

# From folklore to intangible cultural heritage. Observations about a problematic filiation<sup>1</sup>

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In the last few decades some major theoretical and methodological shifts have characterised the interconnected disciplines of Anthropology, Folkloristics, Ethnology of Europe, and Cultural History. Many categories and notions long used (and sporadically abused) have been thoroughly problematised, at times profoundly questioned, and even abandoned.

In this contribution I briefly discuss how these shifts have affected both the institutional, academic, and common usages of two of these notions: “Folklore” and “Intangible cultural heritage”. I also present some reflections about the emic and etic usages of the categories of “folklore” and “cultural heritage” in the two contexts in which I have done ethnographic research over the last few years: Molise in Italy and Bohemia in the Czech Republic.

“From Folklore to Heritage” was the title of the research project for my postdoctoral position in the Czech Republic (2013–2015). Amongst other aims, the project had the purpose of understanding how my specific case study could be encapsulated in the theoretical framework of

1 This piece is the development of a conference paper called “From folklore to cultural heritage and the other way round: Theoretical annotations from two ethnographic case-studies (Italy and the Czech Republic)”. It was presented at a panel convened by myself called “From Folklore to Cultural Heritage”, which took place during the 12th International SIEF congress “Utopias, Realities, Heritages. Ethnographies for the 21st century” (Zagreb, Croatia, 21–25 June 2015), on the 22nd of June 2015. The research that has led to the writing of this piece has been undertaken in the framework of two projects: 1) project “Enhancement of R&D Pools of Excellence at the University of Pardubice” (CZ.1.07/2.3.00/30.0021), financially supported by the European Social Fund and the Czech Ministry of Education (2013–2015; 2) project M 1828-G22, financed by the FWF – Austrian Research Fund and undertaken at the University of Vienna (2015–2017).

the ethnology of immaterial culture in postsocialist countries, and thus compared with other examples of what Sharon Macdonald has recently proposed naming the pan-European “memory-heritage-identity complex”<sup>2</sup>. Here I also use and problematise some ethnographic evidence and research results from my former research project, which was carried out in southern-central Italy.

The idea of problematising the conceptual shift affecting both the popular (or *emic*) and the academic (or *etic*)<sup>3</sup> usages of the notions of “Folklore” and “Intangible cultural heritage” had actually occurred to me earlier, i. e. while undertaking doctoral research in Italy. During that time I also noticed a relative lack of critical and/or anthropological literature in English<sup>4</sup> and French<sup>5</sup> about this semantic shift and its consequences at the level of both institutional and social practices<sup>6</sup>.

- 2 Sharon Macdonald: *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London, New York 2013. The outcomes of the above-mentioned research projects have been published – or are to be published – in several pieces, some of which will be mentioned in this paper. The interaction between cultural heritage and post-socialism is at the centre of Alessandro Testa: *Problemi e prospettive della ricerca demo-etno-antropologica su memoria sociale, (n)ostalgia, ritualità pubblica e patrimonio culturale immateriale nell'Europa post-socialista*. In: *Lares*, 82, 2, 2016, pp. 237–276.
- 3 I use the notions of “*emic*” and “*etic*” according to K. Pike’s theories (Kenneth Lee Pike: *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Structure of Human Behavior*, The Hague 1967) as transposed in anthropological methodology and used for its interpretative purposes by M. Harris (Marvin Harris: *History and Significance of the Emic/Etic Distinction*. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 5, 1976, pp. 329–350). Briefly, I use the word “*emic*” to refer to beliefs or the system of beliefs of a given human group as opposed to, or at least differentiated from, the interpretations and the categories that scholars use and make of those same beliefs, which I refer to using the word “*etic*”.
- 4 There are exceptions of course: important critical reflections on the matter, although rather short and circumstantial, can also be found, *passim*, in Valdimar Hafstein: *Claiming Culture: Intangible Heritage Inc., Folklore ©, Traditional Knowledge™*. In: Dorothee Hemme, Markus Tauschek, Regina Bendix (eds.): *Prädikat: „HERITAGE“: Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Münster 2007, S. 75–100; Máiréad Nic Craith: *Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Challenges for Europe*. In: *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, 17, 1, 2008, pp. 54–73; and Markus Tauschek: *Reflections on the Metacultural Nature of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. In: *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 5, 2, 2011, pp. 49–64.
- 5 The French literature is also rather unsystematic, but see Chiara Bortolotto: *Introduction: le trouble du patrimoine culturel immatériel*. In: Chiara Bortolotto

Certainly enough, the “filiation” between folklore and intangible cultural heritage (or ICH) cannot be questioned. It is, however, rather problematic. Little doubt can be cast on the transversal success of the notion of “heritage” (“patrimonio” in Italian, “patrimoine” in French), which allows the filiation between the two to be thought of as a transition as well. In fact, as has recently been written: “le succès de la notion de ‘patrimoine’ vient peut-être de la critique et de la déconstruction des notions de tradition, folklore, culture, qui sont devenus épistémologiquement, sinon politiquement, incorrects”<sup>7</sup>.

In January 1985, following the indications set during a first meeting in 1982, UNESCO summoned a committee of governmental experts to

- (ed.): *Le patrimoine culturel immatériel: enjeux d'une nouvelle catégorie*. Paris 2011, pp. 21–43; Laurent-Sébastien Fournier: *Intangible Cultural Heritage in France: From State Culture to Local Development*. In: Regina Bendix, Aditya Eggert, Arnika Peselmann (eds): *Heritage Regimes and the State*. Göttingen 2012, pp. 327–340; and Julien Bondaz, Graezer Bideau, Cyril Isnart, Anaïs Leblon: *Relocaliser les discours sur le patrimoine*. In: Julien Bondaz, Graezer Bideau, Cyril Isnart, Anaïs Leblon (eds): *Les vocabulaires locaux du “Patrimoine”*. Berlin et al. 2015, pp. 9–30.
- 6 Italian pertinent scholarship is relatively richer: Katia Ballacchino: *Per un'antropologia del patrimonio immateriale. Dalle Convenzioni Unesco alle pratiche di comunità*. In: *Glocale*, 6–7, 2013, pp. 17–32; Fabio Dei: *Antropologia culturale*. Bologna 2012, pp. 32–34; Francesco Francioni: *The Evolving Framework for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in International Law*. In: Silvia Borelli, Federico Lanzerini (eds): *Cultural Heritage, Cultural Rights, Cultural Diversity: New Developments in International Law*. Leiden-Boston 2012, pp. 3–28, 22; Lucia Gasparini: *Il patrimonio culturale immateriale: nuove prospettive concettuali, artistiche, metodologiche*. Doctoral Thesis, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, XXV ciclo, a.a. 2011/12, Milano (especially the first chapter: “Dal patrimonio materiale al patrimonio immateriale: l'ampliamento del concetto di patrimonio culturale in ambito occidentale”); Eugenio Imbriani: *I beni culturali immateriali: da folklore a patrimonio*. In: *Italianieuropei*, 2, 2011, pp. 1–5; Markus Tauschek: *Beni culturali e demologia: alcune osservazioni su un rapporto complicato*. In: *La Ricerca Folklorica*, 64, 2011, pp. 37–43. The reason why Italian scholarship is relatively richer can be explained with the peculiar interest that many Italian folklorists, ethnologists, anthropologists, and social theorists have cultivated, since the second half of the last century at least, for the definition of folklore – or related concepts such as “cultura popolare”, “demologia”, etc. (this peculiar characteristic of the Italian academic tradition is discussed in detail in Alessandro Testa: *Il carnevale dell'uomo-animale. Le dimensioni storiche e socio-culturali di una festa appenninica*. Napoli 2014, pp. 17–32).
- 7 Bondaz, Bideau, Isnart, Leblon 2015 (as in fn. 5), p. 15. Considering notions as “folklore”, “tradition”, and “cultural” as “epistemologically” incorrect is however

