims to cultivate Cambodian arts on the global scale. It was co-founded by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and John Shapiro. The organization began with a program in Long Beach, CA, for youth in the Cambodian diaspora. Later a program in Cambodia was added including an ensemble (now the Sophiline Arts

Ensemble), an archive, and a training program in Cambodia near Phnom Penh. The Ensemble performs internationally and ensemble members the opportunity to work with artists from around the world. I visited the Khmer Arts Theater twice a week for 9 months (occasionally more often if there was a performance).

Secondary School of Fine Arts: The Secondary School of Fine Arts was re-established in the 1980s. It is the government-run public school that focuses on arts education for students between the ages of 7 and 19 (usually they start between 9 and 11). Students can learn robam boran, lakhon yike, lakhon bassac, lakhon khol, robam propeiny, circus arts, singing, music, and more. Performers in the Royal Ballet Company are graduates of the school, and some go on to consult with the ministry and to teach. I only went to the school three times to observe and talk to teachers since my research focus was on arts NGOs and tourism venues.

Sovanna Phum Arts Association: Established in 1993 by Mann Kosal, the organization provides instruction in shadow puppet making and provides performance opportunities for younger artists in weekly shows. The shows mix different artistic genres in new works imagined by Kosal. I attended rehearsals and performances here for two months in the winter of 2011.

Royal University of Fine Arts: At The Royal University of Fine Arts it is possible to receive a bachelor's degree in choreographic arts (as well as other degrees in the arts and

art-related fields). The campus also hosts art-related activities such as ceremonies. I attended choreography exams and ceremonies on the campus in 2011 and 2012. Some interviews also were conducted here.

Field Sites in Siem Reap

Amansara Resort: Amansara Resort (a part of the Aman Resort Group) is an elite tourism destination in Siem Reap. The Amansara staff is dedicated to cultural programming that supports local arts groups. At the time of research, programs included regular performances by five performance groups (four that perform classical dance) in the area, lectures, and film screenings. Guests also could request private performances at various locations in Siem Reap—including at the Angkorean temples. I was fortunate to be invited to many performances on the resort grounds as well as to private events.

Cambodian Cultural Village: The Cambodian Cultural Village was one of the largest employers of dancers in Cambodia with a 116-member art staff. The privately owned venue was an ethnic theme park that had models of villages used by the different ethnic groups in Cambodia. Performances consist of folk dances and new choreography that explained the local myths at each ethnic village. Classical dance was performed in the bigger shows in the theater and in the restaurant. The Cultural Village drew mainly Khmer audiences. I regularly visited this site for seven months in 2012.

Koulen Restaurant (Kulen II): This is a large buffet dinner-dance show catering to a wide-array of mainly international tourists. Performances are nightly and include classical and folk dance. Aside from Apsara Dance, Fishing Dance, and Coconut Dance, performers are free to select the dances that they want to present based on their capacity and desires. I attended performances at this location regularly for 8.5 months.

Orphanage A and Orphanage B: These orphanages provide dance instruction to their residents. They also perform classical and folk dance for tourists. In the interests of protecting the identities of the children, more will not be said about these locations.

Preah Ream Buppha Devi Conservatoire: This classical dance and folk dance training center was founded by Ravynn Karet-Coxin and was under the patronage of HRH Princess Buppha Devi. With the goal of perpetuating the values and rituals of the Royal Ballet that emerged in the Angkorean period, the conservatory offered training to 176 students from the impoverished Banteay Srei area—descendants of the ritual dancers of Angkor. While students at the conservatory occasionally performed at events in Siem Reap, their real goal was to re-sanctify the land. Students performed *buong suong* ceremonies at temples in Cambodia and in other parts of Southeast Asia. I was given access to watch training regularly (often twice a week) during my nine months in Siem Reap. I also attended several performance events.

Sarun and Sokhun's Dance Troupe: Two teachers who worked at the School of Art, Siem Reap operated this dance troupe. They performed for four companies that organized private events for large groups. Because they employed students and alumni from the school, the dancers had a relatively high technique level and were capable of performing dances that were not part of the repertoire of other troupes. They also performed bokatao demonstrations. I went with them to their performances when possible, sometimes acting as the announcer.

School of Art, Siem Reap: Established in 2002, the school of art was dedicated to helping underprivileged children learn about their cultural practices. With over 250 students enrolled at any one time, the school offered training in classical dance, folk dance, music, costume making, and mask making. At the time of research, the School of Art was a four-year program. Some talented alumni were offered part time positions as assistant teachers and/or were given opportunities to perform with various dance troupes informally connected to the school. The school also worked with the Department of Art in Siem Reap when performers were needed for events. Unfortunately the School of Art, Siem Reap closed in 2014. I frequently attended training classes and events at the school.

Smile of Angkor: Smile of Angkor was a nightly performance event in a large theater at the convention center in Siem Reap that featured 3D laser light technology and moving sets. At the time of research, the show was a recent offering presenting a version of the story of the origins of the country. It opened in 2010 and by the end of 2011 it employed

64 Cambodian dancers who made some of the highest salaries in the region. I attended Smile of Angkor performances several times, sometimes visited the backstage area, and interviewed individuals involved in the production.

Sokham's Dance Troupe: This dance troupe organized by the Folk Dance Master at the School of Art, Siem Reap and specialized in classical dance, folk dance, and lakhon yike. The group was made up of alumni from the school. I attended several performances, particularly during Cambodian New Year in April 2012.

Temple Balcony Club: This is a tourist venue that provides an à la carte menu along with a set dance show upstairs (there is a club/bar downstairs). The dancers perform both classical and folk dances. I attended performances at this venue frequently and met with dancers at their other places of work on occasion—some worked as maids at hotels.

Young Artists Association (TlaiTno): This organization was a joint effort of members of the School of Art, Siem Reap, a children's aid organization, CLA, and alumni of the school. After a successful application to UNESCO in 2011, the organization received US\$100,000 to begin work. I attended all possible activities associated with the association when they began in March of 2012. In 2013 the organization officially adopted the name TlaiTno. Beneficiaries train in dance and music and perform in dignified conditions—hence the name of the organization (TlaiTno means dignity).

Appendix B: Interviews

This appendix contains a comprehensive list of interviews that were conducted as part of the research project. Interviews are listed in alphabetical order Organizations with which interviewees were associated at the time of research and positions within the organizations are included where appropriate. Note: while all interviews shaped my analysis, they are not all used directly in this dissertation. Interviews that appear in the dissertation appear in bold.

