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Archiving Cultures

Heritage, Community and the
Making of Records and
Memory

JEANNETTE A. BASTIAN



Archiving Cultures

Archiving Cultures defines and models the concept of cultural archives, focusing on how diverse communities express and record their heritage and collective memory and why and how these often-intangible expressions are archival records. Analysis of oral traditions, memory texts and performance arts demonstrate their relevance as records of their communities.

Key features of this book include definitions of cultural heritage and archival heritage with an emphasis on intangible cultural heritage. Aspects of cultural heritage such as oral traditions, performance arts, memory texts and collective memory are placed within the context of records and archives. It presents strategies for reconciling intangible and tangible cultural expressions with traditional archival theory and practice and offers both analog and digital models for constructing cultural archives through examples and vignettes.

The audience includes archivists and other information workers who challenge Western archival theory and scholars concerned with interdisciplinary perspectives on tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This book is relevant to scholars involved with non-textual materials and will appeal to a range of academic disciplines engaging with "the archive".

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**Heritage, Community and the
Making of Records and Memory**

Jeannette A. Bastian

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Introduction: A Cultural Archive

A Cultural Archives

In June 1990, representatives of the Republic of Senegal and the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands met on the National Mall in Washington, DC, a landscaped park and national space in the heart of the city. They were participants in the Smithsonian Institution's annual summer Folklife Festival organized and presented by its Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. The two-week-long festival featured a broad array of cultural activities and events from Senegal and the Virgin Islands. Artisans, storytellers, musicians, cooks, dancers and performers from both regions celebrated and shared their traditions. The Smithsonian Folklife Festival had already become a tradition. Started in 1967 as an "international exposition of living cultural heritage" (Smithsonian Folklife, n.d.), the annual event continues today to showcase a wide variety of cultures from around the world.

During the course of that two-week exposition, Senegalese and Virgin Islanders discovered many points of similarity between their two regions. Parallels in dance, food, music and oral traditions were sources of mutual discovery and delight. But in addition to a common African heritage, there were other connections that, while not overtly on display, bound the two regions together. Senegal and the Virgin Islands are both former colonies -- one of France and one of Denmark -- and both share a history of exploitation and violence through the tragedies of the slave trade.

Significantly, both cultures have relied on a blend of intangible and tangible cultural traditions for remembering and conveying their pasts as well as for conducting their presents. The mediums of transmission are primarily oral, musical and performative. Given the deeply intertwined genealogy and history that these two cultures share, their coming together was a source of knowledge and affirmation for both.

2 *Introduction: A Cultural Archive*

It celebrated heritage, cultural transference and the ongoing living reality of dynamic cultural evolution, to the extent that this event led to the inauguration of an annual folklife festival in the Virgin Islands, with Senegal participating in that first local festival on the island of St Croix in 1992.

But what if these and similar celebrations open a wider window into other complex relationships? What if these living cultural traditions, recognized as such by UNESCO in 2003, also function as the dynamic records of their communities and as the archives of their evolving history, expressed orally, musically, performatively and artifactually, rather than through text? And if they do, what then would archivists, historians, humanists, librarians, sociologists, academics and societies generally need to recognize and understand about cultural expressions and about records and their diverse forms, about their relationship to the communities that create and utilize them, and about the resilience and dynamism of archival values, so that they can place those expressions on an equal footing with those primarily textual expressions traditionally labeled as “records”? And, if these expressions are records that are as valid and legitimate as any text-based representations, how would academics, archivists and others rethink and reinterpret traditional archival understandings of records, records creation and recordkeeping¹ in order to fully embrace them?

This vignette of cultural recognition and community empowerment between the Virgin Islands and Senegal at the Smithsonian event in 1990 illustrates a small piece of the story that I wish to tell; it is part of a wider narrative of expansion, equity and inclusion in the archives.² Communities and societies throughout the world express and document their heritage and cultures through a broad variety of tangible and intangible forms and formats, including, but not limited to, oral traditions, performative arts, festivals, commemorations, materiality and monuments. Often not recognized as records in the traditional Western sense, these dynamic expressions in fact form the legitimate archives of a community and are critical components of documenting societies.

