

Defining Self: Performing Chinese Identity through Dance in Belfast

Wanting Wu (Queen's University Belfast)

Abstract

This paper takes an auto-ethnographic approach to questions of belonging and inclusion through anthropological analysis of my own experience as a Chinese dancer in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The Chinese community in Belfast has been well established since the 1970s, retaining a distinctive identity within a city dominated by 'British' and 'Irish' ethnicities. Dance plays a significant role in communal ceremonies and festivals as a symbol and enactment of Chinese identity. As a Beijing trained Chinese dancer who came to Belfast as a postgraduate student, I found myself playing a significant role in the expression of Chinese identity within the city, and having emotional experiences when dancing which were different to those I had experienced in China. These experiences led me to reflect upon the sources of my own identity as a Chinese person.

Through a detailed auto-ethnographic account of my dance experience as a Beijing trained dancer performing in the context of a multi-cultural city far removed from China, I explore the ways that dance may form and transform embodied identities and redefine practices and selves in interaction with different environments and audiences. The article will utilise theorisations of "flow," "authenticity" and "habitus" to understand the emergence of identity in embodied action. The article concludes that the perceived 'Chineseness' of my dance performance, and my own experience of myself as a 'Chinese' dancer, are rooted in ways of being that have been embodied through extensive socialisation and training from an early age.

Keywords: Belfast Migrants. Chinese Dance; Chinese Identity; Habitus; Authenticity.

Introduction

In this paper I focus on my Chinese dance experience in Belfast, Northern Ireland to explore aspects of my own identity as experienced and expressed in dance. First, I introduce Chinese dance and Chinese identity in the Belfast context. I then describe how I came to perform in the Belfast Spring Festival before going on to give a detailed account of my experience of performance. I then draw upon Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of 'flow,' Kristinsson's (2007) theorisation of 'authenticity' as a function of habitus, and Wainright et al's (2006) exposition of varieties of dance habitus to theorise the links between flow, authenticity, habitus and identity. In summary, I show that Chinese identity, at whatever level, emerges from embodied practice through which habitus is transformed and authenticity negotiated within cultural communities recognised as Chinese. Conversely, embodiment of Chinese identity through the medium of dance also reveals processes of inclusion and belonging through which migrants sustain the Chinese community in Belfast.

Transforming Chinese dance in Belfast

According to Wang (2004), Chinese dance is associated with a long and unbroken Chinese culture and civilization. Today there are 56 ethnic groups recognised in China, most of which have developed their own dances making contemporary Chinese dance very diverse. There has been a Chinese community in Northern Ireland since the early 1960s, when immigrants arrived in search of work, mostly from Guangdong and Hong Kong. Today, the Chinese constitute the largest ethnic minority in Northern Ireland with estimates of numbers ranging from 3000 to 8000. The majority live in Belfast, work in the catering industry and have arrived within the last ten years. This community has been augmented in recent years by an influx of students from all regions of China to Ireland. The Chinese community in Belfast holds communal celebrations twice a year: the Spring Festival to celebrate the Lunar New Year and the Dragon Boat Festival in June. Dance plays a significant role in both these events. In China many forms of dance are recognised as Chinese, including classical dance and many ethnic dances. The dance I performed is a Han ethnic fan dance that I learnt at the Beijing dance academy.

Approaches to Dance and Identity

Identity is a multi-faceted topic. Dance theorists are most interested in embodied identities. Dyck & Archetti for example, relate body movement to identity:

In sports and dance, techniques of the body connect and operate in concert with techniques of the self. Who one is and what one does, what one cannot do, or, at least, cannot yet do satisfactorily, may be readily conflated, either in the reflexivity of a dancer or athlete or in the comment and treatment extended by coaches, instructors or performing partners. Among other things, what physical action produces on play-field or dance-floor is selves (1998, p.37).

Ness relates dance to communal identity: ‘the dance produces a condition in which the unity, harmony and concord of the community are at a maximum. And in which they are intensely felt by every member’ (1992, p.127).