discuss the possibility of a scheme aimed at safeguarding folklore. The first significant document issued, the “Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore”, was produced a few years later, in 1989<sup>8</sup>. This document is actually extensively and almost exclusively based on the notion of folklore, to the extent that almost all the sections into which it is divided insist on the term (“A. Definition of folklore, B. Identification of folklore, C. Conservation of folklore, D. Preservation of folklore, E. Dissemination of folklore, and F. Protection of folklore”). Nevertheless, the definition of folklore is here wide and somewhat blurry, sometimes overlapping with what would instead be called material culture (see “architecture” and “other arts” in the following definition; I quote from the document): “Folklore (or traditional and popular culture) is the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group of individuals and recognised as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its social and cultural 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”.

Later, in June 1999, an international conference organised by UNESCO and the Smithsonian Institution was held in Washington, at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage of the Smithsonian Institution. This resulted in a long and articulated document called “A global assessment of the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of the Traditional Culture and Folklore: Local Empowerment and International Cooperation”<sup>9</sup>. This was a turning point in the history of what would not

debatable. My personal opinion on the matter differs significantly from that of the above-mentioned authors (my dissidence is articulated in the article Alessandro Testa: *È la ‘tradizione’ ancora buona da pensare? Riflessioni critiche su una nozione controversa*. In: *Annuaire Roumain d'Anthropologie*, 53, 2016, pp. 63–91; I will return to this topic later in this article).

- 8 Let us not forget that the very notion of “safeguarding” is at the centre of cultural heritage conceptual and political framework. This is yet another link with the notion of “folklore”, insofar as, as it has been written, “the concept brings with it connotations of urgency always associated with folklore and popular tradition” (Hafstein 2007 [as in *ftnt.* 4], p. 80).
- 9 Consulted in June 2016 at the link <http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/Unesco/index.htm>.

much later be known as “intangible cultural heritage”, also because of the quantity and quality of contributions to the conference and its proceedings. It is, besides, the last time the word “folklore” appeared as an official UNESCO term. One of the main outcomes of the conference was in fact a partial disavowal of the 1989 Recommendation and the definitive dismissal of the former approach towards the “safeguarding” of “traditional culture” and “folklore”. The Recommendation was declared ineffective – as it had born little or no impact in the meantime to the member States’ policies concerning folklore –, obsolete, and inadequate to operate in contemporary political, economic, and societal configurations.

The 1999 conference was the first substantial step towards the broad redefinition of the problem as it would be officially presented two years after, in 2001, during an “international roundtable” which took place in Turin. In the meantime, as Lucia Gasparini writes, “UNESCO had initiated a broad survey at a global level, among member States, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and other institutions, to gather definitions of terms such as ‘intangible cultural heritage’, ‘folklore’, ‘traditional culture’, ‘oral heritage’, ‘traditional lore’, ‘indigenous heritage’, etc. [my translation]”<sup>10</sup>. In the document issued containing the answers to the survey questionnaire and called “‘UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage’ – Working definitions”<sup>11</sup>, the word “folklore” and its derivatives still appear in almost all the documents sent by the representatives of the numerous consulted States. Nevertheless, it was to be replaced by that of “intangible cultural heritage” a few months later.

So why was the term “folklore” dropped, in spite of its large usage in the documents sent by the different member States? Firstly, let us recall that already during the 1999 meeting in Washington, several members – surely a minority, but a minority pushing forward a rather politically sensitive agenda – had challenged the usage of “folklore”: as Máiréad Nic Craith writes, “at a joint UNESCO/Smithsonian Institute conference in 1999, delegates from Africa, the Pacific and Latin America expressed dissatisfaction with the use of the term ‘folklore’ which, for them, had strong

10 Gasparini 2011/12 (as in *ftnt.* 6), p. 34.

11 Subtitle: “Definitions for «intangible cultural heritage»: Member States’ replies to questionnaires sent to National Commissions in February and August 2000”, 8 pages, consulted in May 2016 at the link <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/05299.pdf>.

European associations and, from their perspective, was primarily used by anthropologists with reference to cultures in the developing world. [...] Delegates from the Fiji Islands strongly associated the notion of ‘folklore’ with colonisation”<sup>12</sup>. This criticism was accepted by the committee, certainly also because of the political as well as methodological problematicity of the notion that at that time was also being discussed in anthropological literature<sup>13</sup>. Thus, as Kristin Kuutma has summarised, the aim of the *constituendo* ICH was “to be universally inclusive in avoiding references to social stratum or inferiority that are perceived to be present in terms such as ‘folklore’, ‘traditional’, or ‘popular culture’”<sup>14</sup>. Similarly,