It is becoming increasingly clear that Western archival models, codified in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and focusing on the administrative needs of governments and institutions, have proven inadequate to fully accommodate the variety of memory and records of a global society. New models are needed to meet the demands of an international, post-colonial and decolonial environment. This book hypothesizes such a model as a cultural archives. At the heart of this hypothesis is an understanding of “archives” that considers intangible cultural expressions and tangible documentation equally as records

and asks how they can be legitimately and seamlessly accommodated and subsumed within archival practice. Most importantly, what kind of framework will accommodate these cultural expressions, which are often in formats that are not generally recognized as archival? The interweaving of tangible and intangible cultural knowledge, of the archives as well as the repertoire, of the written as well as the performative – this is the archival challenge!

Historically we tend to think of archives as written, as fixed, as old and non-current, but in a cultural archives records are not fixed and static, rather they are flexible and dynamic, often embodied within people; they are responsive and adaptive to the needs of their communities. All cultures may be archiving cultures, but each culture expresses itself in highly individualistic ways. That is, every culture creates and perpetuates its own strategies for maintaining and passing on its history and its memory, for bearing evidence, and for holding its community accountable. We can call these strategies traditions and heritage, or we can call them records and archives.

One fundamental question is whether a material archival tradition can also be the appropriate vehicle for non-material expressions. I contend that the trajectory of recordmaking and keeping (stretching before and beyond the oft-cited Greek *archon*) from rock art to digital bits strongly suggests that this activity conforms to no tradition other than the human need to communicate, to record, to remember and, in both a positive and a negative sense, to control one's environment. In the 21st century, as formerly colonized and marginalized peoples, communities and nations assert their right to control their own cultures and identities, it seems clear that for archives to be globally accepted places of memory and accountability they must recognize and embrace the multiple ways – tangible and intangible, textual and oral, fixed and dynamic – in which societies document themselves.

Embracing a wide variety of non-textual forms and formats of recording within archival structures not only assists in achieving a deeper understanding of knowledge and memory production, but, importantly, establishes parity and equity in the value and significance of that knowledge and memory within the context of the community that produces it. There are many ways in which communities articulate and record themselves and “archive” their own culture and history. If archives are truly the storehouses of our collective memory, then the archives cannot be selective and choose only to store memory that conforms to a particular tradition or function within a particular framework. In order to be relevant, meaningful and enduring in a global

society, the archives must be ready to represent everyone and must have the mechanisms and the strategies to do so

Definitions of “culture” tend to support this expansive and inclusive perspective. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). Cultures, in this construct, form parallel streams in which each culture determines its own meanings, knowledge and symbols and methods of communicating that knowledge. Each stream is equally relevant to its particular society. In this formulation, written text may parallel oral text or performance text as cultural symbols that transmit patterns of meanings to a particular society or community. Context, or a recognition of the society from which particular patterns flow, including its recordmaking and keeping traditions, is the central key to recognizing these symbols and patterns.

Similarly, sociologist Stuart Hall defined culture in terms of shared meanings between a group, arguing that culture is not so much a set of things as a set of practices and processes: “Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings – the ‘giving and taking’ of meaning – between the members of a society or group” (Hall, 2013, p. xvii). These processes and these meanings may be expressed in numerous diverse ways and formats, yet be equally relevant.

This emphasis on cultural contexts is echoed in recent writings by archivists themselves. Australian Chris Colwell, referencing Michael Buckland’s discussion of process, notes that “the record as process, like information as process, is situational. In each context what to record and how to record it, and indeed what is considered a record, will be different” (Colwell, 2020, p. 23). As British archival theorist, Geoffrey Yeo also observes, “Context, as so often, is all important” (Yeo, 2008, p. 141).

Why This Book?

This book is being written against a background of evolving global sensibilities to issues of social justice and archival silences. The emergence of formerly colonized entities into fully realized nations in the mid-20th century not only accelerated the questioning of the hegemony of the West but also highlighted nationalistic desires for self-determination and self-realization. The records of both colonial and precolonial pasts are heavily implicated in that quest. It is inevitable, given the history of colonization, that Western traditions have

for several centuries dominated discourse in determining what constitutes an archives, and, by implication, a cultural archives.

