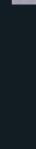How and at what levels does the cultural heritage produce well-being in the present? What actions and methodologies can be put in place to trigger practices of active involvement? Which collaborations make it possible to overcome systemic obstacles? Which tools are best suited to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness? In the wake of the studies on the binomial 'cultural heritage-well/being', the 2021 *CHAIN* (*Cultural Heritage Academic Interdisciplinary Network*, established by the PhD in Sciences of Cultural Heritage and Production of the University of Catania) team edited this volume, which collects the contributions of the conference held in 2021, triggered by the outbreak of the crisis of COVID-19. The papers published here are arranged according to three thematic sessions, i.e. 'Memory', 'Perception', and 'Research-Actions' in which several contributions have highlighted: the physical, psychological and social-based foundations that the enjoyment of cultural heritage and arts exerts on people, groups, and different communities; the role of information and communication technologies; and, the importance of researches on the cultural heritage management developing a wide range of *SDGs' 2030 Agenda*.

CHAIN 2021   WELLBEING AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

CHAIN 2021
WellBeing and Cultural Heritage
MEMORY, PERCEPTION, RESEARCH-ACTIONS

EDITED BY
THEA MESSINA, STEFANO RUSSO, GIUSEPPE SANFRATELLO AND GIOVANNA SANTAERA

CHAIN 2021

Ad Anna
in memoria di Pierpaolo

CHAIN 2021

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BenEssere e Patrimonio Culturale

edited by
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Giovanna Santaera

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PART II

PERCEPTION

Thea Messina, Stefano Russo,
Giuseppe Sanfratello, Giovanna Santaera

*Well-Being or not Well-Being
Approaches to the Cultural Heritage*

1. The birth of the project

When a group of doctoral students at the Department of Humanities (University of Catania) began to take their first steps towards the organisation of a conference on cultural heritage, they perhaps did not absolutely think that they would get at the establishment of an interdisciplinary network with an international scope, namely the *CHAIN* (*Cultural Heritage Academic Interdisciplinary Network*). The *CHAIN* project was thus launched in 2020 in order to create a thought-provoking interdisciplinary environment where young scholars (and not only) would have the chance to reflect on the role of their studies on cultural heritage and their social impact worldwide. The aim then was the achievement of a fruitful discussion about up-to-date research topics revolving around the cultural heritage seen as an alive entity, as well as the interaction between academia and non-academic cultural institutions and cultural workers. Bearing such issues in mind, the first *CHAIN* team individuated the binomial 'cultural heritage-well/being' as an ideal topic, embracing both public practices and the recognition of their social and economic potential. The result of this internal interdisciplinary debate was the call for an international conference on WellBeing and Cultural Heritage/ BenEssere e Patrimonio Culturale.

Several research questions stimulated a fertile debate on the conference theme, including: how and at what levels does the cultural heritage, that is generated throughout history, produce well-being in the present (Settis S. 1994)? What are the real mediation and support abilities of insiders and what are the tools to make it perceptible and relevant for the collective identity? What actions and methodologies can be put in place to trigger practices of active involvement? Which collaborations make it possible to overcome systemic obstacles? Which tools are best suited to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness?

The outbreak of the pandemic, which moved our jobs and projects to online platforms – indeed which reinforced the idea and the need to create an interdisciplinary and international network, with a driving force behind this initial inspiration – rooted in the theoretical framework offered by a number of scientific studies focusing on both cultural heritage and health promotion (among others, Fujiwara et al, 2014; Taçon and Baker, 2019; Travkina et al, 2020).

In the wake of the studies on the binomial 'cultural heritage-well/being', the *CHAIN* team edited this volume, which collects the contributions of those who – among the participants at the *CHAIN* Conference, held online from 11 to 13 February 2021 – sent in their papers in a written enriched form, supplementing them with insights and bibliographical references, and appropriate images.

Not only from a theoretical but also from a practical point of view, the organisation of the conference had to come to terms with the onset of a health crisis unprecedented in at least the last two centuries, triggered by the so-called COVID-19. The health emergency, as stated in the then 'call for papers' «has highlighted some of the contradictions related to the value of heritage as such: on the one hand, the precarious condition of the cultural sector, under the risk of further weakening; on the other hand, the individual and daily need for alternative forms of cultural enjoyment, rediscovered as an essential instrument of social and relational well-being».

One of the needs identified in the formulation of the call for papers was precisely to reflect on the recognition of the 'cultural heritage-well/being' connection, in «relation to the mediating functions of cultural operators, to the ability for planning and synergy between stakeholders, and particularly, to the possibility of fostering opportunities for sustainable growth through the knowledge, enhancement and re-appropriation of cultural heritage».