Unstructured and Informal Interviews

These are generally interviews with dancers, dancer teachers, administrators at arts organizations, employees in the tourism industry, and officials at UNESCO and in the national government. Some personal communications with study participants are included. Interviews with individuals at other related organizations are included as well. The interviews were frequently digitally recorded and range in length from 23 minutes to more than three hours. Over 116 individuals are represented in these interviews, because some participants elected to be interviewed in groups (this is noted in the entry).

Annie. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 8. Annie was a manager at the Smile of Angkor production. Interview is 32 minutes long.

Anonymous. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 25. This individual was employed in development at an arts organization in Cambodia. Interview is 1 hour and 31 minutes long.

Anonymous. 2011. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom, Penh, Cambodia, December 5. This was a representative from UNESCO who preferred to remain anonymous. Interview was approximately 2 hours long.

Anonymous. 2011. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 25. Interviewee was a staff member at a Siem Reap hotel. Interview was 45 minutes long.

Anonymous. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 19. Interviewee was a representative with an organization working on children's rights in Cambodia. Interview was 1 hour and 30 minutes long.

Anonymous. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 22. Interviewed staff at orphanage B in Siem Reap. Interview is 1 hour and 5 minutes long.

Anonymous. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 23. Interviewed a representative from orphanage B in Siem Reap. Interview is 1 hour and 5 minutes long.

Arn, Sophearika. 2012. Interview with the Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 17. Sophearika (Neak Kru Pich) was one of the classical dance teachers at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She was trained at the Royal University of Fine Arts. She was also a star performer at Smile of Angkor. Her mother was Luong Sokham. Interview is 1 hour and 18 minutes long.

Bong, Poch. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 11. Bong Boch was a teaching assistant at the School of Art, Siem Reap. He also performed at Smile of Angkor and participated in a few Young Artist Association workshops. Interview is 1 hour and 15 minutes long.

Brocchi, Sara Soomee. 2012. Interview with Author. Siem Reap, Cambodia, February 29. Sara was a European volunteer with the children's aid organization that financially supported the School of Art, Siem Reap. She worked with the school for two months helping to rework the website and develop a new plan for tourist visits to the school. Interview in 1 hour long

CAO Representative. 2012. Personal Communication with Author. Email communication. April 9. This representative answered questions regarding the School of Art, Siem Reap and the Young Artist Association.

Chab, Sydanal (Danal). 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, May 20. Danal was a student at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and performed with the Children of Bassac. Interview is 1 hour and 15 minutes long.

Chamroeun, Sophea (Phea) and Cheychanrith Hou (Pov). 2011. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 22. Sophea and Chanrith wanted to be interviewed together. Sophea was working on a Bachelor of Arts in Choreography at the Royal University of Fine Arts specializing in Folk Dance. She and Chanrith both performed at Chayyam and with Children of Bassac and studied at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class. They both performed with Belle on occasion. Pov also participated in Amrita workshops. Interview is approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes long.

Chao, Socheata. 2011. Interview with the Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, April 22. Socheata was a company member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble and served as assistant artistic director at the time of research. Interview is 41 minutes long.

Chayyam Owner. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 5. The owner of the restaurant requested that the name of the restaurant be used, but not the individual's personal name. Interview is 1 hour and 6 minutes long.

Chea, Socheata. 2011. Interview with the Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, November 23. Socheata was a company member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble. Interview is 50 minutes long.

Chea, Sokhom. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 7. Chea Sokhom was the history teacher at the School of Art, Siem Reap. He was the older brother of Neak Kru Luong Sokham. Earlier in life he had several ministry positions. Interview is 30 minutes long.

Cheam Shapiro, Sophiline. 2011. Interview with Author. Takhamao, Cambodia, September 27. Sophiline was the artistic director and co-founder of the Khmer Arts Ensemble (now Sophiline Arts Ensemble). In addition to this work she is now an advisor for the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Interview is 2 hours long.

Chen, Srey Pich. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, May 10. Srey Pich was trained at Apsara Arts Association. At the time of research she was a teaching assistant at Apsara Arts and performed at restaurants. Interview is 44 minutes long.

Chey, Chankethya. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 8. Kethya trained in classical dance at the Royal University of Fine Arts. During the research period she taught at the Secondary School of Fine Arts, participated in collaborations produced by Amrita, and began a masters in choreography at UCLA. Interview is 2 hours and 25 minutes long.

- Chhieng, Proeung. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 31. Proeung Chhieng was the artistic director of the Royal Ballet. He was also the vice-rector and dean of Choreographic Arts at the Royal University of Fine Arts. Interview is 1 hour and 52 minutes long.
- Chhon Sophearith. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 8. Sophearith was a marketing manager at the Cambodian Cultural Village. Interview is 1 hour long.
- Chorn-Pond, Arn. 2013.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Brooklyn, New York, April. Arn is the founder of Cambodian Living Arts. Interview is 1 hour and 34 minutes long.
- Choung, Bun Thom. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 13. Bun Thom was a manager at Temple Balcony Club. Interview is 40 minutes long.
- Chum, Chanveasna. 2011. Interview with Author. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 10. Sna was the company manager for the Khmer Arts Ensemble. Interview is 59 minutes long.
- Chuvman, Sodachivy (Belle). 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 11. Belle was trained in classical dance at the Secondary School of Fine Arts. She later became more interested in contemporary dance. During the research period she performed in several collaborations with contemporary choreographies, presented her own short works, and choreographed her first full-length dance piece. Belle's work was inspired by Cambodian dance traditions. Interview is 2 hours and 30 minutes long.
- Dai, Lei. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 18. Mr. Dai Lei was the choreographic director of the Smile of Angkor production. Interview is 55 minutes long.
- Daniel, Alain. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 27. Alain worked in civil service in Cambodia starting in 1965 and was involved with the court dance practice. After teaching in France he retired to Cambodia and conducted independent research on the subject. Interview was 1 hour long.
- Delanghe, Philippe. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25. Philippe Delanghe was the Chief of UNESCO Cambodia's Cultural Department. Interview is 42 minutes long.