The cultural expressions of marginalized, often non-Western societies have been either sidelined as folklore, siloed as pertaining only to specific groups, or generally relegated to the past. While there are hopeful signs that the tide is turning as the societies of former colonies increasingly establish their own voices, decolonize their history and reject imposed frameworks, the blending of all voices is still a distant, and possibly unachievable, aspiration. Nonetheless, it is an aspiration that archival practices, despite their reputation as representatives and creators of dominant narratives, can model.

The making and keeping of records have a very long history. While some historians and archeologists credit the invention of writing with the making of records and identify the clay tablets of the Assyrians (ca 2100 BCE) as the earliest effort at recordkeeping, others point to the petroglyphs and rock art of Indigenous communities thousands of years earlier as markers to record events.

Jamaican archeologist Ivor Connolley, for example, analyzing the rock art of the Taino, writes

Pictograms, that is, drawings of a swimming turtle, a bird in flight, a crawling iguana, a glaring owl, a cautious coney, a cacique's staff, may be seen as a descriptive record of items of the early people's physical inventory, but it is more than that. Petroglyphs, that is, incisions or engravings on cave walls may also be seen as a record of a personal spiritual journey ... Through these drawings, engravings and sculptures the early ethnic groups have shared with us a story of their religion ... their hierarchy, their division of labour, and their political structure.

(Connolley, 2018, pp. 651–652)

Through the centuries, especially as societies moved from orality to literacy, the keeping of records became a central administrative activity for governments, for policy-making, for evidence, but primarily for bureaucratic control. During the era of European conquest in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, recordkeeping practices were critical tools of the colonizers, not only for claiming land and creating boundaries but also for controlling populations. By the late 19th and early 20th century, Western archivists and recordkeepers were consolidating and encoding centuries, if not millennia, of archival practice into manuals that hugely influenced their archival protocols and continue to influence archival practice today.

But over several decades, and intensifying in the first two of this century, a proliferation of writings and presentations by archivists and others have advocated for change within the archives, recognizing that the structures and goals of the archives no longer respond to social needs, and, in fact, often work against them. To many of these authors and theorists, the archives is hopelessly broken because the very rationale for the archives' existence is the issue. But this perspective may be an oversimplification. The protean nature of the archives suggests that the records of oppression can also be tools against oppression, the records of control can also be means to reparations, the archives of domination are also sites for social justice. Kirsten Weld, exploring the revelations of the police archives in Guatemala, writes "archival thinking demands that we see archives not only as data to be mined by researchers but also as more than the sum of their parts – instruments of political action" (Weld, 2014, p. 13).

While changes in archival practices and attitudes have evolved and continue to evolve, the built-in paradoxes of the archives make it difficult to imagine wholesale a model for change. Nonetheless, this book explores the possibility that, despite the often oppressive and dominant nature of archival structures, reconceptualizing these structures as expanded spaces that accommodate the material and non-material, the dominant and marginalized, and the oppressive and victimized alike may frame a model for change that gives them new relevant life. And archival voices advocating the reconsideration of records within the context of the intangible and non-textual are becoming louder and more insistent, foregrounding in particular marginalized, Indigenous and formerly colonized communities. As Evelyn Wareham notes on the records of Pacific Islands communities, they are typically "stories, songs, dances, myths, and traditions passed through generations by word of mouth" – the very things that give communities identity (Wareham, 2002, p. 196).

Modeling an archival perspective that accommodates and equalizes both the textual archives and the cultural archives requires attention to a number of conceptual threads that are woven throughout these chapters. Foremost among these is defining the record itself in a way that is malleable enough to accommodate a range of markers and expressions and yet not so protean that it loses its meaning entirely. But other developments in the area of cultural heritage and of archives at the end of the 20th century suggest that an even broader understanding of documentation is needed.

These developments include the global recognition by UNESCO of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the scholarly debates that this has

engendered. They include the postmodern academic archival turn, which both stretches and endangers the concept of archives. Such developments expand notions of heritage and of archives beyond the text, and complicate those notions. Additional threads importantly include postcolonialism and the subsequent reinterpretation of national heritages by formerly colonized entities, specifically in the areas of language and literacy, orality and performance, memory and artifact. Gaps in the archives, particularly those relating to marginalized and oppressed communities, increase the urgency to uncover and embrace alternate forms of records. Woven within these threads are global issues of social justice, equity and transparency – all significant factors in fashioning a holistic understanding of cultures and societies that can be harmonized with the values and principles that guide archival praxis.