Applying Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of habitus to the practice of dancing may bring together these notions of cultural, embodied and communal identity.¹ Wulff (2007), drawing on Bourdieu, asserts that dispositions, perceptions and actions are inscribed into a dancer’s body. These dispositions influence not only the dancing but also the social life of dancers, as well as how dancers move when they are not dancing. I will show how the competences of Chinese dance stem from the broader worldviews, values and ways of being that predominate in Chinese society.

Bourdieu’s work sees habitus as having a conservative effect. He gives little consideration to the ways that habitus may be changed and the effects that such change may have. I will draw on Wenger (1998) to account for the way learning changes embodied practices and to link practice to identity, and I will use Wainright et al’s (2006) formulation of embodied dance practices as varieties of habitus to extend Bourdieu’s conception in the specific area of Chinese dance.

Chinese identity and dance has been explored from a number of different perspectives (Yi-Chun Wu 1997; Johnson 2005; H. Wilcox 2009; E. Wilcox 2012). Emily Wilcox (2012), in her historical account of the performance of Mongolian ethnic identity by a well-known dancer, suggests that Mongolian identity is perceived through dance movement and performance, whilst Hui Wilcox (2011) in her exploration of transnationalism and inter-ethnic conflict amongst Chinese migrants in an American city, asserts that Chinese dance is central to the construction of a unified Chinese identity. Similarly, Johnson (2005), in an ethnomusicological exploration of Chinese diasporic identity in New Zealand, suggests that the performance of Lion Dance in schools plays a significant role in the education of identity amongst

¹ Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is defined as the way in which a particular culture is internalized in the individual during the socialisation process beginning in early childhood. Habitus is ‘society written into the body, into the biological individual’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 63).

the children of migrants. I will draw upon and extend the insights of these scholars to encompass how my mastery of Chinese dance skills affected perception of my identity not only by others, but also by myself, in the Belfast context. As Dyck & Archetti point out, 'we experience our bodies, as a form of self-representation and belonging' (2003, p.84).

Auto-ethnography

For Reed-Danahay, the label of auto-ethnography includes at least three varieties: (1) 'native anthropology' produced by native anthropologists from a group who were formerly studied by outsiders; (2) 'ethnic autobiography' written by members of ethnic minority groups; and (3) 'autobiographical ethnography' in which anthropologists interject personal experience into ethnographic writing (1997, p.2). My use of the technique is closest to the third of these. I reflect upon my own experience of dancing at the Spring Festival and use this experience as material for theoretical analysis. I adopt auto-ethnography in part because in China, where I received my dance training, Chinese identity is not usually a salient issue for dancers, because it is taken for granted. In Hall's words, identity is 'a soft thing, almost unspoken, that you were born with, that you live with and that you are' (1996, p.18). The situation is very different in a multicultural city such as Belfast, where dancers are constantly confronted by 'others'. Here, identity offers choices, challenges and potential confusion. Moreover, 'identity' in Belfast, is a term with particular local connotations, where all cultural expression tends to be seen in relation to the local ethno-political conflict between 'Orange' and 'Green' or Loyalist and Nationalist identities. In this cultural environment, where public space is generally dominated by the performance of Orange and Green identities in everything from street parades to dance festivals, it is important to Chinese people to assert their right to inclusion within the city through cultural performances which are impressive not only to them, but also to outsiders (cf. Wu 2015). Hae-kyung Um has suggested that we need to examine 'Asian diasporas across the globe to better understand the changing geopolitics and varying post-colonial conditions in which these diasporas create their performances' (2005, p.1). This article examines the articulation of Chinese identity in performance in the specific context of Belfast.

In analyzing a dance which I perform myself, I am drawing on a phenomenological tradition in which experience is 'bracketed' or put in parentheses in order that it may be subjected to analysis. Taipale stresses that 'in the "phenomenological reduction", nothing in the experience is lost. Rather, the constitution of the experience is revealed, opening it to academic analysis' (2014, p.5).