The contributions presented over the three days of the conference laid the groundwork for an opportunity to discuss the theme put forward in the call for papers. Among these, twenty-two – that is, the majority of them – are published here, structured according to the three chosen thematic sessions, i.e. 'Memory', 'Perception', and 'Research-Actions', which were introduced by keynote lectures delivered by Christian Greco, Peppino Ortoleva and Pier Luigi Sacco, respectively. The paper version of Ortoleva's keynote, entitled *Living the Cultural Heritage in the New Media Environment*, is also available in this volume.

The topics of the three conference sessions were singled out to deal with the 'well-being' theme through various and complementing points of views and approaches. 'Memory' indeed refers to issues as identity, community, traditions, challenges and problems of the global dimension; 'Perception' embraces both individual bodily/emotive response (e.g. feelings, cognition, experience) and collective imaginary and its projection through cultural heritage and arts, not to talk about the transmissibility through technologies (e.g. datasets, audiovisual and digital media); 'Research-actions' includes case studies on enjoyment and education, economy and places of culture (e.g. arts, enterprises and production systems), projects, sustainability, impact assessment.

The *CHAIN* Conference 2021 has been therefore developed through the treatment and in-depth analysis of the three above-mentioned thematic areas, as sketched in the following paragraphs, which highlight the structure of the volume and offer some insights on the subject.

The introductory chapter by Peppino Ortoleva deals with the issue of a changing model of approaching cultural heritage as an experience with all senses, through a non-linear behaviour – as occurs – that could be defined as information nomadism. According to this principle, the physicality of places becomes secondary, as «we move from information to places and from places to information». This also implies an active interaction with cultural heritage, through the tendency to «appropriate what most attracts» the visitors, who – for instance – 'consume' museums' work of art and exhibitions through their own device (e.g. taking images and videos of these works). All in all, the above-mentioned nomadic behaviour is well nurtured in modern cities in which it is more feasible to 'live' the cultural heritage.

2. Memory

Along the lines of reflections in the panels following Greco's lecture, entitled *Digital revolution and humanism* a number of issues were discussed in depth through the contemplation of the sub-themes of the day, that is, 'arts and subjectivities'; 'contested, rising, and safe cultural heritage'; 'performative archival memories'. The theme of memory was declined through a material and immaterial approach focused, on the one hand, on the collective expression, visible in the re-appropriation of the spaces of the past and in archival preservation practices, as a 'real' testimony of heritage, and, on the other, on the aesthetic and emotional value of cultural/artistic expressions.

Chiara Pappalardo – participating in the panel 'Contested, rising, and safe cultural heritage' – presented the *Azerbaijani-Italian Ganja Region Kurgan Archaeological Project* (*GaRKAP*) with a paper titled *Raising community engagement with the archaeological landscape in the southern Caucasus*. Her contribution delves in the local engagement with the archaeological landscape in the Southern Caucasus, addressing the plan of a museum within the Heydar Aliyev Park in Ganja, later halted in favour of the development of a virtual museum (Virtual Kurgan Archaeological

Museum, V-KAP), in order to encourage «a positive social impact by raising curiosity, promoting knowledge on the significance of these sites widespread across the land, and creating an active engagement of the local community». In fact, the project she refers to would enable us to envision «potential long-term social impacts of nurturing community engagement with the archaeological landscape, and among them the improvement of local well-being as a more meaningful, inclusive and sustainable lifestyle».

The next two contributions – considerably concerning the world of archives – suggest a different slant, dealing mostly with the sub-theme of 'Performative archival memories'.

Giancarlo Felice, in his paper *Antico Memoria Emozione. La missione delle arti figurative in Duilio Cambellotti*, offers a whole range of insights into the integration of art into life in the service of well-being, illustrating the figure of the Italian applied artist, illustrator, painter, sculptor and designer Duilio Cambellotti (1876-1960). Felice argues that Cambellotti, through is works, sustained the indissoluble link existing between beauty and the well-being, based on a constant reflection of an aesthetic looking at the past as an indispensable value to express contemporaneity, in the idea that social welfare is the essential vocation of the figurative arts.

Concluding the session on 'Memory', Marco Sciotto's insightful contribution entitled *L'archivio teatrale come dispositivo di riconfigurazione del reale e dell'immaginario* explores the potential of a theatrical archive, maintaining the idea that it might be seen as a wellbeing-generating device, being interpreted as emblematic of every possible archive. In doing so, Sciotto focuses on the evolution of the concept of the archive and its functions and potential, «from being a resource for a community, for an institutionally organised and constituted collectivity, to being a tool for the individual, for his or her possibility of drawing on a history, an origin, a root stored therein, in order to appropriate, interpret and rethink it and, with it, his or her own evolving imagination». Finally, the archive not only preserves and provides

material but also generates processes of re-appropriation of a memory of reality that nourishes the individual and collective imaginary.