- Gommard, Marion. 2011.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 17. Marion worked at Bophana Audio-Visual center and later at Cambodian Living Arts. The interview is 40 minutes long.
- Hab, Touch. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia. July 26. During the research period, Hab Touch was the Director General of Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Prior to the research period he was the director of the National Museum in Phnom Penh. Interview is 1 hour and 9 minutes long.
- Hang, Seyla. 2011. Interview with the Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 26. Seyla trained at Apsara Arts Association and helped teach classes there. Interview is 38 minutes long.
- Horm, Bunheng. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 15. Bunheng was a sales officer at the Cambodian Cultural Village. Interview is 58 minutes long.
- Hoy, Sovan. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 6. Hoy Sovan was an alumna of the School of Art, Siem Reap. At the time of research she performed nightly at Temple Balcony Club and worked as a hotel maid. The interview is 1 hour and 3 minutes long.
- Hun, Pen. 2012.** Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 25.
- . 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 30. Hun Pen was the Deputy Director of International Cultural Corporations and ASEAN Affairs. She also was a classical dancer and a contemporary dance choreographer. Our first interview was a brief meeting and was not recorded. Second interview is 1 hour and 28 minutes long.
- Ieng, Srey Penh. 2011. Digital recording. Interview with Author. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 30. Srey Penh was trained in classical dance at the Secondary School of Fine Arts. She studied at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and performed with the Children of Bassac. Srey Penh also was getting a degree in tourism management. Interview is 1 hour and 16 minutes long.
- Ieu, Sopheakagna. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 28. 2 hours and 24 minutes long.

- . 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 13. 1 hour and 16 minutes long. Sopheakagna was trained at the Secondary School of Fine Arts just after it re-opened in the 1980s. At the time of research she was living in Siem Reap and performing exclusively at Amansara Resort events.
- Kanal (Jerry). 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 24. Kanal trained at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and at Khmer Arts. While he loved training in the traditional arts, he didn't perform professionally. Interview is 1 hour and 19 minutes long.
- Kang, Rithisal (Sal). 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, October 18. Sal was working in the administration of Amrita. Interview is 50 minutes long.
- Kao, Sareum. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Banteay Srey, Cambodia, August 24. Sareum was the head teacher at the NKFC conservatory. His specialty was folk dance, but he also taught classical dance. He had a dance troupe in Siem Reap that performed at tourist venues as well. Interview is 30 minutes long.
- Karet-Coxin, Ravynn. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Banteay Srei, Cambodia. February 21. Ravynn Karet Coxin was the founder of the Nginn Karet Foundation (NKF). She also was the founder of the Preah Ream Bopha Devi Conservatoire in Banteay Srei. Interview was informal and was approximately 1 hour long.
- Ke, Polin. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 20. Polin was studying dance at the Apsara Arts Association and Khmer Arts when available. Interview is 1 hour and 20 minutes long.
- Khen, Vanthy. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 11. Vanthy trained in folk dance at the Royal University of Fine Arts. She also studied contemporary dance in Korea. At the time of research, she was working for the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. They had assigned her to conduct contemporary dance workshops for the Young Artist Association in July and August 2012. Interview is 35 minutes long.
- Khuy, Srey La. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, March 9. Srey La was an assistant teacher at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She also was a performer at Smile of Angkor. Interview is 57 minutes long.
- Kilian, Blaise. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 1. Blaise Kilian was the ICC Secretariat for UNESCO Cambodia. Interview is 49 minutes long.

Kim, Boran. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 29. Interview is 51 minutes long.

———. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 4. Interview is 44 minutes long. Neak Kru Kim Boran was a member of the Royal Ballet Company prior to the Khmer Rouge Regime. After the war, she founded a small dance school in Wat Bo and then became the master of the classical dance program at the School of Art, Siem Reap. Kim Boran continued to train dancers at TlaiTno when the School of Art closed.

Kim, Chompo. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 3. Kim Chompo was the costume maker at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She also taught students at the school how to sew costumes. Interview is 47 minutes long.

Kim, Sophors. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Sophors was a performer at Koulen Restaurant (Kulen II). She also worked at a tourism agency in Siem Reap. Interview is 23 minutes long.

Kong, Chandamony. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia. October 11. Chandamony was a student in the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and performed with the Children of Bassac Troupe. Interview is 1 hour long.

Kong, Srey No. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 19. Srey No was a performer at Koulen Restaurant (Kulen II). Interview is 23 minutes long.

Kor, Borin. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 7. Borin was the cultural activities manager at the French Cultural Center in Phnom Penh. Interview is 53 minutes long.

Lem, Srey Neang. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 9. Srey Neang was a member of the Cambodian Cultural Village arts staff. Interview is 42 minutes long.

Leng, Sinat. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 15. Sinat was a member of the Cambodian Cultural Village arts staff. Interview is 54 minutes long.

Leu, Sivmeng. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 29. Sivmeng was a student at the Secondary School of Fine Arts and at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class. She also performed with the Children of Bassac. Interview is 1 hour and 20 minutes long.

- Lim, Chanboramy. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, November 3. Chanboramy was a company member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble. Interview is 48 minutes long.
- Lim, Sopha. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 30. Sopha was a member of the arts staff at the Cambodian Culture Village. He was both a performer and a teacher. Interview is 50 minutes long.
- Luong, Sokham. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 26. Sokham was the folk dance master at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She also led her own dance troupe (separate from the troupe started by Sarun and Sokun). Prior to the war, Sokham was a famous yike performer, so her performance troupe also performs yike. Neak Kru Sokham is the mother of Arn Sophearika. Interview is 16 minutes long.
- Lun, Sokhon. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 22. Sokhon worked as a teaching assistant at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She also performed at tourist venues around Siem Reap. Interview is 48 minutes long.
- Mam, Si Hak. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 24. Hak was a manager at Koulen Restaurant (Kulen II). Interview is 1 hour and 20 minutes long.
- Mao, Keng. 2012. Interview with Author. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July 26. Mao Keng was the Director of the Department of Performing Arts at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Interview is 55 minutes long.
- Meng, Sopheary. 2011.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 6. Sopheary studied at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and performed with the Children of Bassac Troupe. She also was studying to become a history teacher. Interview is 1 hour and 34 minutes long.
- Neang, Visal.** 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, May 21. Visal was a student in the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and he performed with the Children of Bassac. Visal also was an intern in the CLA office. Interview is 2 hours and 18 minutes long.
- Nem, Kin Vantha. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, 21. Kin Vantha was a member of the Cambodian Cultural Village Arts staff. Interview is 57 minutes long.

Nget, Rady. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 18. Rady trained at the Secondary School of Fine Arts and the Royal University of Fine Arts in lakhon kohl. He performed frequently in Amrita organization contemporary dance projects and participated in CLA workshops. He also helped with ceremonies at Khmer Arts. Interview is 2 hours and 25 minutes long.

Nguon, Vuthy. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, April 20. During the research period, Vuthy was the assistant director at the School of Art, Siem Reap. Towards the end of the research period, he also became the director of the Young Artists Association (later named TlaiTno). I have communicated with Vuthy many times since returning from Cambodia. Those discussions that provided information included in this dissertation are listed below. Interview is 2 hours long.