Performance Opportunity

Some months after arriving in Belfast, whilst conducting my MA research into dance amongst Chinese migrants in the city, Xian, a member of the Lion Dance Society, invited me to meet the head of a Chinese community organisation that was seeking dancers for the Spring Festival. I met with the head of the organisation, a second-generation Chinese migrant woman from Hong Kong. I explained that the dance I was going to perform was called Yellow River's Daughter, a fan dance in traditional ethnic Han style, which had been choreographed for me by my professor at the Beijing Dance Academy. The dance tells the story of a girl raised by the Yellow River, considered the mother river of Chinese civilization as it watered the crops of the first Chinese people. The Chinese people are seen as children of the river, and Yellow River's Daughter, therefore, is a symbol of Chinese identity. The dance lasts three minutes and is divided into three parts: arrival at the river; playing in the river as small birds flutter around, and becoming tired. The rhythm of the dance changes from part to part, and the speed of the music alternates from slow to fast to slow again – symbolizing a young girl who grew up by the river playing with the water. The fans represent the river itself whilst the green costume represents the spring season. The whole dance aims to convey happiness and energy to the audience. After explaining this to her, I was invited to perform Yellow River's Daughter at the Spring Festival celebration in Ulster Hall.

Showtime

On the 10th of February, the day of the performance, I was shocked to see that the auditorium and balcony in Ulster Hall were packed with people, most of them Chinese. I had not imagined there were so many Chinese people in Belfast. Would they like my dance? This was not a question that had ever occurred to me in China. I was dressed in a green stylized peasant outfit with red slippers. When I saw the non-Chinese spectators staring at my green costume and pink fans, I experienced another new feeling. I am Chinese, I stand for China, I must perform well to show the beauty of my culture. The flautist who had just played noticed my nervousness and told me not to worry: even if I made a mistake, Chinese people would not mind, and the Northern Irish people would not be able to tell. We laughed together, but still nervous, I noticed that the stage was quite small, and reminded myself to shorten and count my steps so as not to overshoot the centre of the stage.

1. Arrival at the River, Slow Movement

As the Chinese folk music begins, I emerge from the right hand curtain on to the stage. As soon as I start to dance, I feel completely at ease with myself and my environment. I feel excited, my blood pulsing, and forget any need to count my steps. I move naturally without thought. I use alternating movements - ducking and darting - then tilt my face towards the ceiling and smile from the heart. I drape the fans down and to each side, forming the shape of a boat. I visualise myself as the girl who grew up by the river, and the audience disappears from my consciousness, replaced by the flowing river. In eight steps I reach the middle of the stage before taking three steps back, four steps forward with jumping movements, symbolizing jumping across the river. I hit myself lightly on the hips with my fans four times (flutter-fan movement), then turn a half circle before moving side to side.²

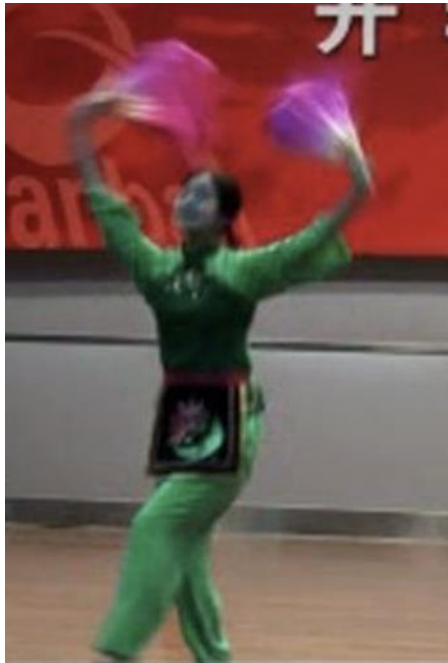


Fig. 1. Flutter Fan movement demonstrated by the author. Circular arm movements derive from Daoist philosophy. Photo by Wang 2013.