3. Perception

The relationship of subjects and communities to the past is also the starting point of many authors in the 'Perception' section. However, this association commonly expressed by cultural heritage is expanded by many of them in three directions. On the one hand, they observe the functions that it plays on the individual dimension. On the other hand, the link it provides in relation to the 'organisation' (considered as a process, aggregation, and/or public institution). Finally, they invite to recognise the nature of 'objects' not only as autonomous entities but as manifestations of the former through various forms of experience. But in what way?

Alparone and La Rosa, through a psychoanalytic re-reading of Freud, Lacan and Heidegger, turn the view on heritage upside down as a «further immersion» in the 'creative practice' of cultural production and new understanding of humanity, not only for their past but also for their present. Through the work on the tangible-intangible heritage and new forms of expression (reminiscent, reflexive and/or productive, especially artistic ones), it sums up the positive function of «elaboration», «orientation» and «organization», even of hidden or negative emotions, feelings, fantasies, desires, experiences, and thoughts about our Beings in the world.

Thus, as recalled by the authors from psychoanalytic perspective, all cultural areas (e.g. from myths to literature, from archaeology to the arts, including cinema) could assume an important role. And this is what the later contributors try to explore, each with specific declinations. Thus, Sandra Condorelli, referring to pictorial works, retrieves macro- and micro-historical texts (as letters or diaries) about the manifestation of the pleasure forms of their vision. Following Castelnuovo's ideas, she explains

how the study of «archaeologies of judgements» as «emotions» can reveal a different art history about interpretations, habits, and access to the art as a «primary need». Sciacca et al apply a similar perspective on the evaluation of experiences, behaviour and emotions to an object apparently far from art studies as video games. Instead, a specific study such as the one proposed can be useful to demystify certain stereotypes about the same, to better understand the critical issues and consciously use them as forms of edutainment. Their case study on a sample of Italian teenagers highlights intimate and relational challenges that open up a discourse on the centrality of video games as a heritage in our 'culture', a topic that is still little explored.

The awareness of the total complementarity of both individual and social perceptions related to our heritages emerges also from three contributions. Rosaria Fallico examines the possibility of uses, especially «training» ones for all ages in her contribution, for a «pedagogy of art» that works on «communication». Her proposal invites us to rethink theatrical methods as experiential tools of «knowing, feeling and acting», which can be applied to all heritage practices. But theatre itself, in the course of its very long history through its 'cathartic function' has connected various themes, even difficult ones in the changing artistic forms of myth, that working on individual bodies and society. For this, Laura Pernice, examines cognitive and social continuities and changes in myth and catharsis from the stage of ancient Greek tragedy to contemporary multimedia plays. Giuseppe Sanfratello's contribution, however, stimulates us to think of the atavistic universality that arts offer not just as universal forms but also as situated. His study demonstrates how «harmony» and «collective resonance» may be achieved with choral music by multipart singing and improvisational harmonisation on the Greek islands of Corfu, Zakynthos, and Kefalonia.

The last three contributions to the section on perception share and improve with practical examples many of the former ideas. They are especially dedicated to the discovery of creative conceptions and strategic approaches which consider the

different states of well-being between several kinds of heritage, subjects, and cultural institutions at the same time. Santaera traces an excursus on cinema museums starting from 'negative' and positive approaches to the media history. She presents some examples of the experimental multiplicity of work on it. For this reason, she recalls the need to recognize the «vital role» of these organisations. In accordance with the recognition of the role of museum institutions, media and subjects, Carola Gatto introduces an experimental project that uses Virtual Reality to create a «collaborative virtual environment» in which they can carry out specific activities designed for well-being. The platform discussed, looking for a replicable and scalable model, is aimed at the prevention of social isolation.

So, as demonstrated by Wolferstan et al, the analysis of the specific set of action – as the European one in their case study on a project between «digital and tangible» in times of social separation – must be added by cultural workers to the development of specialised skills of «mediation» and «facilitation» as technological but also social and cultural practices.

4. Research-Actions

The third and last session of the volume explores the age-old dilemma of policy and resource allocation related to the relevance of the objectives to be pursued, including cultural ones, not only as an economic issue, but also as a biobehavioral one. As also addressed in Sacco's lecture, entitled *Why is culture so important for humans? The socio-biological foundation of cultural welfare*, the brain structure should be taken into consideration: short-term preferences as well as long-term ones, i.e. not just referring to the classic optimization game between different levels of time preference. Considerations like this one also shows us the evolutionary and socio-biological foundation of culture and its importance for our brain and well-being.

Alongside these considerations are the themes of the present day, which can be summarised as follows: 'Social impacts';

'Modelling systems and management'; 'Technologies and socio-cultural sustainability'; 'Communities and territories'; 'Tourism and well-being'.