———. 2012. Personal communication with Author on Facebook. November 23.

———. 2013. Personal communication with Author on Facebook. August 9.

———. 2014. Personal communication with Author on Facebook. March 9.

———. 2014. Personal communication with Author on Facebook. June 1.

———. 2016. Personal communication with Author on Facebook. March 23.

———. 2017. Personal communication with Author on Facebook. November 14.

Nisay. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 6. Nisay was an assistant teacher at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She also performed in Smile of Angkor. Interview is 1 hour and 22 minutes long.

Nop, Thyda. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 21. Neak Kru Nop Thyda trained at the Secondary School of Fine Arts immediately after the Khmer Rouge Regime. At the time all students learned classical dance, but her specialty was folk dance. At the time of research she primarily was teaching at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and the Children of Bassac Troupe. Interview is 1 hour and 54 minutes long.

Nuo, Sokha. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 19. Sokha was the head of the arts staff of the Cambodian Cultural Village. He was the main teacher. Interview is 2 hours and 25 minutes long.

- Ok, Sophon.** 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 26. Ok Sophon was the Director General of Intangible Heritage at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Cambodia. Note: other ministry officials including Vin Laychour from the Human Living Treasures Program, were also present at the meeting. Interview is 1 hour and 15 minutes long.
- Ouk, Rany. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 16. Interview is approximately 40 minutes long.
- . 2012. Interview with Author. Digital Recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 21. Interview is 36 minutes long. Ouk Rany was a performer at Temple Balcony Club. She also taught dance at an orphanage. During the first interview Rany had laryngitis and wrote responses to questions. The follow-up interview clarified some of her responses.
- Ouk, Sothea. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 18. Ouk Sothea was the Director of the School of Art, Siem Reap. Interview is 2 hours long.
- Oukhon. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 9. Oukhon was a rambour driver who worked at the School of Art, Siem Reap. At the school he worked as a driver and security guard. He also worked as a rambour driver outside of the school. Interview is approximately 50 minutes long.
- Para. 2012. Interview with the Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 25. Para was a member of the Cambodian Cultural Village arts staff. Interview is 1 hour and 7 minutes long.
- Pen, Sareth. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 22. Sareth was a student teacher at the School of Art, Siem Reap. He performed at various tourism venues as well. Interview is 36 minutes long.
- Pietra.** 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 6. Pietra was an alumna of the School of Art, Siem Reap specializing in classical dance. She was a performer at Temple Balcony Club. Interview is 1 hour and 20 minutes long.
- Phat, Khoeuy.** 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 2. Khoeuy was a performer at Koulen Restaurant (Kulen II). He trained at the Department of Art in Siem Reap before the training program was disbanded. He continued to consult for the department during the research period. He also performed at other venues. Interview is 54 minutes long.

- Pov, Nisa. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, May 16. Nisa was a music student in the Cambodian Living Arts pin peat class. During the research period she traveled with the Children of Bassac troupe on a tour of the United States. Later she attended college in the U.S. Interview is 3 hours long.
- Prem, Samnang. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 17. Samnang was a performer at Temple Balcony Club. She also worked as a maid in a hotel. Interview is 1 hour and 26 minutes long.
- Prim, Phloeun. 2011.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 29. Phloeun was (and still is) the executive director of Cambodian Living Arts. Interview is 1 hour and 7 minutes long.
- Roeyun, Sarun. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, March 30. Earlier in the research period, Sarun worked as the social worker at the School of Art, Siem Reap. Later she became one of the folk dance teachers at the same school. She also helped form a dance troupe that employed alumni from the School of Art, Siem Reap. This dance troupe performed for large tour groups at major resorts. Interview is 46 minutes long.
- . 2012. Interview with the Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 23. Interview is approximately 20 minutes long.
- Ruijzendaal, Bob. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording and Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 21. Bob Ruijzendaal had worked with several dancers through Amrita. During the research period he worked with them on a dance called Soprisi. At points he requested that I turn off the recording device and just take handwritten notes. Digital recording is 21 minutes long, interview was approximately 1 hour long.
- Ruth, Simol. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 23. This individual was part of the art staff at the Cambodian Cultural Village. She worked as a teacher and performer. Interview is 33 minutes long.
- Saing, Sonalydo (Jary). 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 11. Jary was a student in the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class. During the research period he went on tour and performed with the Children of Bassac troupe. Interview is 1 hour and 40 minutes long.
- Sao, Phirom. 2011.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, March 25. Interview is 27 minutes long.

———. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, March 30. Interview is 25 minutes long. Phirom was a member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble.

Sao Sokun. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 17. Sao Sokun trained in the dance classes lead by Kim Boran at Wat Bo. She was a classical dance teacher at the School of Art, Siem Reap. She also helped Sarun with the dance troupe that employed alumni of the School of Art. Interview is 1 hour and 24 minutes long.

San, Srey Pich. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 11. Srey Pich was an alumni of the School of Art, Siem Reap. She performed at Smile of Angkor and participated in Young Artists Association. Interview is 1 hour and 19 minutes long

Seng, Sophea. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia. July 7. Seng Sophea was a member of the art staff at the Cambodian Cultural Village. The interview is 53 minutes long.

Shapiro, John. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, May 12. John was the executive director and co-founder of Khmer Arts. The interview is 1 hour and 32 minutes long.

Sim, Sina. 2012. Interview with the Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 9. Neak Kru Sina was a teacher at a tourist venue in Siem Reap. Interview is 1 hour and 20 minutes long.

Sin, Samadikchho. 2011. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom Penh Cambodia, April 7. Neak Kru Chho lived and trained in the royal palace as a child. She was the last living woman who had trained in the monkey role before the role was given to men. At the time of research she was teaching at Apsara Arts Association. Her private student Ke Polin was also present. Interview was 30 minutes long.

So, Chanou. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Bantey Srey, Cambodia, July 14. So Chanou taught classical dance at the NKFC conservatory. The interview is 30 minutes long.

So, Mara. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Phnom, Penh, Cambodia, July 24. His Excellency So Mara was the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Tourism at the time of research. Other members of the Ministry of Tourism Staff were present at the interview. Interview lasted approximately 1 hour.

Sochea. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 4. Sochea was a hotel manager in Siem Reap. Interview is 1 hour and 46 minutes long.

Soeur, Vuthy. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 6. Vuthy was a consultant at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. He also taught folk dance at the Cambodian Living Arts Folk and Classical Dance Class. Interview is 2 hours long.