This movement symbolises a mischievous game of hide and seek in the water. Waving the fans from side to side I step towards the centre of the stage, feeling the cold water

² The fan dance is built up of basic arm and hand movements which include, 'open and close fan;' 'push fan;' 'flutter fan;' 'shake fan;' 'turn fan', 'round flower fan' and 'circle fan.' Basic steps for the feet included 'grinding step'; 'twist step'; 'T-step;' 'inverted T-step;' and 'circular stage step.' Leg movements showed little variety. Only two types of movement are used - walk and kick.

flow over my feet as I twice cover my face with the fans. Again, I move them side to side, then bend my knees and stoop forward, crossing my arms, with the fans like wings. This movement brings me close to the left hand curtain. Having traversed the whole stage, I come back to the centre, again using the fans to cover my face twice as the dance becomes more vigorous. I now feel that I am playing with the audience. I sweep my right arm in a wide circular movement bringing the fan above my head before doing a half spin and folding my arms. I flip my arms slightly to each side and use wrist movements to symbolize the movements of a small bird, experiencing a feeling of bodily freedom. I then repeat the three moves to the centre and make another sweeping circular motion, raising the fan above my head like a parasol - giving the sensory experience of being cooled on a summer day, which concludes the first part of the dance.



Fig 2, Parasol Movement demonstrated by author. Photo by Wang 2013.

2. Playing in the River, Fast Movement

In earlier performances, I felt nervous at this transitional point, but today the transition is smooth and I naturally speed up my movement, my feelings becoming more animated as the music quickens. I commence fast fan movements alternating left and right, occasionally lowering between the two in a circular movement (round flower fan movement). This is followed by two alternating wide downward sweeps forward using both fans. The river is now fast and flowing, the girl playing beside it thrusting both arms upwards alternately. I cross the closed fans, strike them against each other, and open them in front of me, repeating these movements to the left, above the head, and to the right, stretching the wrist to open the fan (open and close fan movement). The sound of the fans striking and the silence between is coordinated with the movement of the strike, and stillness when the fans open. I do not need to lis-

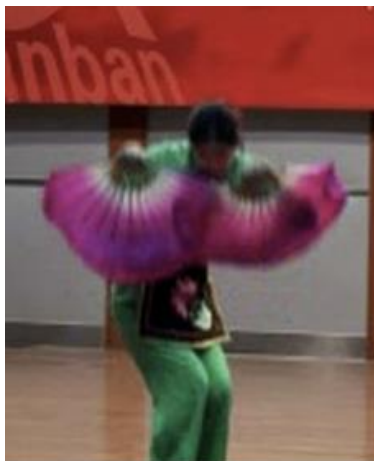
ten the rhythm of the music, I follow the sound made by the striking of the fans. I feel exhilarated and lively, feeling the Ren Qi (body heat) which makes me feel at home, as if in China. My movement does not come from a learned routine, but from following the emotion of the dance, and my self - the two now seem inseparable.



Figs 3,4, 5. Left, Round Flower Movement; Centre, Close Fan Movement; Right, Open Fan Movement, demonstrated by author. All photos by Wang 2013.

3. Becoming Tired by the River, Slow Movement

Entering the final movement, I turn my body left and right whilst keeping my face forward and moving my arms up and down, waving the fans in alternating fashion. Fan rotations follow, whilst the right foot is kept stationary. After taking three steps back I change direction, and repeat side to side movements as in the opening movement, moving four steps to the centre as the fan rises and falls (shake fan movement) symbolising the rise and fall of the sun, as



the day nears its end. The fans are again held parallel, and are used to hide the face. As the fans stir the air and cover my nose, I feel I can smell the flowers by the river.

Fig. 6. Shake Fan Movement demonstrated by author. Photo by Wang 2013.