Reimagining Archives

The need for new perspectives in the understanding of archives and records, together with the recognition that traditional methods no longer meet societal needs, has been growing since the turn of the 21st century. Although fueled by societal turns towards globalism and the imperatives of social justice, perhaps no factor has been more influential in driving that need than the realization within archival and academic communities of the power of archives, the non-neutrality of the record itself, and the consequences of that power and non-neutrality for all users – not only for academics and curators, but also for governments and policy-makers. The growing recognition of the injustices of imperialism and the rights of Indigenous peoples and an increasing desire by communities and groups to assert and express their identities combined with the progressively sophisticated technological affordances to do so, have all fueled a desire for awareness and acceptance of recordkeeping practices beyond the textual.

Unsettling the archives by reconceptualizing and extending archival theory not only works towards decolonizing the archives, but also enhances global cultural patrimony by embracing an expansive and inclusive understanding of records creation. As Hall pointed out, “What is important are the significant *breaks* – where old lines of thought are disrupted, older constellations displaced, and elements, old and new, are regrouped around a different set of premises and themes” (Hall, 1980, p. 57). My objective then is to reimagine those “breaks” in an archival multiverse where all forms of “record” are equally treated, to disrupt and reimagine conventions, and to regroup around premises that fold accepted theory within expanded propositions.

Documenting all peoples within the archives has long been an aspiration of archivists, who need to move beyond the boundaries of Western conventions if they are to realize those aspirations, with the affordances of technology to help. We in the 21st century have the good fortune to live in a digital age where the possibilities for linking, illuminating, showcasing and creating access to both tangible and intangible records extend as far as our imaginations will take us. In the digital realm, where scholars are already exploring the potential for presenting a wide variety of cultural assets, the possibilities for expanding the archives in tandem with those explorations offer unprecedented opportunities for redefining traditional concepts.

To emphasize the universality of recordmaking and keeping, I focus particularly on those societies outside or on the edges of primarily Western traditions that express and record their collective heritage and memory in non-textual modes; I ask why and how these expressions should be considered and treated as archival. By engaging simultaneously with both the cultural heritage and the archival disciplines, I explore and interrogate archives from a cultural heritage point of view and cultural heritage from an archives view in order to construct a framework that embraces core archival theory and an array of cultural premises. The objective is to broaden and expand the concept of "archives" beyond the boundaries of currently accepted, primarily Western, archival tradition and to present a credible case for the equal inclusion of diverse recordmaking within the archives. Through each chapter, I hope to build a theoretical framework that accommodates both conventional archival records and the many and varied unconventional ways in which communities document themselves and their cultural traditions. Far from rejecting accepted Western archival theory, I intend to analyze aspects of it to explore whether and how it can be reinterpreted and re-purposed to accommodate oral traditions and other non-textual expressions.

This book is not so much an attempt to decolonize the archives as to flatten them out, to provide a level playing field for all expressions that can be considered records, to break down the archival box in which text and fixed records offer particular definitions of society, to broaden and deepen a definition of archival provenance that finds room for a flexible and expandable understanding of the creators and creations of records.

Structure of the Book

Climbing outside the archival box means building a case for inclusion of a variety of expressions to be considered archival. The first chapter

expands on the core threads of the book laid out in this Introduction. It considers both cultural heritage and archival heritage and follows the developing trajectory of those definitions up to the present. It explores the ways in which theorizing about "the archive" in other disciplines has influenced and expanded a general understanding of archives, and considers how thinking about records from a cultural heritage perspective changes our understanding of what a record is and what needs to be archived.

In Chapter 2, I address the central issue of the record and offer a discussion and analysis of the Western archival and textual legacy, together with its international contextualization. I make the case for thinking beyond accepted Western archival theory and considering a wide range of community expressions as cultural records. I connect established archives and records theories with dynamic cultural expressions, demonstrating why and how these expressions might fit within archival theory. Using examples from archives and other disciplines, I suggest how the combination of archival methodology and cultural heritage methodology might enhance understanding of non-traditional records, and begin to conceptualize this methodology, the thread of which carries through subsequent chapters.