12 Nic Craith 2008 (as in fnnt. 4), p. 56.

13 This paper is obviously no place to discuss or even introduce the radical methodological and epistemological shifts that, during the second half of the XX century and the first years of the XXI, led most of European scholarship, academic departments, research projects, and publications connected with folklore to rename the latter notion (or its exact German correspondent, “Volkskunde”) with correlated ones (“Demologia”, “Ethnologie de l’Europe”, “Folkloristics”, “Europäische Ethnologie”, etc.). I only mention some of the works on the matter that I consider particularly significant and useful as starting points to explore the theme further: Pietro Clemente, Fabio Mugnaini (eds.): *Oltre il folklore. Tradizioni popolari e antropologia nella società contemporanea*. Roma 2001; Jonas Frykman: *A tale of Two Disciplines: European Ethnology and the Anthropology of Europe*. In: Ullrich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith, Jonas Frykman (eds.): *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*. Chichester 2011, pp. 572–589; Gabriela Kiliánová: *Mitteleuropäische Ethnologie in Transition*. In: Ullrich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith, Jonas Frykman (eds.): *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*. Chichester 2011, pp. 103–121; Bjarne Rogan: *The Troubled Past of European Ethnology*. In: *Ethnologia Europaea. Journal of European Ethnology*, 31, 1, 2008, pp. 66–78; Susan Carol Rogers: *Anthropology in France*. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30, 2001, pp. 481–50. Contrary to what Sharon Macdonald says in her last, important book, where she writes that “In Britain, Folklore is not established in the academy” (Macdonald 2013 [as in fnnt. 2], note n. 10, p. 237), folklore is actually very well established in British academy, with several university courses and programmes (at the Universities of Aberdeen and Chichester for example), and two learned societies, “Folk Life” and “The Folklore Society” – the latter also being the oldest society of folklore studies, currently hosted by the Warburg Institute in London –, gathering many scholars and publishing two journals, one of which, *Folklore*, began in 1889 and since then has continued to publish first-class scholarship for a prestigious academic publisher.

14 Kristin Kuutma: *Between Arbitration and Engineering Concepts and Contingencies in the Shaping of Heritage Regimes*. In: Bendix, Eggert, Peselmann 2012 (as in fnnt. 5), p. 24.

Eugenio Imbriani concludes that the word “folklore” disappeared because “it was considered outdated and imbued with connotations of cultural subalternity” [my translation]<sup>15</sup>.

No wonder, then, that following the explicit UNESCO effort to avoid essentialised and essentialising notions, methodologically or politically problematic concepts, or terms marked by controversial or contested meanings, the word fell into disfavour and into utter disuse as a working concept, being definitively but unofficially dropped in 2001, and officially at the 2003 convention, when the phrase “intangible cultural heritage” was chosen to replace “folklore”, and was ratified once and for all. It is interesting to note at this point that a few years later the term “authenticity”, after receiving similar criticism based on the same arguments and the same will to avoid controversial notions, met a similar fate<sup>16</sup>.

15 Imbriani 2011 (as in fnnt. 6), p. 2.

16 In the Decision of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee 8.COM 8.26 we read about “the importance of using appropriate vocabulary and avoiding expressions such as ‘authentic’ and ‘purity’”; in the Decision 8.COM 8.3 we are similarly confronted with “the importance of using appropriate vocabulary and avoiding expressions such as ‘authenticity’, ‘carrying on the tradition in its purest form’ and ‘virtually unchanged over centuries’” (documents accessed in May 2016 at the following links: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/8.COM/8.26>; <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/8.3>). Chiara Bortolotto has shown and discussed some of the ambiguities and even inconsistencies of the UNESCO discourse, notably the tension that exists between the administrative and implementation policies and their impact at the level of “lower” social poetics and practices associated with heritage (Chiara Bortolotto: *Authenticity: A Non-Criterion for Inscription on the Lists of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention*. In 2013 IRCI Meeting on ICH – Evaluating the Inscription Criteria for the Two Lists of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. The 10th Anniversary of the 2003 Convention. Final Report. Sakai City 2013, pp. 73–78). She concludes that “while capacity building, nomination-writing instructions and the establishment of rules about inappropriate vocabulary may eventually expunge the term ‘authenticity’ from UNESCO documents, the values conveyed by this word are not likely to be eradicated from heritage discourse since the two are closely interrelated. For this reason, the attempt to remove this value system from the contemporary theory and practice of heritage poses a challenge to all heritage players” (p. 78). On the relationship between the notion of authenticity and that of folklore, a terminological, conceptual, and epistemological relationship that is of course of the greatest importance also in the historiography of ICH, cfr. Regina Bendix: *In Search of Authenticity*. Madison 1997.

Today (2016), although it can still be found in the nomination documents, no trace is left of the word “folklore” in the official definition of ICH, in spite of it being at both the institutional and conceptual foundation of what ICH actually is. In the official definition we read that “the term ‘cultural heritage’ has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts”. As is evident, the set of “traditions” or “living expressions” listed in the official definition overlap quite almost exactly with what are normally considered the objects of study of folkloristics. In other words, with what is usually considered “folklore”. Nevertheless, the word itself is avoided.

In the previous pages I have presented an overview of the terminological filiation between folklore and intangible cultural heritage, as well as the conceptual transition from the former to the latter, at a political and institutional level. However, “folklore” is a term doubtless characterised by both *etic and emic* usages and connotations<sup>17</sup>. Semantic entanglements or tensions can exist between the two, as such a term has in the last 50 years at least shown a capacity for circulating not only on the *etic* level, but also in popular culture and in other non-hegemonic, interstitial terminological grounds and discourses.

Conversely, at first “intangible heritage” could be thought of as a technical category only, one used by experts, officials, functionaries, and

17 From this point on, I will try to use the *etic* and *emic* paradigm as critically as possible, following its well-established usage in the anthropological theory and literature, but always bearing in mind the reservations and the criticism this dichotomy has at times been the object of. My focus is, however, less on the distinction than on the interactions between these two ideal poles and the social realities they refer to. In a manner of speaking, the use I make of this dichotomy bears resemblance to the interactive interpretative paradigm theorised by Markus Tauschek, in particular to his highlighting that “heritage research should rethink the relationship between frame (concepts, heritage interventions, bureaucratic structures) [here, “*etic*”], and content (traditional practices, performances, rituals, etc.) [here, “*emic*”]” (Tauschek 2011 [as in *ftnt.* 4], p. 60)



academics, but not really by other categories of social agents<sup>18</sup>. However, recent ethnographic evidence demonstrates that, in its simpler version – “heritage” without an adjective, also used to refer to intangible heritages as well – it is actually also present in non-professional and non-academic fields, being discussed and negotiated, for a rather diverse set of aims, in many social arenas, and in Europe as well as elsewhere<sup>19</sup>.

It is perhaps interesting to take a closer look at the local and national usages of these two concepts. In Europe, the word “folklore” started to be appropriated at a popular level, and to circulate widely in different social contexts, roughly between the fifties and the seventies. By the beginning of the eighties, it had acquired a strong popular connotation, with a variety of uses and misuses for identity, political, religious and even economic purposes. This re-appropriation and circulation have been considered a part of a broader phenomenon of revival of folk practices, interest in local and rural traditions, and reemergence of primitivist sentiments that have characterised many social groups in many European societies since the seventies<sup>20</sup>.