I cross my arms, holding one fan above the other, and then walk backwards, before jumping forward three times holding the fans behind me, and drifting the fans back and forth by my legs. I flip the fans upwards, then down to the ground, raising them again to hide my face. I lift them high above my head, then sweep them down either side of my body in a circular movement, before moving to the centre of the stage, and finishing with a bow. Hearing the applause, I realise that the dance is finished. I feel pride that my dance has brought honour to China.

Movement, Flow and Identity.

The powerful emotional experiences associated with my dance performance can be seen as an example of ‘flow,’ as theorised by Csikszentmihalyi (1991). Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi identify six crucial features of flow:

- 1) intense focused concentration on the present moment, 2) merging of action and awareness, 3) loss of reflective consciousness, 4) sense of agency, 5) changes in subjective experience of time, 6) experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding. Although these aspects can occur independently, only in combination do they constitute flow (2002, p.90).

All six of these aspects of flow can be identified in my experience of performance. From the moment I started to dance, I was lost in the moment, not aware of myself as separate from the dance. I did not need to think about my actions—mind and body felt combined in total competence. I had little sense of time and it was the applause of the audience that made me realize the performance was complete, while my happiness derived entirely from the dance, not from any external rewards. Yet the flow experience culminated in feelings of pride in being Chinese, suggesting that flow is linked to identity in some way.

Turner has emphasised that ‘because flow requires unambiguous feedback, it must be rule-bound - it is always achieved within some discipline’ (1982, p.56). Csikszentmihalyi points out that it is culture that defines the disciplines within which flow can be achieved, ‘Cultures . . . evolve goals . . . in so doing they must rule out many alternative goals and thereby limit possibilities, but this channelling of attention to a limited set of goals and means is what allows effortless action within self-created boundaries’ (1990, p.81). It is the embod-

iment of the cultural competences of Chinese dance through years of training which enable flow experiences of the kind I have described at the Spring Festival. Because I have acquired these skills within the discipline of traditional Chinese dance and the wider context of Chinese culture, my identity as a Chinese person is inextricable from my ability to achieve flow in the dance. This association of flow and identity was apparent to an audience member who spoke to me after the performance, remarking that I performed Chinese dance so well because I was Chinese. Whilst this comment might seem essentialist, it may stem from the perception of the embodied nature of the identity expressed in the dance. There is one further point to make. Although I have often achieved flow whilst dancing in China, it is only in Belfast that this flow experience was associated with pride in being Chinese. In Belfast, the embodied skills of Chinese dance created a joyful experience of membership in a Chinese community associated with a pride in sharing the culture of this community with others. Without an audience which showed appreciation through applause for the authenticity of my dance, I would not have experienced pride. This experience of identity is reminiscent of Cohen's assertion that 'one only becomes aware of one's identity when one stands at its boundaries' (1982, p.3). What, then, defines the boundary? If the discipline of Chinese dance was essential to the achievement of flow, what makes Chinese dance different from other dance disciplines?

What is Chinese Dance?

The dance I performed—an ethnic Han fan dance—is only one of hundreds of dances from China. As a traditional Chinese dancer, I perform dances from a number of ethnic groups. These dances share little which could be described as characteristically Chinese. Moreover, within China, the Han are not considered especially noteworthy as dancers. Why, then, is this dance accepted as representing Chinese dance, both by my audience and myself?