Chapters 3 through 5 each address a different aspect of cultural expression, demonstrating how each fits within an archival matrix. Chapter 3 considers orality in terms of a text and investigates ways in which a variety of cultural heritage expressions become memory texts that function both as historical records and as evidence of actual events. Chapter 4 showcases the embodied archives of performances including dance, commemorations and celebrations. Chapter 5 focuses on the records of shifting collective and cultural memory and the place of community. It addresses the archival obligation to the records of memory and how that responsibility can be fulfilled. Technology and its potential in supporting new documentary paradigms are explored in Chapter 6, which also reflects on the critical importance of thinking archivally and concludes with a final example of unity within the archives.

A Note on the Author

It would be more than presumptuous of me to speak about culture and cultural heritage without declaring my own cultural roots. My own cultural journey includes a number of watershed events, as it does for most people. A Jewish, white, female, immigrant, I came to the United States from England as a teenager with my family. As a

young adult, I moved to the Caribbean – St Thomas, United States Virgin Islands – where I worked as a librarian and library administrator in public libraries and archives for over 25 years. During those years I took time off to live in Jamaica and study for an MPhil in Caribbean literature at the University of the West Indies. Reading Caribbean literature, particularly that of authors such as George Lamming and Samuel Selvon, both of whom had to leave the Caribbean to find a publisher and an audience, I began to understand the intricacies of Caribbean identity and colonial impositions. Eventually, I resumed my studies and, following a PhD at the University of Pittsburgh, taught Archives for 20 years at Simmons University in Boston, discovering a love not only for teaching but also for research and writing.

Now, a semi-retired academic, I have returned home to St Thomas and to my extended family and community. I am privileged to have been appointed Honorary Fellow at the University of the West Indies Department of Library and Information Studies, where I supervise and mentor students in the Department's nascent MPhil/PhD Program.

While my cultural orientation and my writing stems in large part from my varied exposure to living, traveling, working and studying in the Caribbean, it is also influenced by my "outsider" status as a non-West Indian and as an immigrant. Navigating one's place in a society that is not one's own requires a willingness to recognize oneself from without as well as within. Whether all these experiences qualify me to reflect on cultural heritage I cannot judge; I only know that these varied experiences have convinced me of the centrality of community, of cultural heritage, and of the critical importance of cultural acknowledgment for community and personal identity. I leave it up to the reader to make any further judgments about whether I am equipped to contribute in this space.

Notes

- 1 The term Recordkeeping is used throughout this book and follows American usage as found in the Society of American Archivists Dictionary, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/recordkeeping.html>
- 2 According to the Society of American Archivists Dictionary, the term "archives" has at least three different meanings: It may refer to collections of historical records; it may refer to the place where these records are kept; it may refer to the practice of organizing the records to bring them into an archives. In this volume, "archives" generally refers to collections of records but, as made clear through context, may also refer to a place.

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1 Cultural Heritage, Archival Heritage

Introduction

Archives and cultural heritage are a natural pairing. The archives and records of a society form part of its cultural heritage, and the archival institutions of that society are among the social institutions charged with responsibility for documenting, preserving and making those archives and records usable. Certainly, archivists see themselves as advocates, defenders and even shapers of the cultural record. The assumptions of these simple sentences, however, give no account of the complex nature of cultural heritage and archives. Social constructions, evolving identities and political implications dictate that, inevitably, judgments and choices about cultural and archival heritages will be made and values will be weighed. While some values will be key others will be sidelined. As cultural heritage advocates and archivists attempt to establish and consolidate the legacies of the societies they work within, they also become unwitting co-conspirators in influencing what is remembered and what is forgotten.

This chapter expands on some of the core themes of this book – cultural heritage, archival heritage and the relationships between them in the formation of a cultural archive. How does archival theory support cultural heritage? How do the values of cultural heritage fit into an archival model? How have academic ways of theorizing “the archive” influenced and broadened the general understanding of records and brought a cultural heritage perspective to the fore?