18 It is probably superfluous to remember, in a journal of ethnological and anthropological studies, how problematic the notion of “intangible cultural heritage” is. This problematicity is addressed in practically all the studies on ICH that I know, and certainly in all the works cited in this article.

19 On this definitional as well as “ontological” problem, cfr. Nicolas Adell, Regina Bendix, Chiara Bortolotto, Markus Tauschek (eds.): *Between Imagined Communities and Communities of Practice: Participation, Territory and the Making of Heritage*. Göttingen 2015 and Testa 2014 (as fnnt. 6).

20 The literature is abundant; among many others: Antonio Ariño, Luigi Lombardi Satriani L. (eds.): *L’utopia di Dioniso. Festa tra tradizione e modernità*. Roma 1997; Gian Luigi Bravo: *Festa contadina e società complessa*. Milano 1984; Jeremy Boissevain (ed.): *Revitalizing European Rituals*. London, New York 1992; Pietro Clemente: *Oltre l’orizzonte*. In: Hermann Bausinger: *Cultura popolare e mondo tecnologico*. Napoli 2005 (tr. of *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt*. Stuttgart 1961), pp. 235–270; Sharon Macdonald: *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. London-New York 2013; Francesco Faeta: *Un oggetto conoscibile. La festa religiosa in aree dell’Europa meridionale contemporanea*. In: Francesco Faeta, *Questioni italiane. Demologia, antropologia critica culturale*. Torino 2005, pp. 151–170; Poljak Istenič: *Aspects of Tradition*. In *Traditiones*, 41, 2, 2012, pp. 77–89; Giovanni Pizza: *Tarantism and the Politics of Tradition in Contemporary Salento*. In Pine Frances, Kaneff Deema, Haukanes Haldis (eds.): *Memory, Politics and Religion. The Past Meets the Present in Modern Europe*. Berlin 2004, pp. 199–223; Testa 2014 (as in fnnt. 6).

Perhaps as a reaction to this emic re-appropriation, scholars started to discuss new ways of conceptualising oral traditions, especially those coming from rural areas of Europe which were undergoing an evident process of revitalisation. The *intangibility* or *immateriality* of the objects and facts so often at the centre of the interest of European ethnologists and anthropologists started to be recognised as a new feature useful for sustaining a terminological and theoretical shift in the study of these socio-cultural facts. The criticism and deconstruction of the related notions of “culture” and “tradition” obviously played a role in this shift and in its implications.

Over time, the idea of “intangibility” was given an institutional framework and started to be discussed as a new way of conceiving, presenting, and studying cultural heritage. As an ideal end to this intellectual process, in the year 2003, as we saw in the previous pages, UNESCO adopted the notion of intangibility and created a brand new category that integrated into its powerful taxonomic system<sup>21</sup>.

Since then, which is to say, over the last dozen years, the notion of intangible heritage has slowly but significantly and continuously made its way into other social and cultural niches, transcending its technical connotation and becoming not only a label, but also a tool used by social actors for fostering social negotiations, political recognition, identity claims, religious agendas, and economic interests. This has happened in spite of many theoretical and also factual problems associated with the very notion of intangibility: not only is “intangible” cultural heritage usually embedded in objects, artifacts, and is “materially” performed, but tangible heritage itself cannot not exist outside an intangible framework – “intangible” things such as discourses, narratives, and representations make the tangible (whether a monument, a piece of art, an artifact, etc.) socially recognisable and meaningful. In a way, intangible heritage is also

21 On the “taxonomic” force of UNESCO definitions and schemes cfr. Chiara Bortolotto: Introduction: le trouble du patrimoine culturel immatériel. In: Bortolotto (as in fnnt. 5), pp. 21–43; Berardino Palumbo: G(lobal) T(axonomic) S(ystems): Sistemi tassonomici dell’immaginario globale. Prime ipotesi di ricerca a partire dal caso UNESCO. In: Meridiana. Rivista di storia e scienze sociali, 68, pp. 37–67.

tangible, and tangible heritage also intangible: the two dimensions cannot be disentangled<sup>22</sup>.

But how have the local people and the scholars who do ethnographic fieldwork amongst them reacted to – and participated in or otherwise affected – this set of shifts and changes? Several ethnographers – whether they call themselves anthropologists, ethnologists, or folklorists – have recently noticed, and published, cases in which these notions are used and operationalised at an emic level<sup>23</sup>. I myself have encountered similar cases while doing ethnographic research in Italy and the Czech Republic.

Italy is an interesting example, because the academic equivalent for the English “folklore” has been, since the twenties of the last century, a rather different expression: “Storia delle tradizioni popolari” (literally “history of popular traditions”). Although not neglected and actually preferred by some Italian scholars, the term “folklore” has always been less widespread and less used than “tradizioni popolari” – or alternatively “cultura popolare” (“popular culture”), the latter being actually preferred

- 22 The issue of the tangibility of intangible heritage has already been raised in the anthropological literature less than that of the intangibility of tangible heritage. As far as I know, though, no study has been specifically devoted to the matter to date. Considerations and observations can nevertheless be found in Regina Bendix: *Heritage between economy and politics: An assessment from the perspective of cultural anthropology*. In: Laurjane Smith, Natsuko Akagawa (eds): *Intangible Heritage*. London, New York 2009, pp. 253–269; Kristin Kuutma: *The Politics of Contested Representation: UNESCO and the Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. In: Hemme, Tauschek, Bendix 2013 (as in fnnt. 4), pp. 177–196; Juraj Hamar, Lubica Volanská: *Between Politics, Science and Bearers. Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. In: *Národopisná Revue/Journal of Ethnology*, 5, 2015, pp. 35–46 (36–36); Þóra Pétursdóttir: *Concrete matters: Ruins of Modernity and the things called heritage*. In: *Journal of Social Archeology*, 13, 1, 2012, pp. 31–53; Markus Tauschek: *Wertschöpfung aus Tradition. Der Karneval von Binche und die Konstituierung kulturellen Erbes*. Berlin 2010; the “problematicity” of the notion of intangible cultural heritage in relation to its tangible dimension has also been discussed during the Biannual Conference of the Association for Critical Heritage Studies (Montréal, Canada, 03–07 June 2016), especially during the panel “Le patrimoine immatériel: quels nouveaux défis?”, on which I myself participated with a paper called “Le patrimoine immatériel, ça change tout. L’impact de la création de patrimoines immatériels dans les différents domaines de la vie sociale. Quelques exemples européens”.
- 23 The works cited in the previous footnotes are for the most part examples of this trend.