Som, Kamra (Map). 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 12. Map was a performer at Temple Balcony Club. His mother was the teacher. Pietra also was present at the interview. Interview is 41 minutes long.

Som, Saymalyrou (Say Kuru). 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, May 19. Say Kuru was a member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble. Interview is 1 hour and 7 minutes long.

Song, Seng. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 3. Interview is 2 hours and 15 minutes long

———. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, January 30. Interview is 41 minutes long. At the time of research Seng was a program manager at Cambodian Living Arts.

Sonyka. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 21. Sonyka studied and taught at Apsara Arts Association. She performed there on occasion and at a restaurant. Interview is 53 minutes long.

Sopheap. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, March 16. Interview is 1 hour long.

———. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, March 18. Interview is 30 minutes long. Sopheap was a classical dancer and had been a member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble. At the time of research she had transitioned into a position as the association archivist and later moved to a position elsewhere.

Sot, Sovanndy. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, March 18. Interview is 25 minutes long.

- . 2011 Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, March 23. Interview is 27 minutes long. Vandy was a member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble.
- Sothin. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 7. Sothin was a member of the arts staff at the Cambodian Cultural Village. Interview is 37 minutes long.
- Soun, Bun Rith. 2011.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 13. Bun Rith worked for UNESCO prior to the research period (he helped organize the documents for the ICH application for classical dance). During the research period he worked for Amrita and later Phare (an arts organization in Battambang). Interview is 2 hours long.
- Soun, Somphors. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 11. Somphors was a performer at Koulen Restaurant (Kulen II). Some family members—including her mother—were present at the interview since the interview was conducted at the performers home. Interview is 1 hour long.
- Soun, Sovannarith. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 2012. Sovannarith trained at Wat Bo and performed with a troupe from that school before training there stopped. She also performed at restaurants. At the time of research she taught dance at an orphanage and occasionally helped them with performance preparation. She also performed at Amansara Resort with Sopheakagna. Sovannarith was the daughter of Kim Boran. Interview is 1 hour long.
- Soy, Chanborey. 2011.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 1. Borey was a student at the Secondary School of Fine Arts (specializing in lakhon khol). He also studied at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and performed with the Children of Bassac. During the research period he began attending Amrita workshops and performing for Belle. Interview is 2 hours and 20 minutes long.
- Sun, Sovanny. 2012.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 28. Sun Sovanny was the director of the Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Siem Reap. Interview is 1 hour and 12 minutes long.
- Soun, Dany. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, May 31. Dany was a member of the art staff at the Cambodian Cultural Village. Interview is 1 hour and 16 minutes long.

- Tren, Dara. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 9. Dara was a member of the arts staff at the Cambodian Cultural Village. He was both a teacher and performer. Interview is 1 hour and 33 minutes long.
- Tuchman, Janice and Joseph Rosta.** Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, January 29. The ethnographer's parents were interviewed about their experience at the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class visit. Interview is 31 minutes long.
- Um, Sreyvan.** 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Takhamao, Cambodia, May 5. Sreyvan was a member of the Khmer Arts Ensemble. Interview is 1 hour and 30 minutes long.
- Uon, Oun. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October 9. Oun was a student in the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class and performed with the Children of Bassac Troupe. Interview is 50 minutes long.
- Verey, Henry Dickon. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording and handwritten notes. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 5. Dickon was on the board of Cambodian Living Arts and had served as president of the board. He also was working at Epic Arts in Kampot, Cambodia. After the formal interview, we continued discussing issues relating to classical dance in Cambodia. These were taken down in handwritten form. Formal recorded interview is 1 hour and 23 minutes long.
- Vong, Metry. 2011. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 29. Neak Kru Metry trained in classical dance before the Khmer rouge took over the country. After the war, Metry founded the Apsara Arts Association. During the research period she also taught at the Secondary School of Fine Arts. Interview is 1 hour and 23 minutes long.
- Vorn, Sarath. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 3. Sarath was the mask maker at the School of Art, Siem Reap. He also taught students at the school mask making. Interview is 1 hour and 12 minutes long.
- Yim, Sor. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital Recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 25. Sor was the junior supervisor of cultural and religious affairs at Amansara Resort. Interview was 1 hour long.
- You, Sam Ear. 2012. Interview with Author. Digital recording. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 21. You Sam Ear was a tour guide at the Cambodian Cultural Village. Interview is 1 hour and 7 minutes long.

Structured Interviews with Tourists

These interviews are separated from the semi-structured and unstructured interviews above. As discussed in the Introduction, tourists were asked a set of 5 interview questions after performance experiences in Siem Reap and notes were documented on site. When possible a tourist or a group of tourists were interviewed after performances at Temple Balcony Club, Kulen II, and other sites. Note: this method of structured interviewing was employed beginning on June 25. Prior to that date, data collected about tourist experiences were entered into field notes.

Tourist 1. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 25. Group of 3 people interviewed at Kulen II.

Tourist 2. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 26. 1 person interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.

Tourist 3. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 1. 1 person interviewed at Kulen II.

Tourist 4. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 1. 1 person interviewed at Kulen II.

Tourist 5. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 3. Group of 2 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.

Tourist 6. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 3. Group of 7 (5 adults and 2 children), 5 adults were interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.

Tourist 7. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 5. Group of 4 interviewed at Orphanage A performance

Tourist 8. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 6. Group of 2 interviewed after Amansara Resort organized performance at Wat Bo.

- Tourist 9. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 7. Group of 2 interviewed at Cambodian Cultural Village.
- Tourist 10. 2012. Question and Answer with performer. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 7. Response of three guests to performance at Amansara Resort. Note: Questions were very similar to anthropologist interview questions and were documented on the researchers questionnaire that evening.
- Tourist 11.** 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 10. Group of 2 interviewed at Kulen II.
- Tourist 12. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 12. 1 person interviewed at Orphanage A.
- Tourist 13. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 14. Group of 3 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 14. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 15. 1 person interviewed at the Cambodian Cultural Village.
- Tourist 15. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 19. Group of 2 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 16. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 19. 1 person interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 17. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 3. Group of 4, 1 person interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 18. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 3. Group of 3 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 19. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 5. Group of 2 interviewed at Orphanage A.
- Tourist 20. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 12. Group of 2 interviewed at Kulen II.
- Tourist 21. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 13. Group of 2 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 22. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 13. Group of 2, 1 person interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.