When cultural expressions are placed within an archival space and archives within a cultural space, some of the tangential, though distinct, disciplines that also claim a cultural and an archival heritage are brought into consideration. Archeology, anthropology, public history, performance arts and memory studies all point to the many ways that societies value, receive and impart information, express their identities

and record those expressions. But, although nations, communities and individuals express and record themselves in many ways, the human values that are being expressed and recorded are essentially similar. The outward trappings may differ, but the inner humanity is shared. It is this sharing of humanity that mandates equal consideration for all ways of expressing and recording and is the concern of this book.

From Monuments to Intangible Cultural Heritage

Until recently, cultural heritage has primarily been defined through Western eyes. Often seen as a weapon of European imperialism and a “privileging of the ‘written text’” (Butler, 2007, p. 39), scholars trace the beginnings of this appropriation of cultural heritage to ancient Alexandria, through the Greeks and Romans and thence to Europe. Culturalist Beverley Butler writes,

This particular line in cultural transmission has canonised and subsequently universalised a certain tradition as the cultural ‘norm’; this is a tradition synonymous not only with the possession of tangible, monumental heritage in the public sphere but also with the fixing or objectification of memory as written culture. Thus ‘the text’ and ‘the book’ are valourised over oral, memorising traditions (p. 35).

That this perspective was deeply exclusive became increasingly evident in the mid-20th century with the ebbing of colonialism and the rise of emergent nations. Nonetheless, it became the basis for definitions of cultural heritage by global entities.

As a bulwark against cultural heritage erasure, UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization), founded in 1945, was originally established to rebuild schools, libraries, museums and other educational and cultural institutions that had been destroyed in World War II. Recognizing that cultural heritage, both physical and conceptual, is always under siege, UNESCO’s first stated mission was to build peace through international cooperation in education, sciences and culture. This mission rapidly broadened to include the defining, safeguarding and preserving of cultural heritage. Today, UNESCO’s vision statement affirms that “by promoting cultural heritage and the equal dignity of all cultures, UNESCO strengthens the bonds among nations” (UNESCO in brief, n.d.).

Initially following the well-worn trajectory of privileging European cultural heritage, UNESCO’s definitions of cultural heritage, contested

and fiercely debated by member nations, have dramatically changed over the years. Beginning in 1954, UNESCO began a series of conferences and published conventions that refined and gradually expanded definitions of cultural heritage and developed strategies to protect that heritage.

Its first convention statement in 1954, *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, recognized only tangible heritage as cultural heritage, defining it in both physical and global terms as "movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people", and including the buildings designed to hold this cultural heritage, such as archives, libraries and museums (UNESCO, 1954). Examples of cultural heritage included monuments, archeological sites, works of art, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archeological interest, scientific collections and important collections of books or archives. Cultural heritage was tangible property physically situated in a recognized cultural heritage repository and assumed to be of universal value. It was a legacy defined by its historic or artistic value that included not only years of high European cultural traditions but also cultural artifacts acquired and appropriated from developing nations by the developed world.

Limiting cultural heritage to tangible culture reflected not only a European bias but a colonial one. Member nations outside the European sphere, including the colonized and formerly colonized, took immediate exception to this definition, lobbying extensively for the inclusion of definitions that reflected their cultures. It was a crusade that was to continue throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century. Despite these efforts, in 1972 the definition of heritage still focused on the physical and historical and was expanded only to include natural heritage. The *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, defined cultural heritage as, "monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science". The definition included buildings or groups of buildings whose architectural features or placement in the landscape were deemed to have universal value and certain man-made sites considered to have archeological significance (UNESCO, 1972).

In 1989, after continuing pressure from non-European member nations, the definition of cultural heritage was extended to include folklore. The *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* reads,

Folklore (or traditional and popular culture) is the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts

(UNESCO, 1989)

The term "folklore", however, did not resolve the issue, but continued to reflect European bias, essentially creating a second-order heritage. Pressure by non-European nations and territories continued and in 2001, UNESCO's *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* recognized that,

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations

(UNESCO, 2002)

This declaration set the stage for recognition of intangible cultural heritage on a par with the tangible, although it still took another year to make the final leap.

Nine years after Senegal and the Virgin Islands celebrated and shared their heritage on the Washington Mall, the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Heritage engaged with cultural heritage in a different arena. The Smithsonian convened an international forum to assess the implications of the 1989 UNESCO recommendations on the protection of traditional culture and folklore (Seitel, 2001). This conference, attended by representatives from thirty-seven countries, was a major driver for UNESCO's subsequent recognition of both material and non-material manifestations of cultural expressions.