by cultural historians, probably because of the irradiation of Peter Burke's and Carlo Ginzburg's coeval, influential books discussing the notion<sup>24</sup>. Between the sixties and the eighties another term gained a certain academic popularity in Italian academia: "demologia" (a compound word putting together two Greek words and literally meaning "the study of the people"), but its success proved to be ephemeral. Nevertheless, if "folklore" has had little success in Italian academia, it has had great success outside it, where over time it has acquired both positive and negative connotations. The negative is used to refer to something poor, cheap, kitsch, and backward; the positive, to something typical, traditional, and authentic, like a genuine creation of the popular genius. This tension is hardly ever problematised by social agents, and the two connotations seem to be able to coexist rather peacefully and transversally: both can in fact be used, depending on the circumstances. However, with the exception of academics and people interested in local traditions, usually the higher the cultural capital of the user, the more discrediting or pejorative the use of the notion. On the other hand, at least in the contexts in which I have undertaken fieldwork, the category of folklore – which clearly, in the Italian case of mine, was derived from the reading of some local ethnographers and students – is used to dignify popular tradition, especially, but not exclusively, at a local level.

For many of my informants in Castelnuovo al Volturno, during my first intensive ethnographic fieldwork (2010/2011), for example, when associated with their festival, the attribute "folklorico" ("folkloric") bore almost exclusively a positive connotation. On the contrary, in the nearby urban centre of Isernia, "folklore" and its derivatives are mainly used as to designate something playful or futile. It should also be noted that this semantic duality – or ambivalence – of the term "folklore" also subsists in other European languages. I will return to this last consideration later.

"Intangible cultural heritage" – or "Patrimonio culturale immateriale", as it is called in Italy – is still not used much emically to describe well-established traditions like ceremonies, festivals, fairy-tales, songs, proverbs, etc. "Patrimonio" is actually widespread as an all-comprehensive notion that includes all the things worth visiting or knowing about in a certain locality, but the longer and more specific expression "patrimonio

24 Peter Burke: *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. London 1978; Carlo Ginzburg: *Il formaggio e i vermi. Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500*. Torino 1976.

immateriale” is not (yet?) very widely-used. Even in rural areas, though, people are starting to be more familiar with the notion of heritage and are starting to use it. Whereas “traditions” and “folklore” are common and self-describing words, “intangible cultural heritage” is perceived as more technical, but also as more objective. It possesses, furthermore, the aura of institutionality and officiality, which according to the context and the circumstances, can be emically evaluated either positively or negatively.

Conversely, in the area of the Czech Republic where I undertook my second fieldwork (2013–2014) after the Italian one (2010–2011), the expression Folklore (“Folklor”) is virtually absent or at least used very little by the natives and actually has also become quite unpopular in Czech academic discourse. Scholars, especially cultural historians, occasionally use the expression “Popular culture” (“Populární kultura”); anthropologists use it as well, although more in the sense of mass culture than folk culture. This expression is also virtually absent from the vocabulary of the majority of the Czechs. Variants like “lidová kultura” (literally “the culture of the people”) or “tradiční kultura” (“traditional culture”) exist also mostly at an academic level. “Tradice” (both “tradition” and “traditions”) and “lidová tradice” (“tradition of the people” or “popular tradition”) are actually transversally widespread, just like their equivalents in Italy and in many other European countries.

Conversely again, at least in the area where I did fieldwork, the terms “světové dědictví” (“world heritage”) and “nemateriální [or nehmotné] kulturní dědictví” (“immaterial [or intangible] cultural heritage”) are more commonly used and circulate in a variety of different social contexts. This discrepancy is easily explainable: the Italian festive tradition which was at the centre of my former ethnography has not been included on the list of UNESCO ICH – although a candidature is currently being developed – whereas the Masopust in the region of Hlinsko v Čechách was put onto the Representative List of World Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2010. In other words, the processes of institutionalisation of the local tradition and the re-appropriation at an emic level of the terminology of UNESCO occurred some time ago and has been operating for some years now.

This emergence of intangible cultural heritage as an emic category as well as the re-emergence (not really in the Czech Republic but certainly in other European contexts like Italy or France) of that of folklore also at emic level is an interesting phenomenon for many reasons.

Generalisation, even when undertaken from a theoretically-informed comparison, is of course always dangerous, and to a certain extent inappropriate: different people use different notions and words for different purposes. However, as I said, over the last few years these dynamics seem to have acquired a pan-European dimension, and it is definitely possible to attempt to discern patterns and continuities.

Is it possible to individuate common societal patterns and draw broader theoretical conclusions on the basis of what has been presented so far?

Processes of circulation, semantic switching, re-appropriation, and “translation” of academic terms and notions between and through emic and etic levels have been the objects of anthropological curiosity for decades, and not only at a European level<sup>25</sup>. We should be careful, in particular, to avoid the danger of characterising these phenomena as examples of unilateral acculturation from “the top”: as Markus Tauschek has rightly written with regard to the emergence and the diffusion of the notion of cultural heritage, “these connections cannot be characterised as linear or top-down, and they do not simply illustrate the entrance of international discourses on a local or national level. To the contrary, they symbolize the complex paths taken in the production of an intangible cultural heritage discourse”<sup>26</sup>. As I wrote in the conference paper which is at the base of this piece, “scholars run after people in their attempts to record and interpret how they make sense out of things like traditions and heritages, and people often run after scholars in order to legitimize and give an aura of objectivity to their claims and beliefs concerning traditions and heritage”. It was perhaps a baroque formulation, but I think that the idea at the basis of this statement is valid. At the very least, it translates appropriately what I “felt” during my ethnographic fieldworks. Once an Italian informant told me (I translate and summarise from my ethnographic record): “we could call our carnival simply our carnival, or a festival [‘festa’], but sometimes we prefer to call it a tradition, a rite, a part of

25 These processes are at the centre of my two recent studies: Alessandro Testa: ‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 1: Symbolic Effectiveness, Emic Beliefs, and the Re-enchantment of Europe. Forthcoming in *Folklore*, 128, 1, 2017 and ‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 2: Popular Frazerism and the Reconfiguration of Tradition in Europe Today. Forthcoming in: *Folklore* 128, 2, 2017.