- Tourist 23.** 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 14. Group of 2 interviewed at Kulen II.
- Tourist 24. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 16. Group of 2 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 25. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 17. Large group, 1 person interviewed at the Cambodian Cultural Village.
- Tourist 26. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 17. Group of 7, 5 adults interviewed at the Cambodian Cultural Village.
- Tourist 27. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 20. Large group, 1 person interviewed at Smile of Angkor.
- Tourist 28. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 21. 1 person interviewed at the Cambodian Cultural Village.
- Tourist 29. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 21. 1 person interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 30. 2012.** Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 26. Group of 10, 3 people interviewed at Kulen II.
- Tourist 31. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 27. Group of 2 interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.
- Tourist 32. 2012. Interview with Author. Handwritten notes. Siem Reap, Cambodia, August 29. 1 person interviewed at Temple Balcony Club.

Appendix C: Glossary of Key Terms

Aphirorks: To preserve, to conserve.

Aphivordth: To develop.

Apsara: A celestial dancing being with origins in Hindu mythology.

Apsara Mera: The central figure in Apsara Dance.

Bai sei (singular and plural): A type of offering used in Khmer ceremonies such as Samphea Kru. Bai sei often are made of leaf fronds that are folded into triangles of different sizes and attached to young palm trunks and topped with jasmine. They also can be made with gold or silver colored paper.

Bangkeut: To create

Beer dance: A folk dance choreographed by Ieng Sithul, Soeur Vuthy and Nop Thyda during the research period. The dance depicts the process through which the distillery creates the perfect beer.

Blessing Dance: A classical dance often performed at the beginning of a ceremony or event to bless the audience. Traditionally a group of either five or seven dancers perform the dance. The dancers bless the audience by throwing petals on them.

Bokatao: A traditional form of Khmer martial arts.

Buong suong: A buong suong is a classical dance ritual during which through their movements dancers are promising offerings in exchange for divine assistance. Scholars argue that the buong suong may be the oldest classical dance still performed.

Friendship Dance: A classical dance that was frequently performed during diplomatic events in the 1950s and 1960s. Dancers would enter the stage holding Cambodian flags and flags of visiting dignitaries.

Kben: Pantaloon that are used in dance practice and for the performance of Nirong, Yak, and Swa roles. They are made of a long piece of fabric that is secured by placing the middle of the fabric around the waist, twisting the remaining fabric into a tail, and feeding it through the legs. The tail is secured with a dance belt.

Kbach: The Cambodian word for gesture. It often refers to hand, arm, and leg gestures in dance.

Kbach baat: The basic series of gestures and movements that make up the basis of robam boran. These gestures (particularly the basic gestures for Nirong) are learned across most of the dance and theater genres in Cambodia.

Kbach baat yak: The basic gestures that make up the basis for the giant role in robam boran.

Kre: The Cambodian word for bed. The kre is a common part of the stage set with many possible meanings. For example: sometimes, as in the abduction of Seda from the Reamker it denotes an actual bed; sometimes it denotes a position of authority (like a throne); and sometimes it denotes an isolated space like an island.

Lakhon bassac: A form of folk theater that employs song, music and dance to portray stories from classic Khmer literature in a melodramatic way.

Lakhon khol: Cambodia's all-male masked dance drama, which focuses on tales from the Reamker.

Lakhon mahori: A form of folk dance drama that employs simple story telling, folk dance, and spoken theater and is accompanied by a particular type of orchestra.

Lakhon yike: An ancient form of musical theater or opera characterized by the use of a drum called the skor yike. Dance, song, acting, and gesture follow the patterns of the drum.

Lok da: A way to refer to a respected and influential male elder.

Lok Kru: A male teacher.

M'kot: Crowns worn by performers in many classical dances.

Monkey dance: This comic classical dance demonstrates basic gestures of the monkey role, and it draws some sequences from the Reamker.

Neak Kru: A female teacher.

Neang: The Cambodian word for female. In classical dance it connotes doing the female role, the gestures associated with goddess and princesses.

Neang Seda: Sita, the female protagonist in the Ramayana.

Neary chea chour: Literally girls in a line. This classical dance is of unknown provenance. The dance is about the beauty of women and is fairly simple to execute compared to some of the more elaborate classical dances.

Nirong: Refers to the male role in classical dance. The gestures in this role are those of the gods and princes.

Pchum ben: A 15-day ceremony honoring the ancestors.

Phnhievtesachar: A tourist, tourists.

Pin peat: The orchestra used to accompany classical dance, many other forms of performing arts, and religious ceremonies.

Ramourk: Colloquially known as a Tuk Tuk, this popular form of transportation comprised of a three-wheeled cart that seats four attached to a motorbike.

Ream Leak Choup Leak: This is an excerpt from the later part of the Reamker. In this excerpt, Hanuman (the monkey king) leaves his horse in the woods. While he is gone Preah Ream's (Rama's) sons steal the horse. When discovered, they battle Hanuman leaving him tied in the forest.

Reamker: The Cambodian version of the Ramayana

Ream Eyso: A demon in Cambodian mythology. Ream Eyso is one half of a pair that is in a never-ending cycle of battle, a battle that brings the yearly rains.

Robam boran (Classical Dance): This is the current Cambodian term used to describe the form of dance that many scholars argue originated in the Angkorean period (and which is the subject of this dissertation. Literally the term means ancient dance. Some refer to the form as robam kbach boran, dance of ancient gestures, but no dancers I spoke to did this. In Siem Reap some dancers refer to the form as a whole as robam apsara. This does not occur in Phnom Penh.

Robam kngork pailin: A folk-dance based on a legend from Pailin province in which a magical peacock advises the King and brings happiness to the villagers. The dance imitates peacock and peahen mating rituals.

Robam nesat: A folk dance inspired by traditional Khmer fishing techniques.

Robam propeiny: Cambodia's folk dance genre. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts developed these dances based on the traditions of the different ethnic groups in Cambodia.

Robam tep apsar (Apsara Dance): A classical dance created in the 1962, which depicts the celestial beings at play in a garden.

Samteng: To perform

Samphea: A respectful gesture of greeting in which the palms are brought together.

Samphea kru: A ceremony to honor teachers that takes place in Classical dance. There are multiple forms of samphea kru, a daily honoring of teachings, a more elaborate weekly honoring of teachers, and an annual ceremony to request permission to train, perform and teach.

Sampot: A skirt that is formed by wrapping a long ream of cloth around the waist. The Classical dance costume for the female role includes a silk shimmering sampot.

Sbek thom: Large shadow puppet theater.

Selepak: Art, usually used to refer to the performing arts.