In its 2003 adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, UNESCO based its recommendations on a Japanese model that had been in place since the 1950s. Until 2003 UNESCO had defined cultural heritage as objects from the past, but it was now willing to recognize intangible cultural heritage as cultural

practices that were both dynamic and living. In Article 2 of the Convention, it presented its new definition:

- 1 The “intangible cultural heritage” means 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. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.
- 2 The “intangible cultural heritage”, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:
 - a Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
 - b Performing arts;
 - c Social practices, rituals and festive events;
 - d Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - e Traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, *Text*, 2003).

In commenting on the shift from folklore to intangible cultural heritage, anthropologist Chiara Bortolotto points out that it represented a movement away from a European archival approach that emphasized not only history but objects fixed in time to an approach that, influenced by Japan’s long tradition of safeguarding the intangible aspects of its cultural heritage, was fluid and changeable. She writes that, “The reflection on what was formerly known as ‘folklore’ by UNESCO was an important stage in the shift toward the idea of intangible heritage”. She saw this as a movement towards a process-oriented approach following the Japanese model (Bortolotto, 2007, pp. 21–22).

In 2005, UNESCO was once again pressured to affirm its commitment to cultural diversity and expanded its 2003 recommendations in a stronger *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. This convention expanded the definition of cultural diversity to take a more holistic approach:

‘Cultural diversity’ refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural

diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used

(UNESCO, 2005)

UNESCO's most recent list of heritage categories specifies what it considers as cultural heritage:

- Tangible cultural heritage:
 - Movable cultural heritage (paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts)
 - Immovable cultural heritage (monuments, archeological sites and so on)
 - Underwater cultural heritage (shipwrecks, underwater ruins and cities)
- Intangible cultural heritage: oral traditions, performing arts, rituals (UNESCO, *Database*, 2003).

Central in the development of UNESCO's definition was the critical recognition that tangible and intangible heritage work in tandem. Tangible cultural heritage generally includes intangible elements and vice versa; neither stands alone. An example of this is Taino rock art, where depictions are physically etched into stone but what they represent is part of the community's orally transmitted knowledge. This interdependency was expressed by UNESCO's Assistant Director General for Culture in 2003 when the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* was first introduced. He stated that, "cultural heritage is a synchronized relationship involving society ... norms and values", and suggested that the symbiotic relationship between the tangible and intangible meant that, "the intangible heritage should be regarded as the larger framework within which tangible heritage takes on shape and significance (Bouchenaki, 2003).

Nonetheless, UNESCO's division of cultural heritage into siloed categories has drawn severe criticism from those who claim that culture must be all-inclusive and that its division creates a false dichotomy. Anthropologist Máiréad Nic Craith, for example, welcomes the shift in emphasis from tangible heritage to intangible heritage, but recommends thinking about heritage in more holistic terms and, "recognising the

significance of and interactions between the tangible and intangible, objects as well as cultural spaces, embracing both process and product, and placing particular emphasis on ordinary people as tradition definers and tradition bearers" (Craith, 2008, p. 57).

UNESCO's efforts to safeguard cultural heritage perpetuate these silos through the creation and maintenance of three programs that enable the annual nomination of heritage items by countries and their selection by committees. In 1972 UNESCO began listing *World Heritage Sites* in order to encourage the preservation of natural and cultural heritage that focuses on landscapes around the world (UNESCO World Heritage Center, 1992–2022). The *Memory of the World* (MOW) program, initiated in 1992, focuses on documentary heritage in a wide variety of formats from papyrus to digital files. Declaring that, "Our cultural heritage influences our collective memories", and that, "documentary heritage includes ... information that has been created and stored in a variety of ways and passed on from generation to generation" (UNESCO, *Memory*, n.d.), the program connects memory to heritage and suggests that cultural memory is embodied within the objects and artifacts themselves over time. In 2008, UNESCO established its *Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO, *Intangible*, n.d.) which seeks to showcase cultural diversity and cultural connections through intangible heritage around the world.