Within China, dances from minority ethnic groups are more highly esteemed than Han dances. In Belfast, however, the dances which have taken hold—the Lion Dance and the Lilac Dance—have Han origins, as was the case for the Fan Dance which I performed at the Spring Festival. Whilst within China, the fan dance is primarily associated with the Han (the dominant ethnic group in the country). Han dances are often used outside China as signifiers of Chinese national identity (Wilcox 2011, p.324). I suggest that this is because, within China, an ideology of multiculturalism is maintained, but in China's attempts at 'nation-branding' (Anholt 2013), the dominant Han ethnicity is identified with the nation. An example of this 'nation-branding' may be seen in the topic 'Dance of China' in the English lan-

guage version of Wikipedia, in which only Han dances are discussed. Perhaps subconsciously, I sensed this dynamic when I chose to pack only my Han costume before leaving China. The fact that Han dances are used to represent China outside the country, but minority ethnic dances are considered more aesthetically pleasing within China, may be seen as a function of ethnic power relationships within the country. The Han, as the dominant group, do not emphasize their cultural ethnic identity but their political identity as Chinese. And it is the Han, as the politically dominant group, who institute the 'heritage regime' (cf. Bendix, Eggert and Peselmann 2012, p.11) which defines other ethnic groups primarily in cultural, rather than political terms, often through the medium of dance. Therefore, there can be no authoritative definition of authentic Chinese dance based on the characteristics of the dances themselves. So what was it about this performance that made it feel Chinese to me and my audience?

Authenticity and Experience

Even though I am of Manchu, not Han ethnicity, I experienced the Yellow River's Daughter's dance as authentically Chinese. Why should this be? My subconscious sense of the ethnic power dynamics within China by which Han identity is equated with Chinese identity in representations of the country are likely to have played a role. However, there are additional, and perhaps more profound reasons why I experienced this dance as authentic. In order to explain them, we must first interrogate the concept of authenticity.

Kristinsson has noted that although there have been various conceptions of authenticity in Western thought, they have all agreed that authenticity comprises 'fidelity to the self' (2007, p.1). Kristinsson develops a detailed argument showing that such a conception is incoherent. Rather, she concludes:

authentic behaviour . . . must involve acting according to what is objectively instantiated in one's body . . . More specifically, it involves a continuity between agency and embodied self; behavior is authentic to the extent that it is motivationally supported by states that are embodied in the individual, and inauthentic to the extent that it lacks such support (2007, pp. 29-30).

Although Kristinsson does not use the term 'habitus', her conception of 'what is objectively instantiated in one's body' is clearly compatible with Bourdieu's (1977) term. Authenticity then, may be said to derive from the alignment of one's agency with one's embodied tastes, dispositions, and competences - in short, one's habitus.

Before performing in the Spring Festival, I had participated in a Chinese Dance class with students of varied non-Chinese ethnicity who were taught a Han dance called the Lilac Dance. Even when they had learned the correct movements, their style of performance still appeared un-Chinese both to me and to their Chinese instructor, because it was visibly influenced by their previous dance experience in Latin, Irish, Scottish or Indian dance. Unlike my own performance, their attempts to perform Chinese dance appeared to me to be ‘inauthentic’. In examining why my own performance seemed authentic to me to a degree that the performances of these non-Chinese dancers did not, Wainright et al’s (2006) theorisation of different levels of dance habitus in ballet is useful. Ballet is a useful point of reference, both because my own training included some ballet, and because Chinese traditional dance, like ballet, demands intensive conditioning of the body from an early age. Wainright et al (2006) identify a number of levels at which habitus is instantiated within every dancer. Firstly, ‘individual habitus,’ including elements such as gender, height, etc. Secondly, ‘institutional habitus,’ deriving from training within environments with specific ways of doing things; and thirdly ‘choreographic habitus’, stemming from the interaction of the choreographer’s artistic vision with the dancer’s individual habitus. Both institutional habitus and choreographic habitus must be considered in the production of the individual habitus manifested in my dance. My institutional habitus stems from intensive training in the Beijing Dance Academy from the age of seven, and is therefore deeply instantiated in my body. In the Beijing Academy I embodied physical skills, ideologies, emotional dispositions and cultural values. I will briefly explore each of these.