Swa: The Cambodian word for monkey. The monkey is an important element of Cambodian mythology (inspired in part by Hindu influences). As such the monkey plays a major role in robam boran, lakhon khol, and sbek thom.

Tep Monorom: a classical dance in which the dancers, playing princes and princesses, pray to become apsaras and they are transformed into the celestial beings.

Tesachar: tourism

Tum Teav: Often called the Cambodian Romeo and Juliet, Tum Teav is the tragic story of two young lovers who meet a similar fate to that of the Shakespearian pair. Tum Teav is a popular tale that has been used as the inspiration for films, plays, and, of course, lakhon yike.

Tway kru: A daily or weekly ceremony to honor the spirits of the classical dance (and music) performed to promote health for performers.

Water festival: The water festival marks the beginning of the fishing season and the reversal of the Tonle Sap tidal lake.

Yak: Giant or demon. In classical dance the giant/demon role is considered to be the most powerful and is often performed first in ceremonies that involve the kbach baat.

Appendix D: Figures

Introduction



Figure 1. **Tanzconnexion Demonstration**

Khmer Arts performers demonstrate Sophiline Cheam Shapiro's *Stained* at the Tanzconnexion workshop.



Figure 2. **National Museum Preparation**

Children of Bassac performers prepare for opening night at the National Museum.



Figure 3. **Children of Bassac with Candles**

Children of Bassac performers hold candles for the Samphea Kru as they wait to begin the performance at the National Museum.



Figure 4. **Performing Samphea Kru**

Children of Bassac dancers perform a version of the Samphea Kru for tourists.

Chapter 1



Figure 5. School of Art Students at Wat Tanei

Performers (students and alumni from the School of Art, Siem Reap) change into costumes by candle light for the private performance at Wat Tanei on January 13, 2012.



Figure 6. The Private Dinner

The private dinner set for two Amansara Resort guests on January 13, 2012.



Figure 7. Apsara Dance Pose

Apsara Dance performers pose in front of Wat Tanei before the private dinner begins on January 13, 2012.



Figure 8: Waiting For Blessing Dance

Performers in costumes for Blessing Dance wait for Amansara Resort guests to finish their meal.



Figure 9. **A Bas-Relief of the Sea of Churning Milk**

Apsaras can be seen in the top half of the photo, they fly into the air after their creation in the turbulent churning of the waters.



Figure 10. **Smile of Angkor Show**

The Churning of the Sea of Milk is brought to life in the Smile of Angkor show.



Figure 11. Arts Event at the White Building

An arts event hosted at the White Building in 2011. All the way to the left, Belle demonstrates dance gestures to children from the Bassac community.



Figure 12. Practice at the Secondary School of Fine Arts

Folk Dance students at the current Secondary School of Fine Arts practice the kbach baat nirong.



Figure 13. **Khmer New Years 2011**

A ceremony performed by the Khmer Arts Ensemble for Khmer New Years 2011. Many teachers, friends of the company, and family members attended the event.



Figure 14. **School of Art, Siem Reap**

Kim Boran teaches more advanced students at the School of Art, Siem Reap in 2012.

Chapter 2



Figure 15. **Rainy Rehearsal at the Cultural Village**
Arts Staff at the Cambodian Cultural Village try to stay dry at a surprise late night rehearsal on August 22, 2012.



Figure 16. **Cultural Village Performance**
Cambodian Cultural Village arts staff performs Apsara Dance as part of a larger piece called The Immortal Life of the Khmer Soul on May 21, 2012.



Figure 17. Rehearsal for the Launch of Cambodia Beer

Children of Bassac performers rehearse the beer dance for the launch of Cambodia Beer. Note that in this section of the dance the performers are becoming the mechanism of the distillery.



Figure 18. Opening Scene of the Beer Launch Performance

This is the opening scene of the Beer Launch performance. Here the male dancers from the Children of Bassac Troupe transform into stone carvers at Angkorean Temples (in contrast with the machines they become later). Not all performers were comfortable in these costumes



Figure 19. **Children of Bassac Perform the Beer Dance**
Children of Bassac troupe members perform the segment of the Beer Dance described in this dissertation.



Figure 20. **Blessing Dance**
Blessing Dance performed at the launch of Cambodia Beer



Figure 21. **Buong Suong Preparations**
Dancers place the finishing touches on the offerings for the buong suong requested by Cambodia Beer.



Figure 22. **The Buong Suong Begins**
Dancers begin the buong suong requested by Cambodia Beer.



Figure 23. Rehearsing for the ICBC Bank Opening
The Children of Bassac and some ringers rehearse for Neary Chea Chour for the ICBC Bank opening.



Figure 24. Preparing for Neary Chea Chour
Dancers prepare to perform Neary Chea Chour (and other dances) at the ICBC Bank Opening.



Figure 25. Neary Chea Chour Begins
Neary Chea Chour is finally performed on stage after hours of preparation.



Figure 26. Posing With a Chinese Artist
Dancers from the Children of Bassac Troupe still dressed in costumes for Neary Chea Chour pose with a Chinese artist who was flown to Phnom Penh for the ICBC event.



Figure 27. Teaching Ream Leak Choup Leak at the Cultural Village
A Teacher at the Cambodian Cultural Village teaches Ream Leak Choup Leak to a member of the art staff during a busy rehearsal



Figure 28. Ream Leak Choup Leak Rehearsal Continues
Rehearsals of Ream Leak Choup Leak continue on the stage in the mini-theater at the Cambodian Cultural Village.



Figure 29. **Poor Turnout at Dance Class**

Classical dance classes were supposed to take place in this pavilion at the Cambodian Cultural Village. Few students attend rendering the space empty.



Figure 30. **Backstage at the Cultural Village**

The backstage area of the Big Theater at the Cambodian Cultural Village where the costumes are kept, on May 8, 2012 women at different stages of pregnancy were repairing costumes in this room and taught the ethnographer how to replace sequins on the bracelets.

Chapter 3



Figure 31. Rehearsal for Tep Monorom

Teachers from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh (far right wearing hat and center in the blue blouse) instruct dancers during the rehearsal for Tep Monorom at the opening ceremony of the New Year's Festival at the Cambodian Cultural Village on December 28, 2011.



Figure 32. Many Troupes at the New Year's Festival

Dancers from many dance troupes in Siem Reap and the School of Art, Siem Reap rehearse Tep Monorom for the New Year's Festival opening ceremony at the Cambodian Cultural Village on December 28, 2011.



Figure 33. **Performing Tep Monorom**
Dancers perform Tep Monorom at the New Year's Festival opening ceremony on December 30, 2011.