The paradox implicit in creating a permanent and fixed site for an impermanent and fluid heritage has been noted by many critics of the concept of intangible cultural heritage. In addition to questioning whether it is appropriate to set global criteria for community-based cultural practices, they note the incongruity of safeguarding something that is always in process. Cultural heritage scholar Marilena Alivizatou, for example, points out that, "Inherent in notions of safeguarding and preserving intangible heritage is the idea of making permanent the impermanent and therefore capturing and freezing that which is meant to appear, disappear and reappear" (Alivizatou, 2013, p. 10).

Cultural Heritage – A Broader Vision

UNESCO's definitions of cultural heritage accommodate the varied needs and demands of its member countries. Its primary focus is on safeguarding the diversity of its members' heritages by supporting them through a global imprimatur and making it clear that expressions of their heritage are universally acknowledged as benefits to humanity. While UNESCO's websites encompass an expansive human landscape, they focus on presentation and preservation, leaving broader analyses

of cultural heritage to others. Stuart Hall, for example, connected heritage with community, memory and identity when he suggested that, "We should think of The Heritage as a discursive practice. It is one of the ways in which the nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory ... nations construct identities by selectively binding their chosen high points and memorable achievements into an unfolding 'national story'" (Hall, 1999–2000, p. 5).

Hall supported a comprehensive approach to cultural heritage, characterizing it as dynamic and fluid and including a wide variety of institutions and practices. He took strong exception to the propensity for only "keeping what already exists" (Hall, p. 3). Rather he saw cultural heritage as both an active and a living activity that existed together with the heritage of the past – a heritage that marginalizes no-one but includes the full diversity of the nation and the society.

In 2002 "heritage" was similarly defined as dynamic and integral to identity by the International Council of Monuments and Sites, a non-governmental organization associated with UNESCO:

Heritage is a broad concept and includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as biodiversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of historic development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life

(ICOMOS, 2002, p. 4)

And going even further towards including both tangible and intangible, the Center for Heritage and Society at an academic institution characterizes heritage as the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects and culture as well as the range of contemporary activities, meanings and behaviors that we draw from them (UMass Amherst, n.d.).

All of the three definitions given in the preceding paragraphs support an expansive concept of "heritage" that is society- and community-driven, that speaks not only to the past but to the present and future, that supports an understanding of heritage as the legacy of the past in the lived experience of today, that recognizes the passing of this legacy on to the future, and that is intimately connected to the ways in which a society understands itself.

Importantly, in these definitions, "heritage" manifests in no one specific form or format but encompasses the full range of human

and societal expressions and activities whether they be material, non-material, or natural, including photographs, documents, books and manuscripts, as well as traditions, oral history, performing arts, social practices, traditional craftsmanship, representations, rituals, and knowledge and skills transmitted from generation to generation within a community. In addition, places and the environment are considered part of cultural heritage, joining community identity to the natural landscape.

Characteristics of Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage as presented above has core elements that include specific contexts and environments, tangible and intangible expressions of societal and community values and evidence of these values over time. It exists simultaneously in the past and in the present, holds and creates memory, is both historical and dynamic, and tells and transmits the human narrative in multiple ways.

An example of the multiple facets of cultural heritage might be a Caribbean carnival parade with its tangible costumes, floats and traditional troupes, its intangible music and street performances, and its historical memory and community narrative. Like all parades, carnivals take place and are contextualized within specific landscapes. As annual events, they are transmitted through generations and, while the costumes and the themes change yearly, the overall ethos and motive of the event and its relationship to the community remain the same, and thus demonstrate the dynamic yet legacy nature of cultural heritage

Archival Heritage

"Nothing begins life in an archive" wrote David Lowenthal, "and few things remain there forever" (Lowenthal, 2007, p. 193). Sharing similar characteristics with cultural heritage, but evinced in more prescriptive and formalized ways, archival heritage perpetuates a multi-pronged human legacy, at the same time past, present, constantly evolving and, as Lowenthal suggests, selected over time. Manifest not only through records and collections, but also through the theory and practices that have managed and preserved these collections, archival heritage has evolved through centuries of record-making and keeping. In addition, beginning in the mid-20th century, an academic "archival turn" claimed "the archive" as fundamental to its humanistic studies and positioned it "as a metaphor for the accumulated and distributed knowledge of communities and subject disciplines" (Cunningham, 2017, p. 55). This