26 Tauschek 2011 (as in *fnnt.* 4), p. 55.

our folklore, or our cultural heritage [‘patrimonio culturale’] just because these words make it more impressive. We are not trying to be truthful. We want to impress our public”. As I already said, “heritage” is generally perceived as a more “official” and (therefore) “exact” term, whereas “folklore” has acquired, almost everywhere in the Western world in the last few decades, a pejorative connotation, although exceptions – that actually confirm the trend – exist.

Lucia Gasparini has shown how in the nineties UNESCO was well aware of the necessity of dropping the word “folklore” and substituting it for an allegedly more correct and neutral one. The pejorative connotation of the term was already well-known at the time, whereas it was clear that other notions, such as “popular culture”, “living culture”, “oral culture” or “traditional culture” did not have such negative or pejorative connotations<sup>27</sup>. No wonder: since the seventies at least, many Western scholars investigating folklore – and actually folklorists themselves – were starting to be aware of the pejorative connotation often associated with the term, in spite of a likewise visible folk-revival<sup>28</sup> and also in spite of the establishment of departments of folkloristics throughout the Western world. Since then, the pejorative connotation not only has not vanished, but has in certain areas decidedly become stronger. As Laurent Fournier has recently written, “the word *folklore* is rather despised and laughed at in France. The word ‘*folklore*’, being almost synonymous with ‘weird’ or ‘kitsch’ in the French language, is broadly perceived to be connected with narrow-minded parochialism and cultural traditions in the countryside, which totally cuts it off from the universalistic commitments of the French elites”<sup>29</sup>. The same can be said about Italy, although, just like in France, there are many exceptions to this pattern, as I have argued in the previous pages.

In any case, these emic, etic, and institutional terminological adjustments and reconfigurations show that not only is the mere definition and

27 Gasparini 2011/12 (as in fnnt. 6), p. 34.

28 Cfr. Alan Dundes: Interpreting folklore. Indiana 1980, VII–XII and 1–3; Richard Dorson: Introduction. In: Richard Dorson (ed.): Folklore in the Modern World. The Hague, Paris 1978, pp. 3–10.

29 Laurent-Sébastien Fournier: Intangible Cultural Heritage in France: From State Culture to Local Development. In: Bendix, Eggert, Peselmann 2012 (as in fnnt. 5), p. 330.

individuation of certain social facts and cultural elements at stake, but also a process of on-going interpretations and ontological questioning. In the case of UNESCO and other heritage-making agencies (for instance the regional and national ones), both scholars and non-scholars – that is to say, the so-called tradition-holders, but also bureaucrats, administrators, local experts, and others – often play the same game to achieve the same goal: the recognition of a tradition as being more than just such, i.e. as being cultural heritage. In this case things get even more complicated, as different aims, terminologies, conceptions of the past and of traditions, local and external expertise, and interpretations, mingle and entangle inextricably.

Let us now return for a moment to our point of departure, i.e. to the consideration of how the notions of “folklore” and “intangible cultural heritage”, although largely overlapping, have been disentangled in the (etic) discourse of UNESCO, in spite of their actually being largely interchangeable and in use outside the arena of debates between academics, professionals, and experts. It is inevitable to recall that decades of anthropological theorisation, criticism, and deconstruction of notions such as “community”, “culture”, “tradition”, and actually “folklore” and “heritage” themselves, have actually made their use more “prudent”, if problematic, in academic discourse. Nevertheless, they are still widely used by locals and natives, visitors, and other categories of people gravitating around and/or active in the heritage arena. Is this a sign of the fact that terminological and conceptual circulation takes its own forms in utter disregard of the academic conclusions and state of the art? Or is it just that most heritage actors and “tradition-holders” simply ignore (or want to ignore) academia, and in so doing foster a veritable reaction “from below” to its deconstructive attitude?

My impression, grounded on my ethnographic empirical evidence, is that sometimes the use of these problematic if not controversial notions can actually be deliberately chosen as a form of “popular” recalcitrance or reaction to the academic discourse, at times openly considered as dry and disrespectful of local practices (I have noticed this process of “reaction” in both my fieldworks). As Geraldino, one of my informants, once told me during a heated debate at one meeting (which I recorded) of the local association organizing the Carnival, “gli studiosi rovinano le tradizioni popolari” (“scholars spoil popular traditions”). It has often seemed to me that many people do not want to be told that they do not have a culture



(because this is what may come as a result of some scholars advocating that culture does not exist). Many people do not want to be told that heritage “does not exist”, or that it is simply “made”<sup>30</sup>. Many people do not want to be told that their performance is not a genuine rite, but a revitalised, ritualised, and spectacularised event which bears little or no similarities to the “old” one. Nor do they want to be told that authenticity

- 30 Laurjane Smith claims that “There is, really, no such thing as heritage” (Laurjane Smith: *The Uses of Heritage*. London, New York 2006, p. 11); similarly, Regina Bendix wrote that “Cultural heritage does not exist, it is made” (Regina Bendix: *Heritage between economy and politics: An assessment from the perspective of cultural anthropology*. In: Smith, Akagawa 2009 [as in fnnt. 22], 255), and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett that “All heritage is created” (Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett: *World Heritage and Cultural Economics*. In: Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, and alii [eds]: *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*. London 2006, pp. 161–202, 194–195); the same author had actually already written that “heritage is a mode of cultural production that gives the endangered or outmoded a second life as an exhibition of itself” (Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett: *Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production*. In: *Museum International*, 56, 2004, pp. 52–65, 56 – for a discussion and a critique of this dimension of cultural heritage see Ingo Schneider: *Kritik des kulturellen Erbes: ein Versuch*, and Harm-Peer Zimmermann: *Sich eine Vergangenheit geben, aus der man stammen möchte: zur Kritik der Heritage-Kritik*. In: Ingo Schneider, Valeska Flor, Valeska [eds]: *Erzählungen als kulturelles Erbe, das Kulturelle Erbe als Erzählung*. Beiträge der 6. Tagung der Kommission für Erzählforschung in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde vom 1.–4. September 2010 im Universitätszentrum Obergurgl. Münster, New York, 2014, pp. 33–46 and 47–61). Considerations along the same lines in Ellen Hertz, Suzanne Chappaz-Wirhner: *Le patrimoine a-t-il fait son temps?* In: *Ethnographiques.org*. *Revue en ligne de sciences humaines et sociales*, 24, 2012. I have a different opinion on the matter, and anyway I never dared tell the locals I interacted with during my fieldwork investigations that what they so strongly believe in does not exist. My methodological approach is that of the agnostic “third path” theorised by Cristoph Brumann: *Heritage agnosticism a third path for the study of cultural heritage*. In: *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie sociale*, 22, 2, 2014, pp. 173–188. This third path also bears resemblance to the historical, relational, and “inclusive” approach proposed by Markus Tauschek, who refuses to consider heritage as a “second” – let alone lesser – version of “former” traditions. In contrast with the idea advocated, among others, by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, which considers cultural heritage “metacultural”, reflexive and, in a way, only artificially connected with its objects (the “actual” traditions), Tauschek refuses all sharp dichotomies distinguishing alleged pristine traditions (folklore) from patrimonialised traditions (heritage), arguing, along with Dina Roginsky, that “there is no metaculture, but only culture” (Tauschek 2011 [as in fnnt. 4], p. 58).