Figure 34. **Prayers Before Performing**
An alumna from the School of Art, Siem Reap prays at the school before performing at the New Year's Festival on January 1, 2012.



Figure 35. Judges Evaluate Performers

Judges from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Department of Art in Siem Reap evaluate performances by the troupes in Siem Reap on January 1, 2012.



Figure 36. Performing Apsara Dance

Students and alumni for the School of Art, Siem Reap perform Apsara Dance for the judges on January 1, 2012.



Figure 37. Leaders Receive Troupe's Evaluation

Certificates were handed out to leaders of each Siem Reap dance troupe grading their troupe's performance at the closing ceremony on January 1, 2012.



Figure 38. Photo Op at the Bayon

Young men and women dressed in dance costumes including Apsara Mera (three-pointed crown), Ream Eyso (red), and peacocks wait to take pictures with tourists at the Bayon.



Figure 39. **Carved Faces Atop Temple**

The Bayon temple is known for 52 towers, each topped with four carved faces pointing in each direction.



Figure 40. **Animatronic Head at Smile of Angkor**

The giant animatronic head feature at the Smile of Angkor.



Figure 41. Candle Dance Performed.
Candle Dance as performed at the Smile of Angkor.



Figure 42. Buong Suong Performed
Buong Suong as performed at the Smile of Angkor.



Figure 43. **Apsara Dance Performed**
Apsara dance as performed at the Smile of Angkor.



Figure 44. **Inside the Bayon Head**
The Bayon head at smile of Angkor turns around toward the end of the performance to reveal monks in rows sitting within a lotus.



Figure 45. **Finale of Smile of Angkor**

All costumes are represented in the finale of Smile of Angkor. Behind the waterfall you can see dancers dressed as bas-reliefs from the temples.



Figure 46. **Workshop for Young Artist Association**

Alumnae from the School of Art, Siem Reap experiment with new choreography at one of the first contemporary dance workshops for the Young Artist Association.

Chapter 4



Figure 47. **Abduction of Sita Performed**

The Abduction of Sita, an excerpt from the Reamker, performed by School of Art, Siem Reap alumni and students for National Culture Day 2012 in Siem Reap Province.



Figure 48. **National Culture Day Stage**

This is a view of the stage that was prepared for the National Culture Day 2012 event in Siem Reap Province.



Figure 49. **Blessing Dance at National Culture Day**
Blessing Dance performed by a local dance troupe at the National Culture Day 2012 celebration in Siem Reap province. Note that the dancers are facing officials and honored guests during the dance.



Figure 50. **Sophiline Cheam Shapiro Instructs Ensemble Members**
Sophiline Cheam Shapiro perfects the technique of Khmer Arts Ensemble members as they practice the Kbach Baat.



Figure 51. **Khmer Arts Ensemble New Work**
Members of the Khmer Arts Ensemble present work that they created during afternoon development sessions.



Figure 52. **A Rehearsal for *Stained***
Sophiline Cheam Shapiro instructs Khmer Arts Ensemble members Chao Socheata and Mot Paran in a rehearsal for *Stained*, the original work presented at Tanzconnexion.



Figure 53. “My Name Is” Rehearsal

Chamroeun Sophea, Hou Cheychanrith, and Nget Rady rehearse for “*Khnhom Chhmouh*” (My Name Is), choreographed by Chuvman (Belle) Sodachivy, at the French Cultural Center.



Figure 54. Indigenous Awards Ceremony

Final positions are decided at the dress rehearsal for the Indigenous Awards Ceremony. Performers from Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri Province are in the front, the dancers from the Children of Bassac troupe fill in behind.



Figure 55. Performance at Chayyam Restaurant
Chamroeun Sophea performing a classical dance at Chayyam restaurant.



Figure 56. Monkeying Around at Meta House
Male dancers from the Children of Bassac Troupe perform Monkey Dance in the showing at Meta House.



Figure 57. Attendance is Low at School of Art

Arn Sophearika teaches the third and fourth year classical dancer students at the School of Art Siem Reap in the morning. Only half of the students that should be in attendance are present.

Chapter 5



Figure 58. Teachers Visit Temple Balcony Club

Teachers from the School of Art, Siem Reap, a volunteer at the school and the ethnographer participate in the photo-op at Temple Balcony Club.



Figure 59. **Backstage at Kulen II**

Preparation for performance is underway in the backstage area of Kulen II. The door to the parking lot in the back makes it possible to maintain divisions between the tourists and the tourate.



Figure 60. **Stage at Kulen II**

The Bayon head is used as the focal point of the stage set at Kulen II restaurant. Dancers on stage perform a folk dance called Robam Kuos Tralork (Coconut Shell Dance).



Figure 61. **Apsaras at Kulen II**
Apsara Dance as performed at Kulen II.



Figure 62. **Getting the Shot at Kulen II**
A young tourist obstructs views at Kulen II to take a better photo.



Figure 63. Tourists Get Stage Time
Tourists go on stage during the photo-ops at Kulen II.



Figure 64. Temple Balcony Dressing Room
A lean-to on the roof is used as a dressing room at Temple Balcony Club.



Figure 65. **Soft Boundary at Temple Balcony**

Apsara Dance performed at Temple Balcony Club. Note: the dancers are all in slightly different positions, a sign that they are not all well trained. On the left, you can see the stairs the performers use to access the dressing room making it impossible to create severe boundaries between tourist and tourate.



Figure 66. **Themed Décor at Temple Balcony**

Ream Leak Choup Leak as performed at Temple Balcony Club. Here you can see various allusions to the temple theme including the column with vaguely Angkorean detailing.



Figure 67. Tourist Attempts to Copy a Pose

Tourists in the photo-ops at Temple Balcony Club often attempt to copy gestures observed in the performance. Note the individual raising his leg in a yoga-like pose.



Figure 68. CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class

Students in the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class perform Neary Chea Chour for tourists (including the ethnographers parents) on January 29, 2012.



Figure 69. Ethnographer joins the Performance
The ethnographer (in all black) performs kbach baat yak with fellow CLA Classical and Folk Dance Class students. (Photo by Janice Tuchman.)



Figure 70. Cardamom Dance at CLA Class
Students from the CLA Folk and Classical Dance perform a folk dance called Robam Bes Kravagn (Cardamom Picking Dance) for tourists on January 29, 2012.



Figure 71. **Basic Gestures for Emotion**
Students in the CLA Folk and Classical Dance Class demonstrate basic gestures for emotion at the request of tourists on January 29, 2012.