Bodily flexibility is central to training in the Beijing Dance Academy. This can only be acquired by painful exercises. In Buddhist religious thought, pain in this life is seen as a way to gain happiness in the next. Chinese parents, therefore, in contrast to most in western societies, want their children to experience pain in childhood in order to strengthen them in later life. For the first three years of my training, I did not learn any dance moves - I simply engaged in intensive flexibility exercises. Failure to perform the painful exercises correctly was punished by beating. Long years of conditioning, then, have given my body a flexibility which was not matched by the non-Chinese dancers who set out to learn the Lilac Dance.

Ideology was absorbed unconsciously along with the physical skills. The mainstream training in the academy was Han dance, and it therefore seemed natural to equate Han with Chinese identity. Ideology was also inculcated in the form of emotional dispositions. The dancer is supposed to use their body to bring pleasure to their audience, and smiling is therefore an essential element of the training and the dance. Overt sexuality amongst women is

discouraged in traditional and most contemporary Chinese culture, and the dances contain no overtly sexual movements. One Mexican-American student of the Lilac Dance did not appear Chinese because her movements included subtly seductive elements deriving from her previous experience in Latin dance. Wainright et al note that when a ballet choreographer's productions are danced by a dance company other than their own, the individual habitus of the dancers 'is insufficiently shaped via a lack of the appropriate background schooling, the embodied discipline of a particular choreographic and institutional habitus' (2006, p.547). The same dynamic can be seen in the attempts of the non-Chinese dancers to embody Chinese dance (Wu 2013). In fact, the instructor was eventually forced to introduce some of the basics of an institutional habitus in order to make the Lilac Dance identifiably Chinese. Wainright et al (2006) note that whilst this lack of appropriate schooling may be apparent to other dancers, it usually does not prevent the successful performance of the dance, and the non-Chinese dancers did eventually produce successful performances at a number of intercultural events, despite my own aesthetic judgement of their shortcomings.

Choreographic Habitus and Individual Habitus

The Yellow River's Daughter's dance was choreographed for me personally by my teacher in the Beijing Dance Academy. Wainright et al emphasize that 'a choreographer must tailor their artistic creation to fit the bodies of real individual persons' (1996, p.540). When steps are created for an individual dancer, they are inevitably the kind of steps that dancer favours. In my case, my teacher chose to choreograph a dance that had personal meaning for her, as a Han woman from the Yellow River region, and a former Han dance performer, but which was ideally suited to my body condition. Whilst northern Chinese are stereotyped as tall, and southern Chinese as short, those from the Yellow River area are expected to be of middling stature, as I am. My personality and flexibility level was also considered when my teacher designed this dance.

There is a further element to be considered. When my choreographer created the dance, she also created the story of the dance. I learned the story as I learned the dance steps. My choreographer trained me to visualize the elements of the narrative in order to capture the spirit of the movement. Thus, for me, the story was embodied along with the dance movements - I cannot experience one without the other, and the dance is not complete, for me, unless all elements of the narrative are performed. My choreographic habitus, then, is based on my established individual habitus and has also become part of my developing individual

habitus. After years of practice and performance, Yellow River's Daughter has become part of me, and when I perform, I am Yellow River's Daughter, China embodied.

Conclusion

In this paper, I described my performance of the Yellow River's Daughter's dance including both physical and emotional components. I then analysed my physical and emotional experience, drawing on Csikszentmihalyi's conception of 'flow' and raised the question of why, in this situation, my experience of flow was linked to pride in Chinese identity. My answer was that flow was achieved within the discipline of Chinese dance, but this answer raised deeper questions concerning understandings of authenticity and Chinese identity, namely, what made my Chinese dance authentically Chinese? To answer this question, I turned to Kristinson's identification of the experience of authenticity with the alignment of agency and habitus. Finally, I drew upon Wainright et al's work on varieties of dance habitus to complete my argument - specifically, the achievement of flow is a result of the alignment of three complementary forms of habitus within my body: the individual, the institutional and the choreographic. When these three forms of habitus are aligned, authenticity is experienced. This feeling of authenticity - of being true to oneself - allows the disappearance of the self into the dance in the experience of flow.

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