is a social myth, and not an actual property of their traditions<sup>31</sup>. Actually, people care very little about “tradition” being considered an obsolete and controversial notion in the realm of the academics. The same goes for the few places where “folklore” has not yet acquired a vaguely – or soundly – negative connotation: sociologists, historians, anthropologists, and ethnologists have all contributed to the deconstruction of this notion.

Social scientists have long known how thorny it can be to theorise and delimit what a “lore” is, and how even more difficult it can be to say who the “folk” are without taking a big risk of reproducing mere common-sense, old-fashioned Marxist classism, unreliable representations of social differentiation, or without falling into romanticism and primitivism. And yet people in Italy and in the Czech Republic as well as in many other European countries have no problem at all with using these concepts and related concepts and with more or less consciously assuming their “reifying” consequences. No need to refer to field notes or records: it is sufficient to watch whichever of the many documentaries about rural traditions in Europe to hear those words uttered ad libitum by the locals. The same goes for the printed materials produced by local associations and groups organising or coordinating traditional festivals and performances: they are filled with these words (“culture”, “tradition”, “folklore”, “heritage”), if not because of a conscious “reaction” to the academic discourse, surely because there are no others for referring to these social facts!

The causes of this “reaction”, be it conscious or unconscious, spontaneous or deliberated, are certainly numerous. Among them we can surely count the will to “resist”, again consciously or unconsciously, social processes and changes related to globalisation, precisely by using notions and ideas that on the contrary help building locality and vicinity, notions and ideas that can sustain a certain discourse about the past, which is also, always, a certain *Weltanschauung*. Or yet this (epi)phenomenon, which for us scholars may seem an interesting form of popular dissidence, can be observed in rural contexts characterised by social stress connected with transformations such as impoverishment and dispossession, social

31 The problems of ritualisation and authenticity mentioned in the text are at the centre of one of my forthcoming pieces: Alessandro Testa: «This is not a spectacle». Poetics and Practices of Authenticity, Ritualisation, and Tradition in Revitalised European Festivals. Forthcoming.

insecurity, and depopulation, which have been brought about by the neo-liberal and neo-urban post-modern times. In these contexts, this “return to tradition” could be thought of as a pro-social reaction of local communities to said transformations, as has actually been the case in both my ethnographies<sup>32</sup>.

I have offered the example of the notion of tradition because in my opinion it is a striking one: emic essentialisation and reification of things called traditional (and of the notion of tradition itself) seem to be very common phenomena, ubiquitous especially in the rural areas of Europe, which are the contexts I am more familiar with, ethnographically speaking. Similar to what happened with folklore and heritage, while anthropologists and historians were critically assessing and deconstructing “tradition”, calling it reifying, reified, etc., calling traditions spurious, invented, etc. (these are all expressions actually used in the scholarship in the last 30 years), and demonstrating its misuses and abuses, people engaged with traditional practices and intangible cultural heritage and were – and actually still are – only too eager to speak the word, think the notion, and to use it for their purposes, in spite – or at least in utter disregard – of academic criticism<sup>33</sup>. When faced with a closed-ended

32 Here I am not proposing a deterministic relationship between the degradation of material conditions of life, in a certain social environment, and cultural revitalisation of traditions and of the very notion of tradition itself. Nevertheless, I also believe that it is undeniable that a connection between the two facts, in certain cases, can subsist. This thesis (admittedly though only partly neo-functionalistic) has already been proposed: by myself in the conclusions of Testa 2014 (as in fnnt. 6), and in those of Testa 2016 (as in fnnt. 2), and by others: Jeremy Boissevain: Introduction. In: id. (ed), *Revitalizing European Rituals*. London, New York, 1992, pp. 1–19, Gerald Creed: *Masquerade and Postsocialism, Ritual and Cultural Dispossession in Bulgaria*. Bloomington, Indianapolis, 2011; David Picard, Michael Robinson: *Remaking Worlds: Festivals, Tourism and Change*. In: David Picard, Michael Robinson (eds): *Festivals, Tourism and Social Change. Remaking Worlds*. Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto 2006, pp. 1–31.

33 Here I am not advocating a dismissal of all these academic notions that circulate equally at emic levels. On the contrary, I support and try to interpret a methodological approach and an intellectual posture that recognises the necessity of a critical understanding *and* use of notions like “folklore”, “culture”, “tradition”, etc. Ridding ourselves of them would be but a self-impoverishment of our disciplinary critical *apparatus* – without mentioning that often the substitute expressions are no better than the substituted ones. As Eric Wolf once wrote, “writing culture [cannot be done] without naming and comparing things, without formulating concepts

questionnaire (I used a similar one in both Hlinsko and Castelnuovo) asking what terms the respondent would choose to describe the festival at the centre of their community life and of my investigation, “tradition” was by far the most chosen among 5 different options, with a percentage of around 70% in both cases, in Italy and in the Czech Republic (from samples of 20 and 30 respondents respectively)<sup>34</sup>.

The question that arises in my mind, and a consequence of what precedes, is then: are scholars in their right to attempt to dispose of the idea of tradition while the social agents who are at the centre of their research have no intention to do so? Biology and anthropology together, joining forces, have achieved the goal of ruling out the pseudo-scientific idea of race. So the same could be done with other notions, at least theoretically, but would this help us to understand social life in a better way?<sup>35</sup>

As a way of concluding, I will briefly return to the topic of the interactions between the emic and the etic dimensions in folkloric and heritage conceptions. As I have already argued, at times the scholarly analytical

for naming and comparing things” (Eric Wolf: *Pathways of power. Building an Anthropology of the Modern World*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2001, p. 386). With respect to the notion of “tradition”, for instance, in another paper I have strongly advocated a methodological “median” or third pathway in the study of tradition that places itself halfway between an utterly deconstructive attitude (which considers tradition as a spurious and made-up social fact and an “invention of modernity”, as an Italian anthropologist claims: Berdardino Palumbo: *L’UNESCO e il campanile. Antropologia, politica e beni culturali in Sicilia orientale*. Roma 2006 [1 ed. 2003], p. 21) and one more prone to give credit to heritage and its objects (one that takes seriously, not always critically, the emic uses of and beliefs in the authenticity and veracity of traditional objects and is less concerned about their deconstruction). The first attitude is usually representative of post-modern anthropology, whereas the second one can be more easily found in the field of folkloristics (Alessandro Testa: *È la ‘tradizione’ ancora buona da pensare? Riflessioni critiche su una nozione controversa*. In *Annuaire Roumain d’Anthropologie*, 53, 2016, pp. 63–91).