Stefano Russo – opening the discussion of the last day – disentangles the relationship between the two terms well-being and cultural heritage, illustrating case studies and practices, analysing three specific dimensions of this binomial: the economic, the social and the medical. Lastly, he analyses 'loneliness' and 'isolation' as phenomena pertaining all the three above mentioned dimensions and underlines the potential of cultural participation in addressing them.

Iommi in her intervention recalls the importance of well-being as stated in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* identified by the *United Nations Member States* in 2015. The author links well-being to the acquisition of knowledge as a human activity and outlines the primary role of the cultural institutions, such as libraries of conservation and public libraries, in this important mission. Scuto shifts the focus on communities through the case study of Herculaneum, a World Heritage site that has become a renowned example of how participatory processes can lead to urban regeneration, social cohesion, and economic growth. Another system of management – aware of the community centrality – is proposed by Rossi et al who suggest to apply the principle of Stabilitas, a cornerstone of the Benedictine Rule, to the museum complex at the former Stabilimento Florio in Favignana, posing co-creation as an issue of sustainability. Another management modelling is proposed by Trivyzadakis, who addresses the importance of a systematisation of the knowledge of minor heritage through the application of technologies. Krikelikos' intervention also moves along the lines of proposing technology as an application to cultural heritage to promote its digital authenticity and to promote intellectual prosperity.

Bonato opens the section on territories focusing the attention on the case of Chongqing, an example of urban processes of land renewal to point out the relational mechanism between land

monetization and heritagization of local landscape and related impacts on human well-being. Mannino et al continue the discourse on territories by bringing the case study of Officine Culturali, which operates in Catania, in accordance with the *SDGs' 2030 Agenda* to spread well-being. Zammitti et al reshift the focus on communities, underlining the effect on the locals when processes of sustainable tourism are enabled. Calderone closes the volume by summarising the above-mentioned issues of the application of technologies to cultural heritage and the impact on communities of sustainable tourism through the example of the Magna Via Francigena in West Sicily.

5. Conclusions and future perspectives

One of the main contributions of the *CHAIN* conference – represented especially in the papers published here – is to have examined and shown a multiplicity of the concept of well-being through its connections with cultural heritage.

Several contributions have indeed highlighted the physical, psychological and social-based foundations of the positive effect that the enjoyment of cultural heritage exerts on people and groups (cf. Alparone and La Rosa, Pernice, Sanfratello). From another point of view, the relationship between the subject and cultural heritage can be observed (cf. Condorelli). The analysis of the relationships between individual and cultural heritage has had different examples taken from the performing arts (e.g. theatre, cinema and their musealisation, cf. Fallico, Santaera). This occurs because their nature is featured by a greater ability for an immediate involvement with respect to other forms of cultural heritage.

In addition, the relationships between communities and cultural heritage have been considered through different perspectives, such as the construction of memory through archives (cf. Felice, Sciotto), the involvement of local communities in cultural heritage management as well as its economic issues

(cf. Bonato, Mannino et al, Pappalardo, Scuto, Trivyzadakis, Wolferstan et al, Zammitti et al), and the beneficial effects on specific groups within the communities (cf. Sciacca et al).

A third line of research highlighted the importance of the use of technology for a better understanding, analysis and communication of cultural heritage (cf. Calderone, Gatto, Krikelikos). In all these cases, the relevance and the need of open access availability and the collaboration and constructions of digital platforms and archives have been stressed.

Another aspect has dealt with the economic and regulatory levels and elements of cultural heritage for the development of *SDGs' 2030 Agenda* (cf. Iommi, Rossi et al, Russo).

All these reflections must be placed within a time frame – i.e. the era of the COVID-19 pandemic that we have experienced – in which cultural heritage is not only defined as a 'right' but as a primary 'good'. The COVID-19, however, pushed us towards a consideration on what happens in times of crisis. On the 'why', while places of culture have been shut down or severely restricted for so long, people just then started singing from balconies, projected films on buildings and found any digital means to reconnect with any form of culture.

Lastly, together with Sandra Condorelli, it could be worthwhile to quote Salvatore Settis's reply to the then Italian Prime Minister with an open letter published in the *Corriere della Sera*: «we always need culture, beauty and memory, but it is in times of crisis that this need becomes more palpitating and vital», (SETTIS 2020).

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the team organising the *CHAIN* 2022 edition (entitled *Crisis and Cultural Heritage. Evidence, Use, Resource*) tried to elaborate on the very issue highlighted in Settis's quote. And we are very glad about this, because it seems that the first *CHAIN* conference has created fertile ground and a smooth handover for further discussions and developments of theoretical-practical encounters on the cultural heritage over the years.

Catania, 9th August 2022

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