34 Testa 2014 (as in fnnt. 6), p. 502.

35 The implicit comparison I operate in the text between concepts such as “tradition”, “folklore”, “heritage”, and “culture” (which have in turn different scopes and breadths) and that of “race” is only an exercise in imaginative methodology: I do that in a hyperbolic way, i.e. rhetorically and for the sole sake of my argument, for although they have been deconstructed, re-thought, and at times harshly criticised, those anthropological notions still keep, at least in my opinion, some of their explanatory force.

attitude is considered dry and disrespectful by the social agents involved in the performance, transmission, and preservation of things traditional. What occurred to me rather vividly during my Italian ethnographic fieldwork, is a certain emic animosity towards the role that scholars have in “changing” and so to say “endangering”, through their analytic gaze, the authenticity of these traditional things<sup>36</sup>. Other examples, besides my Italian one, can be found in the literature, for instance in connection with forms of resistance, at a community level, to processes of patrimonialisation<sup>37</sup>, sometimes emically considered as unacceptable interference of scholars and/or officials and bureaucrats with local things, and therefore as a violation, through the entering into the sphere of traditional elements, of the locals’ “cultural intimacy”<sup>38</sup>. Just like external visitors, media-operators, and tourists, anthropologists can be seen as a cause or a symptom of “cultural pollution”: tourism is of course mainly considered an important source of local development, and also “proof” that the local traditions (whether or not officially recognised as cultural heritage) are worthy of preservation and promotion. However, on the other hand the more a tradition becomes the object of the interest, presence, and participation of tourists, the less authentic and respectful of things as they

36 Cfr. Testa 2014 (as in fnnt. 6), pp. 489–510, and Testa, «This is not a spectacle», forthcoming (as in fnnt. 31).

37 Cases in which UNESCO nomination or list-inclusion gave rise, from certain segments of the local community, to phenomena of criticism, resistance, or even refusal, albeit on the basis of different or also very different motivations, are reported in Regina Bendix: *Heritage between economy and politics: An assessment from the perspective of cultural anthropology*. In: Smith, Akagawa 2009 (as in fnnt. 22; Christoph Brumann: *Report on the Urban Anthropology section*. In: A.A.V.V., *Report 2012–2013 of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology*, 2013, Halle-Saale, pp. 49–68; Laurent-Sébastien Fournier: *Intangible Cultural Heritage in France: From State Culture to Local Development*. In: Bendix, Eggert, Peselmann 2012 (as in fnnt. 5), pp. 327–340; Kristin Kuutma: *The Politics of Contested Representation: UNESCO and the Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. In: Hemme, Tauschek, Bendix 2013 (as in fnnt. 4), pp. 177–196; and in several papers published in Adell, Bendix, Bortolotto, Tauschek 2015 (as in fnnt. 19).

38 I use the expression “cultural intimacy” in the sense made common, in anthropological studies, by Michael Herzfeld, according to whom it should be thought of as “the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality” (Michael Herzfeld: *Cultural intimacy: Social poetics in Nation-State*. New York 1997, p. 3).

were done in times past it may be considered. In other words, tourism also brings sentiments of cultural loss or better, as Kevin Meethan has written, “cultural contamination”<sup>39</sup>.

Ethnographers, just like tourists, functionaries, and other categories of professionals, can be said to bring about potential factors of de-indigenisation, cultural massification or dispossession, and changes in people’s conception of their own traditions<sup>40</sup> (and, be it noted *en passant*, these negative processes are exactly – and not by chance – those that cultural heritage status recognition is supposed to contrast...). On the other hand, just like external visitors, media-operators, and tourists, ethnographers can also be welcomed with sentiments of pride about the fact that the local tradition is considered worth being filmed, visited, and/or studied<sup>41</sup>.

In this paper I have tried to demonstrate that the filiation and transition between folklore and intangible cultural heritage has determined not only terminological and methodological shifts at institutional, emic, and etic levels, but also ontological and social transformations for different categories of people and in different spheres of social life. My hope is that my observations can be useful in understanding the forms and implications of these transformations. After all, this study not only critically problematises them, but can also be considered itself a product of the consequences of the radical shifts that in the last few decades have been taking place in the realm of social and historical sciences – shifts that have seen most of the themes, topics, theories, and methods traditionally associated with folklore and folklore studies migrating to the anthropology of intangible cultural heritage.

39 Kevin Meethan: *Tourism in a Global society*. Basingstoke 2001, p. 90.

40 I have investigated a rather striking such example of cultural circulation of notions and conceptions in Alessandro Testa: ‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 2: Popular Frazerism and the Reconfiguration of Tradition in Europe Today. Forthcoming in: *Folklore*, 128, 2, 2017.

41 Cfr. Testa, «This is not a spectacle», forthcoming (as in *fnnt.* 31).

**Von »Folklore« zu »Immateriellem Kulturerbe«.****Beobachtungen zu einer problematischen Ableitung**

In den letzten Dekaden haben einige wesentliche theoretische und methodologische Verschiebungen die verwandten Disziplinen Anthropologie, Folklore Studies, Europäische Ethnologie und Kulturgeschichte beeinflusst. Viele Kategorien und Begriffe, die lange verwendet (und vereinzelt auch missbraucht) wurden, wurden problematisiert, diskutiert und auch aufgegeben.

In diesem Beitrag diskutiere ich in Kürze, wie diese Verschiebungen sowohl die institutionelle, akademische Verwendung der beiden Begriffe »Folklore« und »Immaterielles Kulturerbe« wie auch einen allgemeineren Gebrauch beeinflusst hat. Weiters präsentiere ich Reflexionen über die emische und ethische Verwendung dieser beiden Kategorien in Bezug auf ethnografische Forschungen, die ich über die letzten Jahre in Molise in Italien und in Böhmen in der Tschechischen Republik durchgeführt habe.

